

REFORMATION, MIKAEL AGRICOLA, AND THE BIRTH OF THE FINNISH LITERARY LANGUAGE

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Abstract

This article revisits the traditional history of the birth of the Finnish literary language in the aftermath of the Lutheran Reformation in the first half of the 16th century. Contrary to what earlier scholars have assumed, the article argues that the creation of the Finnish literary language cannot be attributed exclusively to the Bishop of Turku, Mikael Agricola, who is known as “the father of the Finnish literary language” because he published the first printed books in Finnish. The article will show that although the first Finnish publications were printed in the name of the Bishop of Turku, they were based on the translations of more authors. The article will also propose answers to the question, who these until now unknown authors could have been. The article is based on the study of relevant contemporary historical source material and close linguistic analysis of the early translations of ecclesiastical texts into Finnish.

Keywords

Finnish, Mikael Agricola, Paulus Juusten, Reformation, Translation

The Traditional History of the Birth of the Finnish Literary Language

In Finland, the Reformation and the birth of the Finnish literary language are tightly bound to each other. This connection is very well-known to all Finns, since we have learned already in primary school how Bishop Mikael Agricola created the Finnish literary language in the 16th century. In this, Agricola followed the principle of Martin Luther, according to whom the holy texts should be translated to vernacular so that everyone would have the possibility to read and understand God’s word in their own language.

And the school books tell for the most part a correct story. The Finnish literary language was indeed created as a consequence of the Reformation. Until then, Finnish had been used in a spoken form. The reason for this lies in the history of Finland: The territory of the present-day Finland was conquered, Christianized, and united with western Christianity in the course of the 12th century by Swedes, after which the territory adapted the written culture of the new rulers and the Catholic Church. In the Middle Ages, three written languages were in use in Finland: Latin in ecclesiastical matters, Swedish for legal and administrative purposes, and the lingua franca of the Hanseatic League, Middle-Low German, in commercial correspondence. Finnish language, instead, was not used in written form – or at least there is very little survived evidence about it (Häkkinen 2015, 13–18, 20). According to the decision of the Swedish provincial synod held in Söderköping in 1441, all priests in the Swedish realm should read the Lord’s Prayer, Hail Mary, and Creed in vernacular every day so that their parishioners would learn them by

heart.¹ In accordance with this decision, these texts should have existed in a written form, but no copies of them have survived. Instead, there are medieval documents written in other languages in which can be found single Finnish words, such as place or person names. The first whole Finnish phrase that has been written down is a citation in a travelogue of a German clergyman, who had learned some Finnish while travelling in the Nordic countries in the middle of the 15th century.²

According to the school-book explanation, the above presented linguistic situation changed radically with the Reformation, because a number of central ecclesiastical texts were translated into Finnish and published within a relatively short time period in the 1540s.³ The task of translating and publishing these texts was carried out by the later Bishop of Turku, Mikael Agricola, to whom the nationalistic Finnish history-writing at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries has applied the epithets of “the reformer of Finland” and “the father of the Finnish literary language”. The second epithet is central for this article.

Mikael Agricola (c. 1510–1557)

Mikael Agricola was born around 1510 in the parish of Pernaja (Sw. Pernå), which is located c. 85 kilometres east of Helsinki. His parents were wealthy farmers, which gives him his Latin surname, Agricola (‘farmer’). Despite his common background, the young Mikael had the chance to study, first under the guidance of the local priest and later in the school of Vyborg close to the Russian border. From there the intelligent young man was transferred to Turku and the Cathedral School in 1528, just one year after the Reformation was introduced to the Swedish Realm as the consequence of the Diet of Västerås in summer 1527. At first, Agricola worked as a scribe and helped his former schoolmaster Johannes Erasmi, who was called to be Bishop Martinus Skytte’s secretary in Turku. However, Johannes died already in 1529, after which his talented assistant got promoted to the Bishop’s secretary.⁴

In 1536, Agricola was sent together with another prominent young man, Martinus Teit, to the University of Wittenberg to study under the guidance of Martin Luther and other well-known reformers such as Philipp Melanchthon and Johannes Bugenhagen. In Wittenberg, Agricola began to translate the New Testament into Finnish. Agricola received his degree of Master of Arts in a few years, and in 1539 he was ready to return to Turku. After his homecoming, Agricola served as school master at the Cathedral School of Turku and, taking example from Luther, continued translating liturgical works

¹ REA 495 (4.6.1441): “... *Item quod transfer[n]tur Pater noster, Ave Maria [et] Credo in lingwam maternam, que translacio per curatos singulis diebus dominicis et festiuis coram populo recitetur. ...*”

² Wulf 1982. The sentences are as follows: “*Mynna thachtton gernast spuho somen gelen Emynä dayda*” [Std. *Minä tahdon kernaasti puhua suomen kielen. En minä taida. – ‘I would like to speak the Finnish language. I do not know how.’*]

³ As will be explained later on in this article, some texts have been translated into Finnish already earlier, but there are no traces of written Finnish texts from the Middle Ages. From the early modern period have survived a few manuscripts, such as the Codex Westh manuscript or the manuscript fragment of Uppsala, in which written Finnish has been used (Häkkinen 2015, 53–75).

