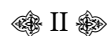




Preface

During our travels in the land of the Samoyed, Arxangel'sk, for the purpose of clarifying how close the connections were between the Finnic and Samoyedic peoples, we quickly observed that those connections were, indeed, quite distant, and that only by researching the different branches of Finnish-related languages could one distinguish and verify them. For many reasons we had considered that [knowledge of] the Zyrian and Ostyak languages would advance our studies markedly, and therefore we set as our goal the acquisition of a familiarity with these languages. We were afforded an optimal opportunity for learning Zyrian as we found bountiful settlements of Zyrians on the border of the Samoyedic areas. Everyone living on the upper Petschora [Pečora] speaks Zyrian. The most well-to-do settlement has been erected on the banks of the River Ishma or Ishva [Ižma or Ižva], which is a tributary of the Petschora [Pečora]. Here we were allowed to rest during the spring of last year [1843], as the melting of the snow and the flooding rivers in the land of the Samoyed hinder all possibilities of departure. Otherwise the country is virtually uninhabited, since the inhabitants leave for the distant sea shore at the earliest point in the year as is possible. With the arrival of summer, we were



forced to leave the Zyrian people, as we were compelled to hasten onward to contend with other pressing responsibilities. What we had been able to learn of the Zyrian language during our two-month stay, we wrote in notes on our journey – during boat rides, in cabins and in *chum* [cone-shaped] tents. In light of these facts, our booklet, which was born in haste and under difficult conditions, will not provide anything complete or final. But we are satisfied that we have at least been able to provide some kind of additional aids for Zyrian literature and that we have smoothed the path for those who will later be able to make even further reaching studies. This could be achieved with as little work as can be seen here, due to the regrettably poor state of Zyrian literature today. The following books contain all texts in the Zyrian language:

1. Зырянская Грамматика. Сочинилъ А. Флѣровъ. Въ Санктпетербургѣ 1813. 44 pp. (in 8:0).
2. Translation of the Gospel of St. Matthew, titled: Мѣанъ Господьлѣнъ Исусъ Христосъ-лѣнъ свѣтѣй Евангеліе Матѣйсѣанъ. Санктпетербургъ 1823. 92 pp. (in 8:0).
3. Translation of the booklet: Наставленіе о прививаніи предохранительной оспы. Petrop. 1815. 16 pp. (in 8:0).
4. Ueber den Grammatischen Bau der Sürjänschen Sprache mit Rücksicht auf die Finnische, von A. J. Sjögrén. 21 pp. (in 4:0). This study was published in Mémoires de l'Académie [Impériale des Sciences] de St.-Pétersbourg in 1830.

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5. Gründzüge der Sürjänischen Grammatik von H.C. v. d. Gabelentz. Altenburg 1841. 78 pp. (in 8:o).

Of the books mentioned, the grammar published in Flërov's¹ name is incomplete, riddled with mistakes and so contrary to the character of the language that it might be regarded as more confusing than enlightening. Sjögrén² was the first to demonstrate the real nature of the language and it was he who indicated what direction would be taken when dealing with Zyrian grammar. Following this lead, Gabelentz³ too writes his "elementaries of the Zyrian language", where he has compiled all of what was good in previous works, especially the translation of the Gospel of St. Matthew. This translation has been duly extolled for its excellence in form, but it is, in fact, a product of haste. The spirit characteristic of the language has often suffered because the translator has striven to adhere to the formulations of the original Slavic text to the letter. In turn these mistakes have inevitably been transferred to the book by Gabelentz. Gabelentz's grammar, however, is more lacking than erroneous, unless of course dearth of information is considered a comparable flaw. This, naturally, is not a flaw we should criticize, as our booklet as well would be subject to the very same criticism. Where possible, we have treated matters with greater perspective, and we have striven to formulate our rules such that they are characteristic of the language and we have attempted to retain everything in its original form. As to how much we developed this field, this is left for others to decide.

- 1 Aleksey Fëdorovich Flërov (his lifetime not known) was a Komi physician and teacher who published the first grammar of the Komi language (Udora dialect) in 1813. Actually, the grammar was written by his student, Filipp Kozlov, in 1808.
- 2 Anders Johan Sjögren (1794–1855) was a Finnish linguist and ethnologist, an Academician of the Russian Imperial Academy of Sciences in St Petersburg and Collegiate Councillor; he published a grammar of the Komi language (Ust'-Sysola dialect) in 1830 (newer versions: 1832 and 1834). (His name should be written: Sjögren, not Sjögrén as Castrén did.)
- 3 Hans Conon von der Gabelentz (1807–1874) was a German linguist and politician, who published a grammar of the Komi language (comparing some dialects) in 1841.

- 4 There are ten dialects in the Komi language. They are territorially divided into two groups: the north-western group: Ižma, Vym', Udora and Lower Vyčegda dialects, and the southern group: Luza-Letka, Upper Sysola and Middle Sysola dialects. Dialects that have emerged later include the Pečora, Upper Vyčegda and the mixed Syktyvkar dialect, which is the foundation of the literary language. Phonetically, according to variation in the *l*-phoneme, these ten dialects form their own groups (see § 31). Cf. KJa: 36, 70, 98–99, 292, 578; Bartens 2000: 48–49; Popova – Sažina 2014: 61–67.
- 5 There is no Jarensk dialect in the Komi language.

