

M. A. Castrén, *Syrjaenica*. Edited by Paula Kokkonen & Jack Rueter, Helsinki 2022 (*Manuscripta Castreniana Linguistica IV*). 277 p. <https://www.sgr.fi/manuscripta/items/show/2263>.

M. A. Castrén, *Tscheremissica*. Edited by Sirkka Saarinen, Helsinki 2022 (*Manuscripta Castreniana Linguistica III*). 135 p. <https://www.sgr.fi/manuscripta/items/show/2215>.

The works reviewed here belong to the massive tour de force of Suomalais-Ugrilainen Seura (Société Finno-Ougrienne) that is the *Manuscripta Castreniana* project. The aim of this project is to (re)publish all of M. A. Castrén's manuscript materials as critical editions and in more accessible format than the previous publications. The books under review are the third (*Tscheremissica*) and fourth (*Syrjaenica*) volumes of the series *Manuscripta Castreniana Linguistica*, in which Castrén's linguistic estate is published.

Both of the works have originally been published by Castrén himself as *Elementa grammatices syrjaenae* (Castrén 1844b) and *Elementa grammatices tscheremissiae* (Castrén 1845). The original publications have one downside from the perspective of the modern reader, namely that they are written in Latin, which is nowadays less and less known language even in the academic circles. The books are, however, interesting even for the present Uralist for reasons I discuss below, and therefore it is very welcome that the original works have been translated into English in the critical editions.

First and foremost, the books are interesting because of their research historical value. Castrén 1844b is the third description of Komi<sup>1</sup> in the Western grammatical tradition, and the first one that is both book-length and based on authentic elicited material. The previous Western treatments of Komi were either shorter (Sjögren 1861 [1832] : 233–459), based on literary materials only (von der Gabelentz 1841). Castrén 1845 is the second description of Mari<sup>2</sup> in the Western tradition, and both the first book-

length treatment of the language and the first description to use authentic elicited data. Its only Western predecessor was a short paper based on literary sources (von der Gabelentz 1841–1842).<sup>3</sup> The critical editions, therefore, facilitate the conduction of studies on the development of the description of Komi and Mari, e. g., how the assessment of linguistic categories has changed during the centuries, or what was altogether missing from Castrén compared to present descriptions. As understanding the history and development of one's own field is very important, this is not a marginal merit. Secondly, the critical editions can be of help to the students of the history and dialectology of Komi and Mari. I will return to this point later.

Both volumes include a foreword and the actual critical editions of the respective grammars, that in both cases consists of a grammar part and a vocabulary part. In addition, *Syrjaenica* includes an Ižma Komi translation of a part of the Gospel of Matthew, which was also included in the original publication, as well as a reprint of the same parts of Gospel of Matthew in the Vyčegda Dialect of Komi that Castrén used as a basis for his own translation. Finally, *Syrjaenica* includes eight wedding laments that Castrén collected. What the books are missing, however, is a concise grammar sketch of the languages in question. A previous volume of the series on Castrén's grammar of Khanty (Castrén 2018) has such a sketch (pp. 11–37), and I

<sup>3</sup> There was, of course, also grammars of the languages written in Russia before Castrén, e. g., Флёровъ 1813 of Komi, and Сочиненія принадлежащія къ грамматикъ черемискаго языка, Санктпетербург 1775 of Mari (The First Cheremis Grammar 1956). These were, however, descriptions based on the Russian grammar, and Castrén's works are huge improvements compared to them.

<sup>1</sup> More precisely of the Ižma dialect of Komi (*Syrjaenica*, p. 11).

<sup>2</sup> More precisely Hill Mari (*Tscheremissica*, p. 9–11).

think it would have made the evaluation of Castrén's description of Komi and Mari easier, if there was a short description of the languages from the modern point of view.

Both books have two maps, one on the inside of the front cover, and one inside the back cover. The one inside the back cover is common to all volumes of the Manuscripta Castréniana series, and it depicts the routes of Castrén's all four expeditions. The map gives a nice overview of Castrén's travels. The maps inside front covers are specifically of the route Castrén took among Maris and Komis, respectively, and they are a valuable addition to the resources of the research history of Uralistics, as these parts of Castrén's travels are rarely, if ever, highlighted in such a way. The map in *Tscheremissica* is based on the data published in the Uralic historical atlas (URHIA;<sup>4</sup> cf. Rantanen & Tolvanen & Roose & Ylikoski & Vesakoski 2022), and the map in *Syrjaenica* has been designed specifically for the volume. Both of the maps represent the cutting edge of map representation in Uralistics.