⁴ About Agricola’s early life, see for example Heininen 2007, 23–61; Häkkinen 2015, 31–36.

and biblical texts into Finnish at the same time as he functioned as the assistant of the old Bishop of Turku, Martinus Skytte.⁵

Agricola's hard work for the Finnish church was rewarded in 1554, when the Swedish King Gustav Vasa appointed him as the successor of Martinus Skytte (d. 1550). Agricola's career as bishop lasted, however, only for a few years. Thanks to his prominent status and his extensive knowledge on different languages, the Swedish King used Agricola in diplomatic missions, and sent him among *c.* 100 other prestigious participants to a peace negotiation journey to Russia in 1557. This journey was fatal for Agricola, since he fell ill in the cold winter weather on the way back and died before arriving home.⁶

Agricola carries the epithet of "the father of the Finnish literary language" due to his extensive translation and publication activities. In 1543 he published his first book, ABC-book. It was the first publication ever printed in the Finnish language and it was later re-published twice. In 1544 Agricola published the Prayer-Book, in 1548 the New Testament, in 1549 a liturgical handbook, a mass-book, and a book about the passion of Christ. After that, in 1551 and 1552, he published the Psalter (= the Book of Psalms) and a selection of other texts from the Old Testament. Altogether, Agricola managed to publish as much text as *c.* 2 400 printed pages in the Finnish language.⁷ Predominantly, these texts were direct translations from German, Latin, Swedish, and to a lesser extent Greek sources but they also included some introductory poems composed by Agricola himself. In addition to his translation achievements, Agricola was actually the first Finnish poet known by name.⁸ After Agricola's publication activity, it took some 25 years before the next books in the Finnish language appeared in print.

Since Finnish had until the 16th century been almost exclusively a spoken language, Agricola not only created the basis for the grammar of written Finnish, but the translating of biblical texts also meant that Agricola had to borrow or invent many words that did not exist in Finnish earlier. Many of the words invented by Agricola are taken from or based on models in the languages he was using in his translation work: German, Swedish, and Latin. Examples of such words are *apostoli* ('apostle') or *filosofi* ('philosopher'). A closer study of Agricola's texts has shown that he was very creative while choosing words in his translations. Agricola has, for example, used words – we cannot be sure whether he has created them himself or borrowed from earlier translations – such as *hiippakunta* ('diocese'), which is a combination of the word *hiippa* ('a bishop's mitre') and *kunta* ('a municipality'). Another example of his clever invention is *opetuslapsi* ('disciple'), which is a combination of words *opetus* ('teaching') and *lapsi* ('child'). For female disciples, Agricola even created a more accurate expression *opetuspiika* (*piika* means 'girl'), but this word was never taken in active use in the Finnish vocabulary.

Paulus Juusten's Accusations against Agricola's Legacy

Due to his extensive and important work, Agricola has reached a unique position in Finland and in the Finnish history-writing, which until now has never really been challenged. The episcopal chronicle, written by Agricola's successor at the episcopal see

⁵ About Agricola's study times and his period as the assistant of the bishop of Turku, see for example Heininen 2007, 62–112; Häkkinen 2015, 37–48.

⁶ About Agricola's time as bishop, see for example Heininen 2007, 113–152; Häkkinen 2015, 48–52.

⁷ About Agricola's publishing activity, see Heininen 2007, 156–335; Häkkinen 2015, 53–75.

⁸ The poems have been collected, commented, and published by Kaisa Häkkinen in Häkkinen 2012b.

of Turku, Paulus Juusten, contains, however, a very strange comment regarding Agricola's literary activities. Juusten first writes praising words about Agricola's literary activities in his chronicle, stating that while he was the headmaster of the Cathedral school of Turku, Agricola published the Prayer-Book in Finnish, which "the Finns consumed in their hands every day".⁹ Juusten also mentions that Agricola translated the New Testament into Finnish, which "was used very much in the Finnish church".¹⁰

These nice words are, however, followed by a statement, which has troubled Finnish historians and historical linguists, since Juusten practically accuses Agricola of publishing translations made by others under his own name. He writes that Agricola published the Psalter in Finnish but that the texts were entirely translated in the cathedral school of Turku, under the guidance of Juusten himself, who had sometimes ordered the students to translate Psalms so that they could exercise their style, according to the example of Luther. Juusten also points out that he had himself used his working hours listening and correcting the translations made by students, sometimes also in his lodgings in the evening. This statement in the chronicle makes it evident that Juusten must have been annoyed by the fact that Agricola had published these texts without giving credit to those who had done the work. Despite his irritation, the chronicler generously – and certainly also ironically – finishes the passage by stating that: "But it does not matter, in whose name the texts are published, as long as they are translated, so that they can be useful for the Finnish people".¹¹

This statement has been interpreted in the way that Juusten – although in a relatively friendly way because he was, after all, writing the chronicle about the bishops of Turku – wanted to make it clear that Agricola had not translated all those texts he has published in his own name. Until now, this statement has been taken seriously by scholars studying Agricola and his literary production, but it has not been possible to determine whether the insinuation of Juusten was correct or whether it was only a way to downplay the legacy of Agricola, with whom the chronicler had never been on very friendly terms (Tarkiainen & Tarkiainen 1985, *passim*; Heininen 2007, 297, 299, 334; Heininen 2012, esp. 169–170).

