

## Preface

The Finno-Ugrian Society (*Suomalais-Ugrilainen Seura*), founded in 1883 and thus one of the oldest and largest learned societies in Finland, celebrated its 125th anniversary or quasiquicentennial in 2008. Ever since its establishment, the Society has striven to advance research into the Uralic and so-called Altaic languages, the ethnography of their speakers, and the historical and pre-historical past of speakers of these languages. The main events of the jubilee year took place on November 15th, the day of the founding of the Society, and on December 2nd, the traditional day of the Annual General Meeting of the Society.

This volume contains ten papers, eight of which were presented at the quasiquicentennial symposium “Suomalais-ugrilaisen kieliyhteisön verkosto” (‘The network of the Finno-Ugric language community’) held in the Small Hall of the University of Helsinki on December 2nd, 2008. In accordance with the title of the symposium, many of the papers present various aspects on the multifaceted networks observable in Uralic research. This is made most explicit by Johanna Laakso in her observations on the sociology and history of networking within Uralistics in general, by Márta Csepregi in her review of the history and the sociolinguistic subject matter of Ob-Ugric studies, as well as by Anneli Sarhima in her paper on the prospects for Finnic, especially Karelian, sociolinguistics.

Other branches of the Uralic language family and their study are represented by Karl Pajusalu’s and Yölgün’ (Yevgeniy) Tsypanov’s up-to-date overviews of the contemporary situation and the recent history of the Southern Finnic and Permic languages. More detailed perspectives on the ever-growing number of sub-disciplines in Uralic studies are provided by M.M. Jocelyne Fernandez-Vest’s paper on the change of information structuring in North Saami, one of the many Uralic languages that are gradually replacing their primarily oral features with those more typical of languages with established literary traditions. On the other hand, some of the more traditional issues in historical linguistics are considered by Juha Janhunen in his endeavour to determine the date and location of the Uralic proto-language on the Eurasian linguistic map, as well as by Janne Saarikivi in his etymology-centred survey of contacts between Finnic and Slavic.

The eight symposium papers—mainly representing the contemporary activities of present-day Finno-Ugrian Society—are complemented by two surveys of the history of the Society. Timo Salminen’s article on the history and role of the Finno-Ugrian Society in relation to Russia is based on a paper presented at the Finno-Ugrian Society on November 21st, 2008, as well as his recent history of the Society. Finally, the volume ends with the speech delivered by

Seppo Suhonen at the quasiquicentennial banquet of the Finno-Ugrian Society on December 2nd, 2008, which depicts the 113 founders of the Society with an emphasis on their diverse roles in the academic, administrative and commercial life of Finnish society at that time.

It is also worthy of note that, in common with the long tradition of publishing translated samples of all languages that are within the sphere of interest of the Finno-Ugrian Society, the present volume also offers students and researchers of Komi and Finnish the possibility of thus utilising the parallel texts of Yölgin' Tsypanov's paper published both in the original Komi and as a Finnish translation.

The editor hopes that this book will provide representative glimpses of the vast and variegated field of Uralistics as practiced on the verge of the sixth quarter-century of the Finno-Ugrian Society.

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At the quasiquicentennial banquet on December 2nd, 2008. From left to right: Professor Seppo Suhonen (President of the Finno-Ugrian Society 1991–2000), Professor Riho Grünthal (Second Vice President 2006–), Professor Ulla-Maija Kulonen (President 2001–), Professor Alho Alho-niemi (First Vice President 1981–1999) and Professor Sirkka Saarinen (First Vice President 2001–).