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We also hope that the new Ižma dialect we are treating will advance the knowledge of the Zyrian language. Sjögrén divides the Zyrian language into four dialects: Udora, Ust'-Sysola, Upper Vyčegda and Jarensk⁴, of which the last three belong to the same category. According to Sjögrén, the Ižma dialect is reminiscent of the Udora dialect. Evidence provided by the Zyrians themselves, however, proves Ižma to have a character of its own, and that it resembles the Jarensk dialect⁵, especially the variety spoken along the River Glotovo, the place where the first settlers of the River Ishma [Ižma] come from. All of these dialects differ more on the basis of usage (vocabulary) than in structure (grammar), which, on the basis of previous literature, one can conclude are based on suffixation. At first, inflectional endings in all Finnic languages provided a possibility for a duality in their realisation dependent upon the quality of the vowels in the word stem. In Zyrian, however, the endings have stabilized throughout with either the vowel *ö* (*ä*) or *y* (*i*). The Udora dialect has a preference for *ö*, whereas the Ust'-Sysola dialect and undoubtedly its adjacent dialects has *ö* in some places and *ä* in others. The Ižma dialect, it will be observed, advocates an *ä* word finally and in the inflections. In the indicative preterite the Udora and Ižma dialects both use *i* instead of *y*. Setting aside dialect differences, which are of little moment in an abstract of the grammar, the Ižma dialect presents itself as a very interesting point of study; it has retained much which has disappeared in the other dialects. The Ižma dialect retains an entire system of personal suffixes,



various forms of verbs and nominals that are not attested in other languages or that grammarians have not as yet made note of. Additionally, many elements which are uncertain in other dialects can be clarified on the basis of the Ižma dialect and established as universals. In fact, it was this quality of the Ižma dialect which compelled us to write this book.

In the preceding we have inspected the relationship of Zyrian to Finnish and Lappish, which had previously been refuted but which since has been established by the honourworthy Sjögrén on the basis of structure, general formation and principles of the languages. This relationship, however, is not limited to the mere general form or principles of the languages: it can be observed in practice as well; in words resembling each other, in similar nominal and verbal endings as well as derived forms and elsewhere. We have also attempted to make reference to this actual kinship between the languages and for this special reason a minute word list has been provided in the appendix. We have adapted four chapters of the Gospel of St. Matthew⁶ mentioned above to the Ižma dialect so as to provide a clearer representation of special characteristics of the dialect. From these we can observe the modern state of the language, the terrible degradation of its syntactic structure, for it was this portion of the grammar we were obliged to leave unaddressed.

Upon completion of our little book, we are still inclined to make a number of comments on the Zyrian language and its relationship to Finnish, the most noteworthy of which are⁷:

- 6 Castrén's translation of the Gospel of St. Matthew into the Ižma dialect was based on the translation of the Gospel (1823) in the Vyčegda dialect made by Aleksandr Šergin (1789–1837), who was a Komi teacher and translator (see Ploskov – Cypanov 2002: 32–36). According to Gabelentz (1841: 1), the translation was in the Ust'-Sysola dialect, but according to G. Lytkin (1889: 230–232), it was in the Vyčegda dialect. (According to G. Pune-gova (p.c.), the dialect seems to be the Upper Vyčegda dialect.)
- 7 The major part of these comments is found in Bihang till företalet ('appendix to the preface') in a letter to Sjögren, cf. *Epistulae* 1, pp. 323–324.

- 8 The meaning of the question mark here is not known. Perhaps, Castrén himself was not quite certain. Cf. KSK 2, 849: эты, KSK 2, 856: эны. The plural form is correct.
- 9 The terminative ending in *-öd'ž* [-ödž] is assumed to be a reflex of *ć, from which the Finnish prolativ ending *-itse* appears to have been derived (Bartens 2000: 87).

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1. The Zyrian language has a dental sound that is realised phonetically between the Russian sibilants *c* [s] and *з* [z], and it is quite similar to the soft *s* found in the Uusimaa dialect of Finnish, e.g. *messä* 'forest', gen. *mesän*; *vissa* 'switch', gen. *visan*. Examples from the Zyrian language can be found in: *doos* 'basket' and *kosa* 'I return'. This sound has nearly been lost, however, in the Zyrian language, in favor of *z* and *s*.
2. Demonstrative pronoun relations are represented by *sya* 'it/that' and *etaja* or *taja* 'this' as shown in § 62. In addition, there is also the demonstrative pronoun *etya* 'that', pl. *enya* (?)⁸, which is used to indicate a very distant object and which declines similarly to *etaja*, e.g. dat. *etyly*, illat. *etyä*, abl. 1 *etylys[j]* etc.
3. The following additions should be made to matters of case formation and the relation of these cases to their Finnish counterparts should be:
 - a. The terminative suffix *edzj* has a cognate in the Finnish particle *asti*.⁹
 - b. The Finnish allative also bears the function of the consecutive, e.g. *meni velle* '(he/she/it) went to (the) water' in other words '(he/she/it) went to get water'. From this we can conclude that either the allative and consecutive cases in Finnish have assimilated to one form due to their close similarity, or a new consecutive case has been formed from the dative case in Zyrian.