Did Agricola Translate all Books Published by Him?

The question about the challenged legacy of Agricola is indeed very interesting, but for decades scholars have been in doubt if it would be possible to examine, whether – or which of – the translations were made by Agricola. Nowadays we can answer this question, thanks to the digitalized database of all texts published by Agricola¹² and modern electronic search possibilities. With the help of modern technology, the experts

⁹ Juusten 1988, 75: "Edidit enim in suo rectoratu Precationale finnonicum, quod in omnium Finnonum manibus quotidie teritur."

¹⁰ Juusten 1988, 75: "Transtulit etiam Novum Testamentum finnonice, quod ecclesiae Finlandensi magno est in usu."

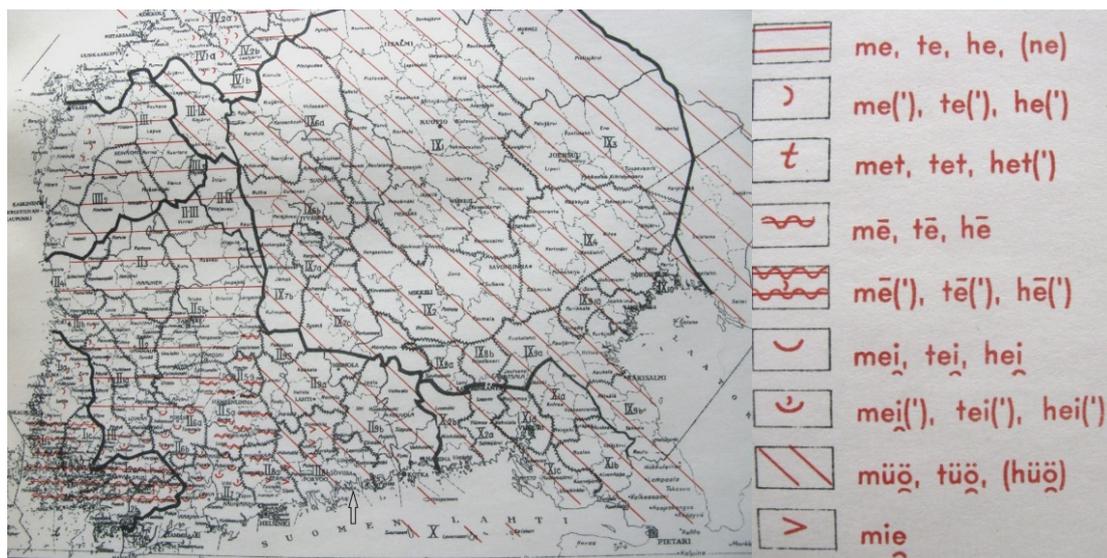
¹¹ Juusten 1988, 75: "[...] procuravit ille, ut Psalterium imprimeretur finnonice, quod tamen integre finnonice fuit translatum in schola Aboensi, rectore Paulo Juusten, qui mandaverat, ut scholastici pro exercendo stylo interdum verterent psalmos, prout doctor Lutherus, beatissimae memoriae, eos transtulerat. Illorum finnonicam versionem audivit et correxit ipse illis horis, quibus scripta scholasticorum solent exhiberi et examinari, saepe etiam peracto in hypocausto suo. Sed nihil refert, cuius nomine sit editum, ideo enim translatum est, ut in populo Finlandico magno esset usui."

¹² The Morpho-Syntactic Database of Mikael Agricola's Works.

in Agricola's language at the University of Turku have investigated the vocabulary and the grammatical structure of different texts published in the name of Agricola, and they have concluded that there is actually too much variation in the vocabulary, dialect, and grammar of the translations to be translated by one person only.¹³ In the following chapters the disputed authorship of Agricola is examined through two examples: the dialectal variation of personal pronouns in plural and the use of possessive suffixes of second-person singular.

Eastern Dialectal Personal Pronouns in the Western-dialect-based Finnish Literary Language

We show here a couple of examples to illustrate the use of pronouns in the texts published by Agricola. The map below presents the territorial division in pronouncing of the word *me* ('we') in different Finnish dialects. In the western Finland we meet different variations of *me* (for example: *me*, *me*(')¹⁴, *mē*), while in the eastern dialects the word is pronounced *müö*. The same division can be found also in the pronouns *te/tüö* ('you' in plural) and *he/hüö* ('they'). In the Finnish literary language the western variant was dominant. The Finnish dialects around Agricola's birth place, Pernaja, belong to the western group (southeastern Tavastian dialects), but they have adopted some eastern features.