As mentioned above, both volumes begin with a foreword which discusses background of the work as well as the principles used in editing the critical edition. In both volumes a concise description of the background of the study of the language before Castrén as well as Castrén's research of the language is given. *Syrjaenica* has somewhat more comprehensive treatment of Castrén's expeditions and studies on Komi, than what *Tscheremissica* has on his activities with Mari. However, both of the volumes give a more in-depth descriptions of the parts of Castrén's studies and expedition among Komis and Maris than has been typical in previous accounts (e. g., Korhonen 1986 : 54, 56; Stipa 1990 : 307–309). Typically, the focus of description has been the part of Castrén's travels that took place in Siberia, and the results of his Samoyed studies. Therefore, the forewords in *Syrjaenica* and *Tscheremissica* are welcome addition to the research historical literature on Castrén.

The grammars themselves are meticulously commented for a number of things, most notably mistakes that Castrén has made in his analysis, and phenomena that are analyzed differently in modern grammars of

the languages. Castrén has in some places proposed historical developments and etymologies for the linguistic elements that he treats, and in both books the correctness of these is commented by the editors, more systematically in *Tscheremissica*. All these comments are interesting and important for the reader to be able to assess the quality of Castrén's original analysis and development of the description of the languages from Castrén to present. As mentioned above, a grammatical sketch would have made it easier to understand the differences of Castrén's analysis and the modern ones as a whole, but the comments felicitously point out the important differences. In addition, the books, especially *Tscheremissica*, contain comments on differences between the published grammars and older Swedish manuscripts that Castrén had written. These comments shed light on the process of writing a grammar in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Both critical editions use basically the same editorial principles (*Syrjaenica*, p. 18–21; *Tscheremissica*, p. 12–13), and especially the unified way of marking phonological phenomena (e. g., palatalization) makes it easier to compare Castrén's grammars with each other.

There are a couple of minor mistakes in the critical editions of the grammars. First of all, in the comments in *Tscheremissica* the abbreviations EGS and EGT are used, but they are not explained anywhere. In *Syrjaenica* (p. 232) we learn that EGS is *Elementa grammatices syrjäenæ*, and therefore EGT is probably *Elementa grammatices tscheremissæ*. Secondly, in *Syrjaenica* (p. 233), the linguist Gillaume Jacques name is given as Gillaume, Jacques instead of the correct Jacques, Gillaume. Except for a few typing errors, these are the only things that can be considered actual mistakes that I spotted, which should be held as a testament of the high quality and minutely detailed editing of the volumes.

In *Syrjaenica* there are additionally some terminological choices I find less than optimal, namely the use of *gerund* (p. 107, note 235) to refer to converbs, and the reference *Finno-Permic* (and *Finno-Ugric*) *protolanguage* (p. 79, note 174). As mentioned by, e. g., Ylikoski (2003 : 188–189), *gerund* is not an optimal term for the kind of non-finites

<sup>4</sup> <https://sites.utu.fi/urhia/>.

it traditionally refers to. *Converb* is widely used in typological literature, but one could also use the term *verbal adverbial*. The authors do comment the terminological choice later (*Syrjaenica*, p. 120, note 272), but the comment should have at least been with the first mention of the term, and even then, I find the use of obsolete terminology less optimal. In the same vein, the use of *Finno-Permic* (and *Finno-Ugric*) *proto-language* as a term of a stage of the evolution of Uralic languages should be, in my opinion avoided, as the status of intermediate protolanguages in the Uralic languages is presently unclear (cf. e. g., Luobbal Sámmol Sámmol Ánte 2022 : 3–4). Similarly, in *Tscheremissica* there are some terminologically less optimal choices, which pertain to the nomenclature used of cases. First of all, the author uses the term *separative* as a term for the source case of Proto-Uralic (p. 33, note 69), but later refers to the same case as *ablative* (p. 37, note 81). The problem here is not that one of the terms is less suitable for the case, but rather the lack of systematicity. Another somewhat problematic choice of terminology is the use of *unproductive inessive* (e. g., p. 38, note 87), *elative* (e. g., p. 37, note 81), and *illative* (e. g., p. 36, note 77). These cases do not have anything to do with cases typically labeled *inessive*, *elative*, and *illative* (cf. e. g., Haspelmath 2011: 515–517), and therefore some other labels would be more suitable.

