

After Old Finnish



Important events

- 1809: Finland becomes an autonomous Grand Duchy within Russia
- 1827: Great fire of Turku, capital (and university) relocated to Helsinki
- 1828: Lecturer (and 1850 professor) of Finnish at university.
- 1835/1849: Publication of the *Kalevala*
- 1863: Official status of Finnish

And with all this:

- Enormous expansion of the usage of Finnish in various domains (legal, political/administrative, academic – but also literary (poetry, first novels)).

Attitudes to language

- Finland is now a real nation, and like any nation it needs a national epic (*Kalevala*), an origin story (Finno-Ugric languages) and a language of its own. Old Finnish not good enough – too Swedish – let's make a new one.
- Publication of folk poetry (not just the *Kalevala*) led to a strong interest in East Finnish culture and dialects.
- "Dialect war" (*murteiden taistelu*): conflict of whether the new Finnish standard was to be based on West Finnish dialects (as before) or East Finnish dialects.
- Eventually, compromise was reached – but a number of West Finnish features in Old Finnish were replaced by Eastern variants.

An extreme position

Carl Axel Gottlund (1796-1875),
lecturer in Finnish from 1839.

- Ethnographic studies among the Värmland Finns in 1821, activist attitude got him into trouble in Sweden.
- Collector of folk poetry: published the *Runola* in 1840 to compete with the *Kalevala*, but this was criticized for being (among other things) too erotic.
- Felt he did not receive recognition for his work, Lönnrot took all the glory.



A sample of Gottlund's language

Sen eistä kuta enemmin yks kansa on valaistu ja valaistettu, sitä enemmin ovat nämät hänen henkelliset tietot ja uatokset selkiät ja julkiset; hyö ei ovat peitetyt ja puetut luonnollisissa aineissa, vaan heitä toimitetaan ymmärryksellä ainoastansa ajatuksen avulla, puhuttelemisella, opettelemisella ja neuvottelemisella.

Mutta kuta roajempi ja mielessänsä sovaistu yksi kansa on, sitä ruajemilla ja usein luonottomilla kuvilla toimitetaan heillen taivaan tapoja, heijän Viisaimmilta

The more a nation is enlightened, the more its spiritual knowledge and principles are clear and public: they are not covered and clothed in natural material, but they are brought to understanding only with the help of thought, speech, teaching and discussion.

But the harsher and, in it's mentality, blinder a nation is, the harsher and often unnatural the images with which the workings of heaven are brought to them by people wiser than them, (Otava, 1831 p. 16)

Gottlund lives on in Stockholm!



Reinhold von Becker, 1824

For that reason the Savo dialects would seem to be preferable, if the question is looking for the original sound of the language, its disposition and its formal and material properties. The dialect of Häme is more known and also more cultivated through its use in writing, but it has also gotten a few deformities, and it misses a number of both formal and material advantages of no small significance, which are still preserved in the Savo. (...) that one would through unifying the most regular and salient resources of the main dialects would attain a more complete written language is easy to see (...) Moreover, the Finnish written language, also in the past, would have been well served by having been adapted to a more genuine dialect."

(Finsk grammatik, p. 6)

Således synes Savolaxska dialekten åga företräde, då fråga är att uppsöka språkets ursprungliga grundljud, lynne och formella samt materiella tillgångar, äfvensom denna dialekt är i poesi tjenligare och mera nyttjad. Deremot är den Tavastländska dialekten genom användandet i skrift bättre känd och äfven mera odlad; men derjemte har den fått en och annan missbildning, samt gått miste om åtskilliga dels formella dels materiella fördelar af icke ringa nytta, hvilka i den Savolaxska ännu finnas i behåll. Ehuru derföre Tavastländskan, såsom mera odlad och bättre känd, i allmänhet är berättigad att till skriftspråk användas, synes dock den Savolaxska, såsom grunddialekt, tillika böra dervid begagnas tillatt i nyssanfördt afseende dels rätta dels rikta detsamma. Att man genom föreningen af det regelbundnaste och de särskildta tillgångarne i hufvuddialekterne skall komma till ett fullkomligare skriftspråk, är lätt att inse, och att en sådan förening låter verkställa sig, bevisas äfven genom de flere dialekt-sammansättningar, som i landet finnas. Föröfrigt har finska skriftspråket, äfven tillföre, blifvit med fördel efter en genuinare dialekt till någon del jemkad och upphjelp.

Counterpoint: Gustav Renvall

If Mr. von Becker's grammar has any flaw, it is very much apparent in that he, out of love towards his prized Savo dialect, tries to mix in Savo elements foreign to the established language, including confused and malformed ones, often without indicating their origin. In this way the old Finnish has been clad in an unusually variegated suit, with sewn-on patches in many colours.