Map 1: Geographical distribution of dialectal variants of the pronouns *me/müö* ('we'), *te/tüö* ('you', pl.), and *he/hüö* ('they') in Finland. Source: Kettunen 1940, map 29. The bold line indicates the border between the western and eastern dialects. Agricola's birth place Pernaja (see the arrow) is situated on the coastline c. 90 km westward from the border.

¹³ The question of authorship and plagiarism is somewhat anachronistic, since they were not an issue in the Middle Ages and in the Early Modern period. It was a common practice that authors borrowed from other works as much as they pleased without giving credit to the work they had consulted. See for example Wolf 2015. For some reason, most probably because of the rivalry between the two men, the authorship has become an issue in the case of Agricola's publications because of the direct accusations made by Juusten.

¹⁴ The sign indicates final aspiration, a weak stop-like sound, which is historically a remnant of an earlier word-final consonant (k or t).

From the map it becomes clear that the pronouns are pronounced in a very different way in the western dialects than in the eastern ones. The map also shows that the border lines between different dialect areas are quite straightforward. In the Finnish 16th-century context, without a well-established Standard Language, this clear dialectal division means that the Finns most probably stuck to the use of the local dialect of their home parishes, which they had once learned, and did not mix it with other variants. Only later, as the literary language became more commonly established in use, it started to serve as a model for the spoken language.¹⁵

Thus the use of eastern or western variants of the pronouns in a 16th-century text gives a clear indication about the origins of the author of the text in question. It is possible to examine Agricola's text from this point of view and to investigate whether all texts attributed to Agricola include the same (western or eastern) versions of the pronouns – and if not, whether there is a pattern in the variation, which could be explained by the fact that Agricola was not the sole author of these texts.

Table 1. The amount of eastern and western variations in personal pronouns of plural in the works of Mikael Agricola.

Eastern pronouns	Number	Western pronouns	Number	Sum
Myö	15	Me	2422	2437
Työ	2	Te	2098	2100
Hyö	2	He	3427	3429
Total	19	Total	7947	7966

Source: The Morpho-Syntactic Database of Mikael Agricola's Works.

In the above table the dialectical variation in the use of the pronouns 'we', 'you', and 'they' in the translations attributed originally to Agricola are calculated. In the two left hand side columns the number of references to the eastern variations of pronouns in Agricola's texts (*myö*, *työ*, *hyö*) are counted, while the references to the western variations of these pronouns (*me*, *te*, *he*) are counted in the two middle columns. In the right hand column the sum of both references is given. As the numbers show, the use of the western variants is clearly dominant, but the texts printed by Agricola also contain a certain number of eastern variants of the pronouns, which is difficult to explain. Although their number is very small, their occurrence in the texts in groups is significant.

One could, of course, explain this variation by the fact that Agricola mastered both variants. After his childhood in Pernaja, he studied in Vyborg, where the eastern dialect variants were in use, and spent the rest of his life in Turku, where the western variant was dominant. The relatively consequent use of the western variant in Agricola's texts has been interpreted in the way that Agricola deliberately made efforts to establish the use of the western variant in his texts. In fact, in the preface of the New Testament he gives some

¹⁵ Nowadays, it is usual that even the spoken language keeps changing over a person's lifetime, depending on where he/she is living and working (See e.g. Nuolijärvi 1986; Mustanoja 2011), but this was not the case in the Middle Ages or early modern period. An illustrative example of the extensive use of one's home dialect is the literary production (e.g. hymnal) of Hemmingius of Masku (c. 1550–1619), which is clearly identifiable as a special type of the western dialects on the basis of certain dialectal characteristics even if Hemmingius must have been very well acquainted with earlier publications in Finnish.

details on his translation work. He states that there are several dialects spoken in Finland, but he himself uses the language of Finland Proper – that is, Southwestern Finland where Turku is located – as the region was “like the mother of the other provinces of Finland” (Häkkinen 2015, 63). One could argue that the few cases with the use of the eastern variants are just remnants and lapses from Agricola’s childhood dialect or school years in Vyborg, but the experts on the Finnish language tend to think that they are too many to be just mistakes.

The eastern versions of the personal pronouns are written as *mö*, *tö*, and *hö* in the works of Agricola. Orthographically, the difference between the western *me* and the eastern *mö* (etc.) is minimal, but it is still significant. It is not possible to interpret those words as printer’s errors only, because there are other anticipated alternatives too. First, they can be explained simply through the eastern dialect’s phonology. Second, the variants are not isolated cases even in Agricola’s work. It is important to notice that the *mö*, *tö*, and *hö* variants appear also in other texts of the Reformation period.¹⁶

It is more important to pay attention to those texts where the eastern variants appear. In many cases, the use of the eastern variants is not fortuitous but concentrated in certain texts of medieval origin. This kind of distribution rather indicates that in those places Agricola has simply copied the forms from some earlier translations made by someone from the eastern parts of the country. For example, the translation of *Te Deum* in Agricola’s Prayer Book suddenly contains the eastern *myö* version five times and not a single use of the western *me*. This is an interesting observation, since it is known that this text has existed in Finnish version already prior to Agricola’s printed version (Toropainen 2019). In the Prayer Book’s texts before and after *Te Deum*, Agricola uses the western pronoun variant *me* consequently.

