

## The Story of Supposed Hebrew-Finnish Affinity - a Chapter in the History of Comparative Linguistics

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Enevaldus Svenonius was born in the parish of Annerstad in Småland, Sweden, in 1617. He studied at the Universities of Turku (Academia Aboensis in Turku, Finland)<sup>1</sup> and Uppsala; the degree of *magister* was conferred on him by the Faculty of Philosophy in Turku in 1647. Svenonius continued his studies in Uppsala and Wittenberg and travelled widely in Bohemia, Austria, Hungary, Bavaria, Alsace, Switzerland, and the Netherlands in 1654. In the same year he was chosen as *Professor eloquentiæ* (i.e. Professor of Latin) at the Academia Aboensis and six years later, in 1660, he was appointed *Professor Theologiæ* at the same University. Finally, in 1687, the King of Sweden nominated Svenonius as Bishop of Lund and Vice Chancellor of the University in the same city. However, in spring 1688 Svenonius died in Turku where he was buried in the Cathedral.

Svenonius was the most productive writer and the leading person in cultural, academic, and church life in Finland in the seventeenth century. Among his extensive literary output *Tò nóēma ēkmalōtisménon seu potius Gymnasium capiendae rationis humanae*, an encyclopaedic collection of twenty dissertations published in the Faculty of Philosophy in 1658-1662, is the most central work to be dealt with in this context.<sup>2</sup>

I. A. Heikel, who wrote his still indispensable *Filologins studium*

<sup>1</sup> The city of Turku is called Aboa in Latin and Åbo in Swedish.

<sup>2</sup> Seppo J. Salminen has written an extensive scholarly biography of Svenonius: *Enevaldus Svenonius 1 & 2* (Suomen Kirkkohistoriallisen Seuran toimituksia 106 & 134, Helsinki-Rauma 1978 & Helsinki-Jyväskylä 1985).

vid Åbo universitet ('The study of philology at the University of Åbo') in 1884, includes the following statement in his presentation of Svenonius (p. 57): "As far as is known, even the questionable merit of being the first to propose the sentence that to the greatest extent the Finnish language has received its vocabulary from Greek and Latin, rests with Svenonius."<sup>3</sup> As a rule, a similar amused tone accompanies the descriptions of the linguistic achievements of Svenonius and his colleagues of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in both scholarly and popular works, inclusive of textbooks.<sup>4</sup>

Indeed, Svenonius wrote in *Tò nóēma ēkmalōtisménon seu potius Gymnasium capiendae rationis humanae* (Book 5, Para. XLIII, p. 87) that "Finnicæ lingvæ originem quod concernit, videtur ea maximam esse partem ex Græcis & Hebræis generata vocabulis" ('concerning the origins of the Finnish language, it seems to originate to the greatest part from Greek and Hebrew words'). As examples to prove his statement, he first refers to thirteen Greek words and proper names with their supposed counterparts in Finnish: Greek *khaláō*, Lat. *demergo*, 'to sink, submerge' = Finnish *Kala*, Lat. *piscis*, 'a fish'; Greek *kheĩlos*, Lat. *labium*, 'a lip' = Finnish *kieli* Lat. *lingva* 'a tongue'; Greek *khōiros*, Lat. *porcus*, *sus*, 'a pork, pig' = Finnish *koira*, Lat. *canis*, 'a dog'; Greek *aigésippos*, 'Hegesip' = Finnish *Sippi*; Greek *basilios* = Rus[sian, sic !] Wasiliwitz &c.

In contrast to Greek,<sup>5</sup> "the Hebrew vocabulary of Finnish" presented

<sup>3</sup> "Svenonius tillkommer äfven den tvifelaktiga förtjänsten att, så vidt man vet, först ha uppstått den satsen, att finskan till största delen har sina ord från grekiskan och hebreiskan", I.A. Heikel, *Filologins studium vid Åbo universitet* (Åbo universitets lärdomshistoria, 5. Filologin. Skrifter utgifna av Svenska Literatursällskapet i Finland, XXVI. Helsingfors 1894, p. 57); Svenonius and his linguistic views are described by Heikel on pp. 51-62, while later proponents of the Hebrew background of the Finnish language are introduced on pp. 149-151 and 208-212.

<sup>4</sup> See e.g. Salminen's summary of the philological parts of Svenonius' work and his sources: Baazius, Scaliger, Beckmann, Glandorp, Walther, Walper, etc.; for the discussion of the Hebrew-Finnish relations Salminen has been unable to find earlier sources (Salminen 1978: 238-260).