(Fins Språklära, enligt den rena Vest-Finska, i Bokspråk vanliga dialekten. Åbo 1840)

Mitt hufvudsakliga bemödande har varit att framställa Finska Språket, sådant det genom sekler varit i skrift brukligt, samt är för Nationen allmänt bekant och af tiden godkändt. — Har Herr von Beckers Grammatik något fel, så visar det sig isynnerhet deruti, att han af förkärlek till sin beprisade Savolaxska dialect, försökt i det antagna Språket mångstädes inblanda Savolaxskans derintill för bokspråket fremmande egenheter, äfven de förvirrade och missbildade, ofta utan att indicera deras hemort: hvarigenom den gamla Finskan blifvit påklädd en ovanligt brokig dräkt, med mångfärgade påsydda lappar. I det mesta följes dock den brukliga och goda Finskan med vida mera granskning och klarare utredning, än någon annan äldre Finsk Språklära förmått det framställa: hvarföre en ny upplaga deraf, närmare öfvertänkt och något omstöpt, vore en verkelig vinning för den länge försummade och ännu ofullständiga Finska Språkforskningen.

The fate of Old Finnish features

Inessive -s, -sA: replaced by -ssA in early 1800s.

Past 3rd person plural -*t* makes way for -vAt in the 1830.

Personal pronoun accusative -*n* makes way for -*t* in the mid-1800s, but variation occurs until the end of the 19th century.

Allative: East Finnish -*llen* (also Agricola) used to some extent in first half of 19th century but does not catch on.

Many eastern features are not accepted/used at all! (See Gottlund's Savo diphthongs).

Old Finnish research

Old Finnish long neglected in emergent Finnish research. Reasons:

- Neogrammarian revolution made scientific research of Uralic language relationships possible. A lot of effort and resources went (understandably!) into this.
- Old Finnish seen as an inferior "first attempt" at a written language, marred by the "corrosion" of foreign (especially Swedish) influence.

Still:

- Important works (incl. legal translations) published in *Suomen kielen muistomerkkejä*, initially edited by Wiklund and Setälä.
- Some research, e.g. K.F. Petander's work on Sorolainen's language (1892), Heikki Ojansuu's work on Mikael Agricola's language.

Martti Rapola and Osmo Ikola

Martti Rapola (1891-1972):

- Dialectologist, strongly interested in historical phonology.
- Researcher of Old Finnish: work on the phonology and orthography of Abraham Kollanius (and published his legal translations 1926), introductory texts to Old Finnish and overviews of literature, *Suomen kirjakielen pääpiirtettään I* (phonology and orthography, other parts never appeared) 1933.
- Defended Old Finnish literature as a field worth of study.

Osmo Ikola (1918-2016):

- Lecturer in Uppsala, later professor (and rector) in Turku.
- Dissertation on future tense in the *Biblia*, continuous work on Old Finnish besides work on Finnish dialects and grammar (with a strong emphasis on non-finite constructions).

Pirkko Forsman-Svensson

- Doctorate and then lecturer in Umeå, later active in Helsinki.
- Dissertation on participial clauses in Old Finnish (1983).
- Large amount of work, particular emphasis on participial and non-finite constructions but also other areas of grammar as well as (neglected or poorly known) texts (e.g. Petter Schäfer's early 18th-century diary).
- Virtuaalinen Vanha Kirjasuomi: resources for self-study of Old Finnish (detailed grammar, texts, exercises). <https://vvks.it.helsinki.fi>

Two other names

Marja Itkonen-Kaila (1935-2021):
member of the famous Itkonen
dynasty (daughter of Toivo and
sister of Terho). Translator of
classical works, but published
important work on the source
languages of Agricola and on Old
Finnish passive constructions.

Silva Kiuru (1932-2010):
wideranged work on Old Finnish,
from aspects of Agricola's grammar
to the sermons of the 17th century
preacher Laurentius Aboicus. Co-
wrote an introductory text
(*Kirjasuomen kehitys*) with Laila
Lehikoinen

Kaisa Häkkinen and the Turku school

Kaisa Häkkinen: originally a Uralicist, very large amount of work on Old Finnish including critical texts editions, an introductory text (*Agricolasta nykykieleen*), works on Old Finnish etymology, and recently work on the oldest Finnish texts (Westh, Kangasala missal, etc.)

Turku school of Old Finnish research, for example:

- Nobufumi Inaba, dative genitive
- Heidi Salmi, adpositions
- Duha Elsayed, modal constructions
- Harri Uusitalo, provenance of old texts
- Kirsi-Maria Nummila, derivation and language contact
- Tanja Toropainen, word formation