In the Prayer Book, eastern pronoun variants also appear in the Litany, in the *Canticum Zachariae* (*Magnificat*), and in a collect prayer of unknown origin.¹⁷ Osmo Nikkilä has pointed out that those texts probably already existed in Finnish when Agricola compiled his Prayer Book (Nikkilä 1980, 59). The 16th-century Finnish ecclesiastical manuscripts also include the above mentioned or some other texts (i.e. Lord’s Prayer, Litany, Psalms, Gloria) in which eastern pronoun variant *myö* is used and which can be old translations. Researchers have stated that there has been some kind of Finnish literal tradition before Agricola’s work, and this tradition has included eastern linguistic elements, which have found their way to Agricola’s publications (Rapola 1933, 252–253; Nikkilä 1980, 59; Häkkinen 2015, 26).

Within the New Testament translation of Agricola, there are some passages where the pronouns of different dialects are mixed. A good example comes from the Gospel of Mark (7:18)¹⁸: *Ningö mös tökin ymmertemettömet oletta? Ettekö te viele nyt ymmerdhä?* The first part of this passage includes an eastern variant *tökin* (‘you too’, in plural), while in the second part is used a western variant *te* (‘you’, in plural). Another example is from the Gospel of Mathew (20:4)¹⁹: *Menget mös tö minun winatarhan / ia mite cochtolinen*

¹⁶ E.g. in the Lord’s Prayer in Sebastian Münster’s *Cosmographia*, in the Codex Westh manuscript, in the manuscript fragment of Uppsala, and in several music manuscripts. We return to them later in the article.

¹⁷ The sources of the Prayer Book have been examined by Gummerus 1947–1955 and Holma 2008, esp. 32–40.

¹⁸ Mark 7:18: “And he saith unto them, Are ye so without understanding also? Do ye not perceive” (KJV).

¹⁹ Matt. 20:4: “Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right I will give you. And they went their way.” (KJV).

on / mine annan teille. Nin he menit sinne. Also in this example, the eastern form *tö* ('you', in plural) is used in the first part of the phrase, while in the second part is used the western variant *he* ('they'). The variation can be explained on the basis of editorial work during the extended publication process. It is known that Agricola started to translate the New Testament already before he left for Wittenberg, kept continuing the translation process in Germany in the cooperation with his fellow students, and finalised the text single-handed in Turku much later (Itkonen-Kaila 1997, 106–107; Heininen 2007, 235–239; Perälä 2007, 70). In his letter (Tarkiainen & Tarkiainen 1985, 306–311) to Georg Norman in 1543, Agricola reported that the manuscript of the New Testament was almost done and ready for printing. Nevertheless, it was not until 1548 that the book actually came out, which means that Agricola had plenty of time to work up the translation.

Archaic possessive suffixes

Possessive suffixes are elements, which are attached to nouns, indicate their possessor, and refer to the person (i.e. *kirja-ni* 'my book', *kirja-si* 'your book', *kirja-nsa* 'his/her book'). For example, in contemporary Finnish the second-person singular possessive suffix is *-si*. The same suffix is very common in works of Agricola too, although the final vowel is commonly lost in Agricola's texts as they most often are in other texts of the same age as well. This suffix fits well into the study of the age and origin of Agricola's translations, since another suffix *-ti* appears in Agricola's books and in some contemporary or earlier manuscripts. This is historically an older variant than the regular *-si* ending. In tracing Agricola's authorship the following hypothesis can be used: the use of *-si/-s* suffix must refer clearly to texts in use in Agricola's time, while the use of *-ti* suffix must refer to more archaic forms of language from times before Agricola.²⁰ The suffix *-ti* has typically been united to the nouns, which have a consonant-final stem, like *laupius* 'mercy', *rakkaus* 'love', and *valkeus* 'light'. The following analysis is based on the suffix forms used in these three lexemes in Agricola's Prayer Book. In Table 2 below the number of times the two different variants appear in Agricola's texts are counted.

Table 2. Possessive suffixes of second-person singular in lexemes *laupius* 'mercy', *rakkaus* 'love', and *valkeus* 'light' in Mikael Agricola's Prayer Book (1544).

Archaic variant -ti	Number	Prevailing variant -s(i)	Number	Total
laupiautti	1	laupiud(h)es	88	89
rackautti	3	rackaud(h)es	22	25
walkeusti	2	Walkeudhes	4	6
Total	6	Total	114	120

Source: Vanhan kirjasuomen korpus.