<sup>5</sup> Still in 1774 Nils Idman defended the community (*gemenskap*) of the Greek and Finnish languages with a reference to hundreds of similar words in his extensive work *Försök at visa gemenskap emellan finska och grekiska språken, såsom tjenande till uplysning i finska folkets historie* written in Swedish (Åbo 1774, 92 pp.) which in 1778 also appeared in French translation in Strasbourg (*Recherches sur l'ancien peuple finois, d'après les rapports de la langue finoise avec la langue grecque*, par M. le pasteur Nils Idman, ouvrage traduit du suédois par M. Genet le fils, Strasbourg: Bauer et Treuttel, 1778, xvi+149 pp.).

Similarly, still in 1770 Nicolaus Funck defended the close relation of Swedish to Greek in his dissertation *De harmonia linguæ Græcæ & Sviogothicæ* at the University of

by Svenonius, one of the first scholars of the local language of his university town, has - to the best of my knowledge - never been published in a form comprehensible to a modern-day student of the history of linguistics whose knowledge of Hebrew and/or Finnish may often be rather limited.<sup>6</sup> Thus the following decipherment may not be out of place in this collection; at the same time it endeavours to provide the reader with an opportunity to realize with the development that took place in the study of Hebrew-Finnish relations during the following century.

Svenonius presents the 36 or 37 Hebrew words in a type of transcript, and their Finnish counterparts are not always easy to identify. In the list below I first give the genuine Hebrew spelling followed by the transcript of Svenonius and then a transcript in a more systematic form based on the academic pronunciation tradition current in those days (N.B.: ch = [x], z = [z], and ts = the affricate [c]). The translations of the Hebrew words into Latin provided by Svenonius are translated by me into English between brackets; after an equation sign it is followed by the Finnish counterpart of the Hebrew word according to Svenonius (underlined by me and a few times clarified with modern spelling / form between brackets). The translations of the Finnish words by Svenonius into Latin (and a few times into Swedish) and their renderings from Latin into English, added by me between brackets,<sup>7</sup> complete the entries. A similar method of presentation is also applied in other vocabularies in this article.

אבה Avah; ava; voluit ('he wanted, wished') = âwi (= ovi) (in Swedish) döör ('a door') / q: ad nutum patens ('opening according to wish').  
 איי Oi; oy; Wæ ('oh') = woi part. intendendi (exclamatory particle).  
 אודות Odot; odot; causæ ('on account of') = âdotta expectare & q: causas rimari ('to wait, expect' & 'to search for reasons').  
 אמ Em; em; mater ('a mother') = Ämi (= ämmä) anus ('an old woman').  
 איל Ajal, ail; ayal, ayil; ceruus, dux ('a deer', 'a leader'), אילות Ejaluth; eyalut; fortitudo ('power') = jalo præstans ('excellent').  
 אכן Achen; achen; verè, profectò ('surely') = niniken (= niin ikään) ita, propemodum ('thus', 'similarly').

Uppsala; parallel ideas concerning the relation between German and Greek and French and Greek were proposed by well-known scholars till the end of the eighteenth century.

<sup>6</sup> Both Heikel (1894: 56-57) and Salminen (1978: 240-241) quote a number of Greek etymologies of Finnish words in Svenonius; however, the similar lists of the Hebrew vocabulary have remained beyond their scope.

<sup>7</sup> In a number of cases Svenonius' Latin equivalents of Finnish words are inaccurate; however, in this context these errors are irrelevant and are not corrected by me.

- הולל Holel; holel / holal; vesanus ('furious, madman') = hullu insanus ('folly, infatuated').
- חזה Chadsah; chaza; vidit ('he saw') = katzō idem.
- חטב Chatab; chatav; cæcidit ligna ('he cut firewood') = catawa (= kataja) juniperus ('a juniper').
- חלה Chalaph; chalaf; penetravit ('he passed on, penetrated') = kelpa juvare q: opem insinuare ('to help something to insinuate').
- חמל Chamal; chamal; clemens f. ('he had compassion') = camala mirabilis : clementia enim Dei quòd milliès superet justitiam mirari subit ('surprising, awful : namely, the compassion of God which a thousand times exceeds the justice is surprising').
- חמר Chamar; chamar; lutosus f. ('was muddy') = camara pellis suilla, q: semper lutosa ('pigskin which is always muddy').
- חרמש Chærmæsch; chermesh; falx messoria ('a harvest sickle') = kermess (= kärmes, käärmē) serpens, à simili figurâ ('a serpent, from a similar shape').
- חרפה Cherpah; cherpa; probrum ('shame'), cui non dissimilitèr enunciatur membrum virile ('with which not dissimilarly the male organ is called').<sup>8</sup>
- ילך Ialach; yalach; ivit ('he walked', a theoretical verb which in practice does not occur in Hebrew) = jalka pes ('a foot, leg').
- יפהא Iapheach; yafeach; efflavit, locutus est ('it blew', 'he spoke'), & פוח poach; poach / puach; flare ('to breathe') = poho, (Swedish) bläsa ('to blow') / puhu, (Swedish) tala ('to speak').
- עמנו אל Imanuel; imanu'el; *anagrammatistheïs* ('God is with us' with letters in a different order) = Jumalen : Jumala enim, quod Deum significat ('God's : God, which signifies God').<sup>9</sup> Svenonius continued by writing that it is rather probable that Jumala should be derived from Hebrew יום Iom; yom; dies ('a day'), & מלא Mala; mala / male; plenus f. ('was full'), q: plenus dierum & annorum, ut significet idem quod infinitus & æternus ('i.e. full with days and years to signify Him who is infinite and eternal').<sup>10</sup>