Moreover, there are some omissions in the books that, in my opinion, if included to the critical editions, would have made them even better. The part of *Elementa grammatices syrjaenae* which appeared as the doctoral dissertation of Castrén, i. e., the section of noun inflection of the grammar (1844a), could have been also published as a part of *Syrjaenica*, or if that seems like too much repetition, at least the differences between the two versions should have been indicated in the critical edition. There are at least two terminological changes between Castrén 1844a and Castrén 1844b that I am aware of, namely the change of case terms *secutivus* to *consecutivus* and *transitivus* to *prosecutivus* (Erkkilä 2023 : 577), which are not mentioned in the notes in the appropriate section of the critical edition. The change of *secutivus* to *consecutivus* is, however, mentioned elsewhere as a correction to a mistake made by Castrén (*Syrjaenica*,

p. 84, note 190). In *Tscheremissica* it should be mentioned that in modern grammars possessive suffixes are discussed with nouns, but Castrén includes the discussion in the sections on pronouns (*Tscheremissica*, p. 50–58). This is mentioned in *Syrjaenica* (p. 87, note 205). However, both books could have mentioned that the analysis of possessive suffixes as pronouns was rather typical in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Such details would still increase the usefulness of the volumes as sources for research historical studies.

The references in the volumes are also partly outdated, or at least the most recent research is not cited. The book *Permiläisten kielten rakenne ja kehitys* (Bartens 2000) is used as a reference for the history of Permic languages in *Syrjaenica*, even though *Die Rekonstruktion der permischen Grundsprache* (Csúcs 2005) is both more recent and more comprehensive reconstruction (cf. Holopainen 2019 : 377).<sup>5</sup> The best solution would have been to refer both to Bartens 2000 and to Csúcs 2005 when applicable. Both volumes also use UEW as the main source of etymologies in their notes, even though recently there has been published at least two books discussing (among other things) etymologies of Permic and Mari languages, namely Holopainen (2019) and Metsäranta (2020). The results of these studies could have been integrated into the etymological considerations of the critical editions.

The word lists included in the original grammars are also thoroughly commented in the critical editions. *Tscheremissica* uses an extremely precise annotation scheme, the same that is used in the previously published *Ostiacica* (Castrén 2018; cf. *Tschreremissica*, p. 12). In this scheme, every translation that Castrén gives in the original work, is considered an etymology, and treated accordingly, i. e., even in cases where Castrén did not intend his translation to be understood as an etymology, the translation is marked as a false etymology in *Tscheremissica* (cf. p. 87–89). This is a good practice, as it leaves no question about the correctness of Castrén's assumptions. In *Syrjaenica* the system is somewhat more relaxed (cf. p. 169), but the work is still done well. The vocabularies themselves are probably not the most useful

<sup>5</sup> In synchronic considerations Bartens 2000 is still mostly valid.

part of the books, but it might be possible to find some new etymological material in them. There are some words that, according to the editors, are not to be found in modern sources (e. g., *juolj* 'autumn salmon without fat' (*Syrjaenica*, p. 181), *käškä* 'gall' (*Tscheremissica*, p. 98)). Mostly the value of the vocabulary is as a document of lexical research of Komi and Mari in the 19<sup>th</sup> century though.

The part of the Gospel of Matthew (*Syrjaenica*, p. 150–167) is interesting from the point of view of linguistic choices Castrén has made in it. For example, one can notice that even though Castrén does not mention compound past tenses in his grammar, he uses the pluperfect rather often in the translation (e. g., *Syrjaenica*, p. 152, note 370). The situation is similar with the comitative case, which Castrén regards as a postposition (*Syrjaenica* p. 140) but writes it like a bounded morpheme in the translation (e. g., *Syrjaenica*, p. 153, note 372). These and other similar cases reflect on the problems of linguistic analysis and are interesting from the point of view of the research history of Uralistics. The editors have fortunately been very precise in commenting all such discrepancies between Castrén's analysis and use in the translation. The part of Gospel of Matthew Castrén used as a basis for his own translation is rather a curiosity than a necessary part of the critical edition, but maybe a student of Komi dialects can compare the two translations for some interesting results, e. g., in the development of Komi dialects from the 19<sup>th</sup> century to this day. Same goes for the wedding laments. As they are collected by Castrén, and the Manuscripta Castreniana project intends to publish everything in Castrén's archives, it is of course good that they have been published, but their usefulness for the linguistic audience is, in my opinion, limited. It is possible, however, that folklorists or other researchers studying culture find the texts interesting.

