

## BETWEEN CIFU XII AND CIFU XIII

Halfway between the last International Congress of Finno-Ugric Studies (CIFU) 2015 in Oulu and the following one, 2020 in Vienna, it may be a good time to recall past events. The Congress takes place every five years, and it is an important meeting place for the research community of Finno-Ugric studies. The 2015 Congress lasted from 17th to 21st of August, and it was hosted by the University of Oulu, with its 16,000 students and 3,000 employees one of the bigger higher education institutions of Finland. It was the fourth time that CIFU was held in Finland, and for the first time in the city of Oulu. Altogether it was the twelfth congress of its kind, the tradition goes back to the year 1960 when the first congress was organized in Budapest, Hungary (inbetween were Helsinki 1965, Tallinn 1970, Budapest 1975, Turku 1980, Syktyvkar 1985, Debrecen 1990, Jyväskylä 1995, Tartu 2000, Yoshkar-Ola 2005, and Piliscsaba 2010).

The venue of this large event was the spacious university campus in Linnanmaa on the outskirts of Oulu. It welcomed more than 380 participants from Finland, Hungary, the Russian Federation, from Austria, Germany, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, the United States, and from Estonia. The Estonian delegation enjoyed a collective bus journey to Oulu and back, and the Estonian bus was a popular means of transports between the city center and the campus also for other colleagues. CIFU XII did not have a special theme unlike the previous congress in Piliscsaba ("Finno-Ugric Peoples and Languages in the 21st Century"). For the first time, all abstracts had to be submitted in English, a measure which guaranteed an international review process, the languages of presentation, however, were additionally Finnish, Russian, Estonian, Hungarian. The programme had to announce the talk in the language of presentation. This system seems very successful, a coherent collection of English abstracts is created which enables a congress participant to

get acquainted with all topics, and it makes the congress content also transparent for non-Finno-Ugricists. But the speaker is free to choose the language which appeals to her most for her actual talk. This freedom could, in principal, be even more unrestricted, and one may well imagine a future CIFU where a speaker is completely free in presenting in whatever language. At CIFU XII, however, most speakers decided to present in English: according to the Program there were almost 200 talks in English, approximately 50 in Russian, and 40 in Finnish, and less than ten in Hungarian, and less than five in Estonian and German. The majority of sessions was mixed concerning the language of presentation.

CIFU has a high density of plenary talks from different disciplines, all in some way representative and relevant for Finno-Ugric Studies. The seven plenary talks are the only ones published by the Congress. The first talk by Lyle Campbell and Bryn Hauk from the University of Hawaii presented data about Uralic languages from the aspect of endangerment. It was as a clear appeal to engage in documentary linguistics. The German scholar Cornelius Hasselblatt examined patterns of thought and aspects of culture which connect Finno-Ugrians, other than the languages. The only plenary talk in Russian was held by Jevgeni Tsypanov, who presented latest modifications to the theory of ethnic and linguistic genesis of the Permian people. Valter Lang from the University of Tartu gave an archaeologist's perspective to accompany the theory of the formation of the Proto-Finnic later than it was previously believed, in bronze age or even early iron age. Katalin Sipőcz from the University of Szeged analysed ditransitivity in the Ob-Ugric languages from a typological perspective, drawing conclusions about the possible ways such constructions have developed in Mansi and Khanty. Ethnic identity and its socio-historical background of the Vasyugan Khanty was analysed by Zoltán Nagy in his presentation. The themes of Kaisa

Rautio Helander's talk were onomastic landscapes and different language policies concerning the public display of Sámi place names in different Sámi areas. There was no talk on a broader Uralic linguistic problem.

Since CIFU is a big congress, the symposia and the general session cover, of course, an abundant variety of topics. The list of realized symposia contains 19 titles. A maybe surprisingly small amount of symposia was devoted to central linguistic topics: these were two symposia which addressed the often observed lack of syntactic descriptions of minor Uralic languages, "The Syntax of Samoyedic and Ob-Ugric Languages", and "Syntactic Structure of Uralic Languages", as well as the symposium on a contemporary dominant research topic, namely "Expressions of Evidentiality in Uralic languages".

Of course, there were more linguistic symposia, an onomastic one, "Personal Name Systems in Finnic and Beyond", an etymological one, "Linguistic Reconstruction in Uralic: Problems and Prospects", two on computational methods, "Computational Uralistics", and "Language Technology through Citizen Science", one on second language acquisition, "Finno-Ugric Languages as Target Languages", and finally one on "The Development of Volgaic and Permic Literary Languages". Two symposia investigated multilingualism and its effects on FU languages, "Change of Finnic Languages in a Multilingual Environment", and "Multilingual Practices and Code-Switching in Finno-Ugric Communities", and one symposium concentrated on its effect on literature, "Multilingualism and Multiculturalism in Finno-Ugric Literatures". One symposium covered the "Diaspora Mordvins and Their Neighbours".