<sup>8</sup> With a tacit reference to the Finnish word kyrpä 'penis', not in polite use.

<sup>9</sup> After this equation Svenonius adds that this etymology is preferable to that from Julma ('terrible'), which more probably is derived from Jumala ('God').

<sup>10</sup> Svenonius goes on to argue that in Finnish the letter o is easily pronounced as [u]; the latter etymology accords well with the Scriptures, because God the Father is called the Ancient of Days (Dan. 7,13. 22), and God the Son proceeds from ancient days (Micah 5,2), whose years will never end (Hebrews 2,12 [an error *pro* Heb. 1,12]). In plural *Iom* (day) refers

- כנס Canas; kanas; collegit ('he collected') = Kansa (= kanssa) cum ('with').
- כר Car; kar, Camelus, agnus, aries ('a camel', 'lamb', 'ram') = Karia, S[wedish] boskap, pecudes ('cattle').
- ליש Laisch; layish, Leo decrepitis ('a decrepit lion') = Laiska piger ('lazy').
- נשל Naschal; nashal; solvit ('he loosened, undid') = Nascala subula ('a cobbler's awl').
- סוס Sws; sus; 1. Equus 2. Grus, 3. Anser sylvestris, variorumquè aliorum animalium nomen ('1. a horse, 2. a crane, 3. a wild goose, and the name of various other animals') = Susi Lupus ('a wolf').
- סלה Silla; (theoretically) sil-la; stravit ('he built a way') = Silla (= silta) pons ('a bridge').
- סלח Sallach; sallach; condonavit ('he forgave')<sup>11</sup> = salli permittere ('to permit').
- עלפה Ulpæ; ulpe;<sup>12</sup> obiectus ore ('with a mouth covered up') = ylpiä superbus ('proud').
- פורה Purah; pura; in quod uvæ confringendæ mittuntur ('in which the grapes to be pressed are put') = Puro puls ('a brook').
- פימה Pimah; pima; omentum, pingvedo ('the fatty membrane or caul covering the intestines', 'fatness') = Pimä pingvedo lactis ('butterfat, buttermilk').
- פסה Pissah; pissa; particula ('a particle')<sup>13</sup> = pissar (= pisara) guttula ('a small drop').
- פרש pæræsch; peresh; fimus æquiv. met. podex ('manure, metonymically equal to the anal orifice').<sup>14</sup>
- צרע Tsara; tsara; leprosus f. ('was leper') = sairas ægrotus ('ill').
- קדח Kadach; kadach; accendit, ferbuit ('was kindled', 'glowed') = Kâdas (= kota) culina ('cooking hut').
- קדים Kadim; kadim; ante pridem<sup>15</sup> ('in front, before' and 'in days of yore') = kodast (= kohdast = kohdakkain) è regione ('opposite').
- קול Kool; kol; sonus ('a voice, sound') = kuula audire ('to hear').
- ראה Raah; ra'a; vidit, providit, pavit ('he saw', 'predicted', 'provided', 'was to years; God the Holy Spirit proceeds from both eternities (i.e. the past and the future, TH) and he is the spirit of the veritable eternity (John 15,26; Ps. 33,6 & 119,90).

<sup>11</sup> More correctly 'ready to forgive', occurs only in Ps. 86,5.

<sup>12</sup> A corrupt word in Ezek. 31, 15.

<sup>13</sup> An unexplained word occurring in Ps. 72,16.

<sup>14</sup> With a tacit reference to the Finnish word perse 'buttocks', not in polite use.