The numbers in table 2 show that the archaic *-ti* suffix in these nouns is very rare, while the *-s(i)* suffix is clearly the most common one. This indicates that Agricola has attempted to use the contemporary version in his translations. Yet, there are archaic suffixes in Agricola's Prayer Book and in the manuscripts, and they are not lapses. A closer study of the places in which the *-ti* suffixes occur, shows that they frequently occur in texts which on the basis of their content can be considered to be older Finnish translations. For

²⁰ For the historical background and frequencies, see e.g. Nikkilä 1985, 253–254.

example, they appear in the Creed, *Veni Creator Spiritus* hymn, translations of certain parts of *Missale Aboense* (the Mass Book of Turku diocese, printed in 1488), and *Hortulus animae* (Little Garden of the Soul), a prayer book for devotion and moral instruction, which was extremely popular towards the end of the Middle Ages. Thus it indicates that in these places, Agricola has used texts he already had at hand and has not translated everything himself.

This hypothesis is confirmed by the studies of Osmo Nikkilä, who has investigated the apocope (cutting off the final vowel of words) of the old literary Finnish and counted up all the cases where the oldest variant *-ti* appears in the texts of the Reformation Period (Nikkilä 1985, 255–257). According to his studies, there are 16 occurrences in Agricola's works, mainly in the Prayer Book, three occurrences in the Codex Westh, one in the Kangasala Missale (to which we shall return later), and one within the hand-written marginal notes in a copy of the *Novum Testamentum* of Erasmus of Rotterdam, preserved in the National Library of Finland in Helsinki. In addition, Nikkilä states that all *-ti* variants are found in texts which, as for the contents, may very well have been translated into Finnish already before the Reformation. His study thus confirms that the use of archaic suffixes is clearly reminiscent of older tradition, and therefore the appearance of such forms in Agricola's texts must refer to an older authorship.

Who have contributed to Agricola's publications?

These results clearly point towards the existence of archaic and eastern forms in Agricola's texts and thus confirm Juusten's claims that Agricola cannot be the sole author of all that he has published. This is an extremely interesting result, but it also leads us to the next question: Who, then, made these translations if it was not Agricola? The modern technology, unfortunately, cannot provide answers to the question about the authorship of these texts, as there is hardly any material available for comparison.

It is, however, possible to make some educated guesses about the authorship of these texts. The first hypothesis is that Agricola borrowed the texts from older translations of biblical and liturgical texts that were still in circulation in Agricola's time. No Finnish medieval manuscripts containing Bible translations have survived to our days, but it is probable that Finnish translations of biblical text fragments existed already in the Catholic times. However, it is not possible to know who the authors of these texts were. The second hypothesis is that Agricola mainly borrowed translations from his contemporary authors, as for example the students at the Cathedral School of Turku mentioned in the chronicle of Juusten. Unfortunately, we have no lists of boys studying at the school in those years and none of them have later made a name for himself as a talented translator, so we cannot come to a closer answer. It is, however, possible to address this question from two directions that may cast some light on the question of the unclear authorship: the surviving manuscripts and information about active ecclesiastical personages from the Reformation period.

Other Finnish Documentation of the early Reformation period

Despite the lack of medieval biblical manuscripts in Finland, we have testimonies of manuscripts from the early Reformation period that contain ecclesiastical texts in Finnish. Since some of them have been dated to years prior to Agricola's corresponding publications and the Finnish language used in them shows significant divergence from

the orthography, grammar, and vocabulary used by Agricola, we can be sure that the Finnish texts in them must have been independent versions circulating contemporaneously.

At the very time when the liturgical language began to shift from Latin to the vernacular in Finland – most probably in 1537 – Agricola was not even in Turku, but in Wittenberg. Therefore, there must have been other reformers and translators who have delivered the necessary texts in Finnish. Those texts, as useful as they have been in practice, were never printed and never reached a wider audience as Agricola's texts did. Since a large part of the bourgeoisie and intelligentsia in Finland, especially in cities, spoke Swedish, it was possible to use Swedish-language books also in Finland (Tarkiainen 2008), – but only to some extent. Swedish was just as unknown to the ordinary Finnish people as Latin.

As there were no printing offices in Finland, the printing of translations was a complicated and expensive process, which had to be done abroad. Therefore, a considerable part of the oldest translations remained manuscripts only, and, fortunately, some of them have been preserved to our days. Another reason favouring the use of manuscripts was the fact that the Royal Printing Press in Stockholm was not capable of printing musical notes at the time, only an empty staff with four [sic!] lines.

One example of such a manuscript is a codex from 1540s attributed to Mathias Westh – a parish priest in the town of Rauma in the Finnish western coastline, c. 90 kilometres north of Turku (National Library of Finland, C III 19; Häkkinen 2012/2013). Westh was the owner and possibly also the author of core parts of the manuscript. His initials and his autograph appear in the manuscript, and he has dated the document 1546. The Codex Westh manuscript contains material necessary for evangelical masses and other ecclesiastical services. Its core parts consist of a *Manuale* and a Mass book in Finnish, and the manuscript also includes a lot of chant texts in Finnish with musical notes. Even if the major parts of the texts in the Codex Westh differ clearly from the corresponding translations of Agricola, some of the chants are fully identical with Agricola's versions. Therefore, there are good reasons to believe that the wording in Agricola's later publications is based on an older tradition (Häkkinen 2012b, esp. 88–90).