Symposia devoted to cultural studies were "Ethnofuturism and Contemporary Art of Finno-Ugric Peoples", "Rethinking Family Values. The Conception of Family in the Context of New Rural Everyday Life", "Body — Identity — Society: Concepts of the Socially Accepted Body", "Borderlands in the North-East Europe — Complex Spaces and Cultures of Finno-Ugric Peoples", "Music as Culture

in an Uralic Language Context", and finally "Archives Enriching the Present Cultures of the Northern Peoples".

Despite this wide spectre of topics organized in symposia, quite many papers had to be directed to the General Session, which itself enclosed several sessions of thematic coherence, as e.g. phonetic studies (gemination in Estonian, Võro and Seto laryngeals, tonal and duration variability in Livonian, and others), Udmurtology (Udmurt ethnography, the Udmurt youth, Udmurt stereotypes, Udmurt religion in Bashkortostan, and others), or aspects of Finnish linguistics (non-finite person marking, temporal converbs, the predicative function of the reflexive suffix, sound change in Medieval Finnish, the Finnish grammar by Rasmus Rask, and others). Some of the talks in the General Session, however, seemed to belong to one of the symposia, e.g. paper on "Ob-Ugric Syntax before 1850: the Case of Castrén", or "On Clitics in Nenets" to the symposium "The Syntax of Samoyedic and Ob-Ugric Languages". For a closer look at the two syntactic symposia see the excellent report by Georgieva and Mus (2015). Finally, to complete the picture, two more symposia titles need to be mentioned: "From spoken Baltic-Finnic vernaculars to their national standardizations and new literary languages", and "Functional Verbs in Uralic". These symposia proposals did not receive a sufficient number of abstracts.

A cross-section: e.g. at eleven o'clock on Tuesday a visitor had the chance to choose between eleven different talks, six within thematic symposia, plus additional five in subsections of the general session. Parallel sessions are inevitable, but the abundance of choices creates a somewhat chaotic situation where one must have great planning abilities in order not to miss any presentations interesting and relevant for them. There can be no doubt that Finno-Ugric Studies in the 21st century include a multitude of contemporary research fields and CIFU is a vivid fair, from which everybody benefits who has an agenda in one or several of these research fields. Some clear tendencies can be observed. First, studies on syntax of minor Uralic languages is an

explicit desire, and there will be probably more of it in the upcoming years. Second, the multilingual speaker is in the focus which means that language contact studies are no longer focussed in detecting foreign influence in the context of cultural and political differences, but rather on the individual performing in two or more languages, and the strategies which such an individual chooses. And, of course, Finno-Ugric studies is still concerned with bridging between the Russian and the Western European world and traditions.

The organizers provided a room in which participants could present and sell their publications. This was a welcomed possibility to access some rarer literature which might only be published locally and not easy to come by otherwise, which holds especially for some of the books brought to the location by the participants from the universities of Russia.

Additionally there was a versatile cultural program offered, which included performances by talented young musicians from Sápmi — rapper Ailu Valle, Finland — folk music orchestra "Orivesi All Stars", and Estonia — Mari Kalkun and her band "Runorun". A photo exhibition "Veelinnurahvas. Lennart Meri Soome-ugri filmirännakud 1968–1988" (Waterfowl People. Lennart Meri's Film Travels to the Finno-Ugric People 1969–

1988), was set up in the lobby of the main hall, accompanied by a possibility to watch Lennart Meri's documentary films. Both events were organized by the Estonian Embassy and the Institute of the Estonian Language. Financial support for the Congress was granted by the Federation of Finnish Learned Societies, the Kone Foundation, the Finno-Ugric Cultural Foundation (Suomalais-ugrilaisen kulttuurirahaston säätiö), and the University of Oulu. For the conference dinner, the participants were taken to Ylikiiminki, approximately 40 kilometers east of Oulu, where in a charming location in a bend of the Kiiminki river the participants were served *rössypottu*. It is a traditional dish with blood pudding, and even some non-vegetarians were happy about the vegetarian alternative. The dancing, however, led by congress president Harri Mantila, was unanimously appreciated and great.

The next International Congress of Finno-Ugric Studies, CIFU XIII, will be held in 2020 in Vienna.

#### Addresses

Tiina Klooster  
University of Hamburg  
E-mail: tiina.klooster@uni-hamburg.de

Gerson Klumpp  
University of Tartu  
E-mail: gerson.klumpp@ut.ee

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TIINA KLOOSTER (Hamburg),  
GERSON KLUMPP (Tartu)