<sup>15</sup> Obviously meant to have a comma after *ante*.

afraid') = Raha pecunia, quâ sibi quis providet de victu & amictu ('money which everyone provides for himself concerning food and clothing').

רוח Roach; roach / ruach; spirare ('to blow, breathe') = Roka (= ruoka) cibus, quo spiritus sive vita sustentatur ('food by which the spirit or life is sustained').

רפה Rippah; rippa; debilitavit ('he weakened') = Râpi (= rupi) assumentum caducum ('a disappearing patch' = 'scab'). &c.

From the viewpoint of later centuries the equations of Svenonius look more or less casual and even ridiculous, as has been stated in numerous contexts.

In 1692 Eric Wallenius defended the dissertation *De confusione lingvarum*<sup>16</sup> under the *præsidium* of Daniel Johannis Lund, Professor of Oriental languages and Greek at Academia Aboensis; in this work the Finnish language was concluded to possess "not only minor vestiges" of the languages which were spoken before "the confusion of languages"; these are to be found in the vocabulary and affixes in particular.<sup>17</sup> A more detailed discussion of the similarities was not included in the booklet, however.

Five years later, on November 13, 1697, the theme of the equivalence of Hebrew and Finnish was dealt with, again under the *presidium* of David Lund, in the *pro gradu* (magister) dissertation *Lingvarum ebrææ et finnicae convenientia* presented by Eric Erii Cajanus (1675-1737) at the same University in Turku.<sup>18</sup>

At first, Cajanus was able to find equivalent words in Hebrew and Finnish; due to the limited space in his dissertation – he wrote – he enumerated (p. 8) only six words (four of them occurred in Svenonius!) "although a

<sup>16</sup> [Aboæ 1692, 22 p.], Jorma Vallinkoski, *Turun Akatemian väitöskirjat 1642-1828 - Die Dissertationen der alten Universität Turku (Academia Aboënsis) 1642-1828* (Helsingin yliopiston kirjaston julkaisu - Publications of the University Library at Helsinki 30, Helsinki 1962-1969 = Vallinkoski), No. 2325; *Suomen kansallisbibliografia - Finlands nationalbibliografi - Finnische Nationalbibliographie*, I-II (ed. Tuija Laine & Rita Nyqvist, Vammala-Helsinki 1996 = SKB), No. 2448; Heikel 1894:149-150.

<sup>17</sup> "Cum hanc linguarum examina confusionem, unicum hoc tantum bonâ veniâ paceque eruditorum, expers tamen affectatæ laudis dixerim, scilicet idioma Finnicum haud exigua primævi præ se ferre vestigia, quod ut existimem, tum plurimarum vocum affinitas, tum affixorum similis indoles mihi persvadet" (p. 14).

<sup>18</sup> [Aboæ 1697, 16 pp.], Vallinkoski No. 2350; SKB No. 2476.

Daniel Lund was born in Halikko in southern Finnish-speaking Finland and Cajanus in Sotkamo, in northern Finnish-speaking Finland; thus, in contrast to the Swedish Svenonius, they knew Finnish well.

more extensive list easily could be collected”:<sup>19</sup>

אם em, mater (‘a mother’) = emä (‘a mother’).

זה ze, pron. Demonstrativum, iste (‘this’) = Se (‘this’, ‘it’).

הביש hevis, hiph. ביש pudefacere (‘to make ashamed’) = häväistä (‘to make ashamed’).

הולל holel / holal, insanus (‘folly, infatuated’) = hullu (‘folly, infatuated’).

חזא chaza, vidit (‘he saw’) = catzo (‘has watched’).

ילך yalakh, ivit (theoretically ‘he walked’) = jalka pes (‘a foot’, ‘a leg’).

However, Cajanus was not satisfied with a word list. According to the traditions of the linguistic studies of those days, he continued to examine the various parts of speech (*partes orationis*) of Hebrew and Finnish – though he does not mention this self-evident attitude in his work. Cajanus was able to make the following observations: In the morphology Finnish reveals counterparts to three out of the four “conjugations” (i.e. stems) of Hebrew verbs (*Kal* teki fecit ‘he made’, *Pihel* teeskeli factitavit ‘he frequented/used to make’, and *Hiphil* teetti facere permisit ‘he let make’). Both languages possess independent and non-independent forms of personal pronouns; among the independent pronouns the plural forms of Hebrew ‘*atem* ‘you’ and ‘*hem* ‘they’ closely resemble their Finnish counterparts te and he, while the non-independent short forms can be added as (possessive) suffixes to a noun (e.g. Hebr. *sifrenu kiriamme* libri nostri ‘our books’, cf. Hebr. ‘*anahnu* and Finnish me ‘we’). Further, in both languages these pronominal suffixes can be attached to verbs (i.e. infinitives); thus e.g. ‘*okhli*, ‘*okhleka*, and ‘*okhlo*, derivations of the verb ‘*akhal* ‘to eat’, meaning *edere me/te/eum*, correspond to the Finnish expressions syödesäni, syodesäs, and syödesäns [‘when I/you/he eat(s)];<sup>20</sup> these forms also imply transformations of the vowel patterns in the two languages. In poetry the metre which usually consists of eight syllables as well as the recurrent parallelism of two verses are no minor proofs of the affinity. In the syntax it is worth noticing that for the address both languages apply the second