The volumes might benefit from some terminological changes and additional references, but as wholes they are excellent works that will no doubt aid scholars of research history, grammaticography, and even etymology in their studies, not to mention the benefits for general audience and students of Uralic languages, for whom

the translated and commented editions with all their additional material will give a unique look at the very beginnings of the discipline that we nowadays call Uralistics.

## References

- Bartens, Raija 2000, Permiläisten kielten rakenne ja kehitys, Helsinki (MSFOu 238).
- Castrén, Matthias Alexander 1844a, De nominum declinatione in lingua syrjaena, Helsingfors.
- 1844b, Elementa grammatices syrjäenæ, Helsingfors.
- 1845, Elementa grammatices tscheremissiæ, Kuopio.
- 2018, Ostiacica. Edited by Ulla-Maija Forsberg, Helsinki (Manuscripta Castreniana Linguistica V).
- Csúcs, Sándor 2005, Die Rekonstruktion der permischen Grundsprache, Budapest.
- Erkkilä, Riku 2023, Mistä uralistiikan sijatermit tulevat? Suomen ja muiden uralilaisten kielten sijatermistön kehityksestä. — *Vir.*, 560–590. <https://doi.org/10.23982/vir.126048>.
- Haspelmath, Martin 2011, Terminology of Case. — *The Oxford Handbook of Case*, Oxford, 505–517.
- Holopainen, Sampsa 2019, Indo-Iranian Borrowings in Uralic. Critical Overview of the Sound Substitutions and Distribution Criterion, Helsinki.
- Korhonen, Mikko 1986, Finno-Ugrian Language Studies in Finland 1828–1918 (The History of Learning and Science in Finland 1828–1918 11), Helsinki.
- Luobbal Sámmol Sámmol Ante (Ante Aikio) 2022, Proto-Uralic. — *The Oxford Guide to the Uralic languages*, Oxford, 3–27. <http://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780198767664.003.0001>.
- Metsärinta, Niklas 2020, Periytyminen ja lainautuminen. Marin ja permiläisten kielten sanastontutkimusta, Helsinki.
- Rantanen, Timo & Tolvanen, Harri, & Roose, Meeli, & Ylikoski, Jussi & Vesakoski, Outi 2022, Best Practices for Spatial Language Data Harmonization, Sharing and Map Creation. A Case Study of the Uralic Languages. —

- PlosOne 17 (6), 1–19. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0269648>.
- S j ö g r e n, Joh. Andreas 1861, Gesamtelte Schriften. Band I. Historisch-ethnographische Abhandlungen über den finnisch-russischen Norden, St. Petersburg.
- S t i p a, Günter Johannes 1990, Finnisch-ugrische Sprachforschung von der Renaissance bis zum Neupositivismus, Helsinki (MSFOu 206).
- The First Cheremis Grammar (1775). A Facsimile Edition with Introduction and Analysis by Thomas A. Sebeok and Alo Raun, Chicago 1956 (Studies in Cheremis 3).
- v o n d e r G a b e l e n t z, Hans Conon 1841, Grundzüge der syrjänischen Grammatik, Altenburg.
- — 1841–1842, Vergleichung der beiden Tscheremissischen Dialekte. — Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes 4 (1), 122–139.
- Y l i k o s k i, Jussi 2003, Defining Non-Finites. Action Nominals, Converbs and Infinitives. — SKY Journal of Linguistics 16, 185–237.
- Ф л ё р о в ъ А. 1813, Зырянская грамматика. Изданная отъ главнаго правленія училищъ, Санктпетербург.

**Acknowledgements.** The publication costs of this article were covered by the Estonian Academy of Sciences.

*RIKU ERKKILÄ* (München—Helsinki)

**Address**

Riku Erkkilä  
Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München  
University of Helsinki  
E-mail: riku.erkkila@helsinki.fi