The oldest manuscript written in Finnish is a 12-folio-fragment of a lectionary containing sections of the Gospels required for the Masses of the liturgical year (Uppsala University Library, T 387; Penttilä 1931; Häkkinen 2016). The fragment contains Finnish translations of Gospel and Epistle texts and two collect prayers to be used in services during the Easter period. The fragment was found in 1921 inside of the cover fillings of a book donated to the Uppsala University Library (Undorf 1995, 120–121, 188–189). The watermarks of the manuscript (Briquet 12661) show that the paper was manufactured in France in 1537 (Briquet Online). Aarni Penttilä and Marja Itkonen-Kaila have shown that, in most cases, the source text of the Finnish translation has been the Swedish *New Testament* printed in 1526 (Itkonen-Kaila 2002).

Otto Walde, the Chief Librarian of the Uppsala University Library who discovered the fragment, supposed that the manuscript and the translations might have been made by Mikael Agricola. However, the analysis of the handwriting, orthography, grammar, lexicon, and translational solutions shows convincingly that neither the manuscript nor the translations could be connected to Agricola. Several peculiarities in the content and the linguistic form of the manuscript – some of which can even be detected in the oldest part of the Manual of the Codex Westh – indicate that the fragment must be an

independent product of emerging Finnish text tradition, but certain features in the manuscript point to Swedish use. Indeed, there must have been some written ecclesiastical aids in the Finnish language also on the western side of the Gulf of Bothnia in an early stage of the Lutheran Reformation, as a Finnish preacher was appointed to the parish of Stockholm in 1533 (Tarkiainen 1990, 44). In Stockholm, the Reformation progressed especially quickly because the city council and other leaders were very positive towards it. There was a considerable number of Finnish workers, servants, handicraftsmen, sailors, clerks, and other Finnish-speaking people in the capital of the Swedish realm. Therefore, when the city council of Stockholm ordered that vernaculars were to be taken into use in liturgical practices, it did not only mean the use of Swedish in ecclesiastical services, but Finnish as well. Since no printed ecclesiastical manuals in Finnish existed in the 1530s, manuscripts were the only means to spread the Finnish tradition. Unfortunately, there is no information on the identity of the first Finnish preachers in Stockholm, who might be responsible for these manuscripts. The first one known by name is Lord Martti who was appointed in 1545.

Only a few early manuscripts in Finnish have survived to our days, but it is possible that there have been more such manuscripts in circulation before Agricola's printed books with the standard translations replaced them. It is also possible that Agricola had such manuscripts at hand when he made his translations and that he copied some texts directly from them. But we have no possibility to know for sure which manuscripts he might have had at hand while composing his translations.

There are some interesting text fragments in the printed literature, too, e.g. the Lord's Prayer in Sebastian Münster's *Cosmographia*, which are clearly independent of Agricola's translations. It is not known where Münster got his Finnish material from, but there is a decisive piece of evidence to show that neither Agricola nor any other writer of the same age known by the name could be the source: in a little word list of Münster's *Cosmographia*, the Finnish word for 'human being' is spelled out *ihminen*, which does not occur in any other text of the same era, but there are several longer variants (*inhiminen*, *inheminen*, *inehminen* etc.) of the same word instead. The modern form of the word, *ihminen*, only comes into use towards the end of the 16th century. Interestingly enough, the Lord's Prayer in Münster's *Cosmographia* shows distinctive marks of eastern dialects of Finnish: *siun nimesi* 'your name', *myö annamma* 'we give', cf. *sinun nimes*, *me anname* in Agricola's translation.²¹

Possible translator candidates

On the basis of existing information from the early 16th-century decades, it is possible to identify certain individuals who might have participated in the translation of the early ecclesiastical texts into Finnish. The prime candidates for the first translators are the young scholars sent to Wittenberg by Bishop Skytte before Agricola and Teit. There were at least three of them (Heininen 1980). The first students from the diocese of Turku who left for Wittenberg after the 1527 Reformation in the Swedish realm were Thomas Francisci Keijoi and Canutus Johannis, both of whom begun their schooling in Rauma. They left for Germany in 1531. Thomas Francisci came back to Turku in 1533, and after his return, he worked as the schoolmaster of the Cathedral School of Turku. During his

²¹ All the oldest versions of the Lord's Prayer in Finnish have been collected and examined by Harri Uusitalo 2016.

period of employment, Finnish was officially implemented as the liturgical language of the Finnish Church. Canutus Johannis, who was awarded a Master's degree in 1536, took the post of vicar of Turku upon his return home, and later he became a close associate of Mikael Agricola. In his later years, Canutus Johannis was appointed as Bishop of Vyborg (Häkkinen 2015, 26, 38–39, 41, 47; Heininen 2007, 62–63, 113–114, 360).