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- c. The *lanj* allative and *sänj* second ablative can best be derived from the consecutive and relative cases. These cases have been derived with the suffix *ni*, which undoubtedly is of the same origin as the *ni* particle in the Estonian language and the *ne* ending in the Finnish, e.g. *kunne* ‘whither’, *tänne* ‘thither’ etc.
4. The transition of the letter *l* to *u* in the Finnish language (cf. § 12) can be attested in the Savo dialect, e.g. *ei ouk* instead of *ei ole* ‘is not’. The letters *u* and *v* are pronounced in both languages in approximately the same manner, whereas the *k* of thick Savo speech represents aspiration alone.
5. Although syllable length is generally distinguished clearly in the Zyrian language, we have noted that, at times, the letter *z* requires a preceding vowel be pronounced long regardless of whether that vowel is short or not.
6. The plural originally ended in *äs*, which is demonstrated by the ending *äs¹⁰*, where the letter *j* is in contradiction to the actual nature of the language, the nominative noun *purtäs¹¹* ‘scissors’, which is the plural form of the word *purt* ‘knife’, is formed in the same way as the Russian ножницы ‘scissors’ and ножъ ‘knife’.
7. The *ä* vowel in the *tägja* ending of the caritive does not change to *e*, this exception to the rule happens in many other places as well, where the vowel is followed by two consonants that can be split into two separate syllables.

- 10 See plural suffixes: § 26 and § 44.
- 11 *purtäs* (in the literary language *purtös* [пуртöc]) has no plural suffix but a nominal suffix *-ös* [-öc], cf. § 37; Rédei 1978: 88.

- 12 Cf. § 6 (and notes).
- 13 Some *w*-initial words were erroneously left in some paragraphs. The editors of this book have changed them to *v*-initial words.
- 14 As seen, Castrén was not satisfied with an apostrophe indicating the hushing of sibilants including affricates, so the editors have changed every instance of apostrophe (') to caron (ˇ) when dealing with these phonemes: *s' > š | c' > č | z' > ž | dz' > dž*.
- 15 In standard Komi-Zyrian, there are 7 vowel phonemes: /a/, /e/, /i/, /o/, /u/, /j/, /e/. These are also found in the Ižma dialect, though Castrén added one more vowel /ä/ when describing an open /e/ vowel in the Ižma dialect. When using the Cyrillic alphabet, this ä is marked with ə.
- In the Cyrillic alphabet, two additional vowels are used: *i* and *ö*.
- 16 There are 26 consonant phonemes in the Komi alphabet: /p/, /b/, /v/, /m/, /t/, /d/, /s/, /z/, /ž/, /š/, /l/, /r/, /n/, /dž (ž)/, /č/, /tʃ/, /dʃ/, /š/, /ž/, /č/, /dž (ž)/, /lʃ/, /rʃ/, /g/, /k/, in addition, there are 4 consonants borrowed from Russian for Russian loanwords /f/, /x/, /c/, /šč/ (in Cyrillic ф, х, ц and ш). Cf. Punegovna 2016: 25; Rédei 1978: 58.

❖ VIII ❖

When this grammar was in press, we were frequently absent or taken ill and therefore unable even to see to the outward appearance of the publication, an obligation to our readers, ourselves and especially the Imperial Academy of Sciences in St Petersburg, who honoured this booklet with half of the Demidov Prize and financed its publication. There are scores of misprints in the book, which the reader should be made aware of, so as to avoid misconstructions of the state of matters. Hence, sometimes vowels are followed by the letter *i* when there should be a *j*, e.g. *pojka, zej, myj*¹²; *w* is also used where there should be a *v*, e.g. *wyy, wöölä, wöly* etc.¹³ Even more disconcerting is the fact that the sound *cj* is alternately indicated by the letters *c*, *c'* and *cj*, e.g. *sec'äm, secedzj, secje'* (see § 98), which for matters of consistency should be written in the same way despite the fact that the sound is produced with great variation from one speaker to the next. It is also regrettable that the mark ' has, for lack of anything better, been used to represent the dentals (*s', z', c'*)¹⁴, which has, as a matter of fact, been done in our absence and in contradiction to our wishes. This does not confuse matters, as we have never used the apostrophe immediately following a consonant to indicate elision, use of the apostrophe does, however, make for confusion in context. The lack of letters has partially had the effect that the Russian letters *x* and *u* have been indicated with the letter combinations *ch* and *sc'* in words of foreign origin. Other short-comings that we have noted will be brought to the reader's attention at a later point in time.

Released in Helsingfors, 2 September 1844

M.A. Castrén