Simon Henrici Wiburgensis (= of Vyborg) is another possible candidate for translating ecclesiastical text into Finnish in the early phase. Of those scholars sent to Wittenberg before Agricola and Teit, he is the only true representative of eastern Finnish dialects. Simon Henrici left for Wittenberg in 1532, returned to Turku, and then left again. He also met Mikael Agricola and Martinus Teit in Wittenberg as they arrived in 1536. In all likelihood, all three participated in the translation of the Finnish New Testament during their stay in Wittenberg. We have some written testimony of this activity. Agricola mentions the translation work in his letters to King Gustav Vasa in 1538, but he does not specify the translations.²² A concrete proof of the shared translation work is a Latin Bible concordance in which Martinus Teit has put his name and initials in 1538 and which has been preserved until our days.²³ Thanks to this concordance – a list of all the words appearing in the Bible – we can know for sure that the three men have translated biblical texts into Finnish in Wittenberg. Simon Henrici earned his Master's degree in 1541. He did not, however, return immediately to his home country but stayed in Wittenberg, where he worked and taught. In 1544, Simon Henrici returned to Turku but did not get a seat in the cathedral chapter. He died in 1545 (Häkkinen 2015, 27, 39, 60; Heininen 2007, 360).

Agricola's closest study comrade, Martinus Teit, is also an obvious translator candidate. However, his potential contribution cannot explain the linguistic variation of Agricola's publications, since his language background was practically the same as Agricola's. Teit's translations, if there were any, were probably similar to Agricola's works. Teit returned to Finland from Wittenberg together with Agricola in 1539. He did not continue his literary activities after returning home. He became a member of the Turku Cathedral chapter and vicar of Maaria, Turku's neighbouring rural district. In 1542, he was called to Stockholm, where he acted as tutor for the two younger Swedish princes, John and Carl. He died in Stockholm in 1544 (Häkkinen 2015, 27, 33–34, 39–41; Heininen 2007, 29, 62–65, 83, 85, 89–90, 113, 360).

Another translator candidate was the Archdeacon of Turku, Petrus Sild, who had studied in Rostock before the Reformation. He earned his Master's degree in 1513 and became a vicar in the Turku church. At first, he was rather sceptical about the Reformation, but in 1529 he was appointed to the revered position of archdeacon on the condition that he would teach and give sermons in the spirit of the Reformation. Hence, he went down in history as the first Finnish-speaking Finn representing the new Evangelical Lutheran faith. When he died in 1542, he bequeathed a portion of his fortune to the printing of a Finnish-language New Testament (Pirinen 1962, 48; Häkkinen 2015, 25, 38).

In addition to the scholars mentioned above, it is quite obvious that some other clergymen of different parishes in Finland – there were about one hundred of them at that time – were able to make early translations for their own use even if they had not had the

²² “*Oc man kunde teslikes med tiiden wttolka Nyia Testamentit på ffintzke Tungemåäll. som man altreedä begynnat haffuer.*”, published in Tarkiainen & Tarkiainen 1985, 293–299.

²³ The text is preserved to our days and kept in the collection of the Borgå Gymnasiums bibliotek.

chance to study abroad. One of those clergymen was the priest of Kangasala congregation, Lasse Henriksson, who had worked as the precentor of the same congregation before he was appointed priest. He made some inventory remarks signed with his own name on the supplementary pages of the Catholic Mass Book *Missale Aboense* owned by the Kangasala congregation, and the same hand has added core parts of the evangelical mass in Finnish and in Swedish to the same book. The manuscript is a testimony of Lasse Henriksson's independent translating activities, since the text includes some dialectal properties which are not known in any other manuscript or printed source in Finnish of the Reformation era (Häkkinen & Tuppurainen 2014).

Agricola, the Father of the Finnish Literary Language

To sum up, the above analysis of the use of both personal pronouns and possessive suffixes in the texts published by Agricola demonstrated that the variation in these details is too broad for the texts being created by one person only. Based on this, it is possible to conclude that Juusten's accusations about Agricola profiting from other translators' work were correct. Agricola cannot have been the (only) translator of all texts typically attributed to him. But who, then, were the anonymous co-authors of Agricola? It is possible to identify some persons, such as the mentioned Wittenberg students, as probable translator candidates but unfortunately it is impossible to attribute any single translations to any specific person. Therefore, the identities of the fellow translators of Agricola remain obscure.

However, it is important to underline that this result should not diminish Agricola's reputation as the Father of the Finnish literary language due to his enormous publication activities. In a ten-year-period he managed to provide nine printed Finnish books which fulfilled the needs of religious literature in Finnish for a long time. Without Agricola's efforts in printing Finnish texts, the earlier translations circulating in manuscripts would perhaps never have developed into written Finnish. And lastly, without the Reformation and the important role of vernacular in Luther's thinking there might not have been any need to write anything down in Finnish. Therefore, the Reformation has played an extremely important role in the creation of the Finnish literary language, and Agricola has been the prime actor in Finland in this process.

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