<sup>19</sup> The transcriptions and English translations have been added by me.

<sup>20</sup> Still in 1858 these Finnish suffixes were mentioned by G.L. Pesonius as an exceptional feature shared by “other Semitic languages, too” [p. 287: “Vielä sitte on suomella, niinkuin muillakin Semitan kielillä, liitettäviä asemoita (latinaksi pronomina sufucsiua), jotka muilta kieliltä tykkänään puuttuu.”]; Pesonius was the first Rector of the first Finnish *gymnasium* in Jyväskylä who also served as the Lecturer in Religion, Greek, and Hebrew in the same school. Gottlieb Leopold Pesonius, ‘Rehtorin puhe Jyväskylän ylä-alkeskoulun avajaisissa 1. 10. 1858’, published e.g. in: *Suomen sana* (Suunn. ja toim. Yrjö A. Jäntti, Porvoo 1965): 285-288.

person singular; instead of the various degrees of comparison of adjectives a reduplicated positive form or a positive form added with an emphatic word (Hebrew *me'od*, Finnish *aiwan*, 'very') replace superlatives in both Hebrew and Finnish. Two consonants in initial position cannot occur in these languages.

A comparison between the arguments of Svenonius and Cajanus is interesting. Svenonius introduced the presumption of the equivalence of Hebrew and Finnish. However, as evidence in favour of his statement he was able to propose a mere list of similar words – the unsteady similarity of which probably casted suspicion on the theory even in his time; on the basis of very similar lists Svenonius also defended special contacts of Swedish with Latin, Greek and Hebrew, on the one hand, and of Latin with Greek and Hebrew, on the other.<sup>21</sup> Nevertheless, in his time Svenonius was an authoritative scholar whose conclusions constituted a starting-point for further research.

Instead of a list of words Eric Cajanus penetrated the question on a more comprehensive level: he examined all the parts of speech which, according to the grammarian tradition of his period, were considered to characterize the very essence of a language.<sup>22</sup> In addition to a condensed list of lexical similarities Cajanus was able to point out similarities in the morphology, prosody, syntax, and phonology, i.e. all the linguistic fields of both languages. This implied that the affinity between Hebrew and Finnish was demonstrated in an all-round shape which followed the current traditions and principles of the scholarly research of his time.

On the basis of this argumentation it is logical to conclude that the

<sup>21</sup> See Heikel 1894: 56-58, and Salminen 1978: 240-241, 245-248.

<sup>22</sup> On the grammatical theories of that period, see G.A. Padley, *Grammatical Theory in Western Europe 1500-1700*. Trends in vernacular grammar, I-II (Cambridge 1985, 1988); Esa Itkonen, *Universal History of Linguistics : India, China, Arabia, Europe* (Amsterdam studies in the theory and history of linguistic science. Series 3, Studies in the history of the language sciences, Vol. 65, Amsterdam 1991).

The article "Suomen kielen kuvaus 1600-luvun kieliopissa" by Sakari Vihonen (*Collegium scientiae*. Suomen oppihistorian kehityslinjoja keskiajalta Turun akatemian alkuaikoihin. Editor: Jussi Nuorteva. Suomen Kirkkohistoriallisen Seuran toimituksia 125, Helsinki-Saarijärvi 1983: 121-155) includes a fine presentation of the philological literature known by the scholars at Academia Aboensis in the seventeenth-eighteenth centuries.

For the dissertations dealing with Oriental studies defended at the Academia Aboensis, see the catalogue in the article "Lähteitä orientalistiikan ja Vanhan testamentin eksegetiikan historiaan 1640-1828" published by Klaus Karttunen, in: Ilkka Antola & Harry Halén (toim.), *Suomalaisen eksegetiikan ja orientalistiikan juuria* (Suomen Kirkkohistoriallisen Seuran toimituksia 161. Helsinki 1993: 163-202): 163-179.



search for the roots and relatives of the Finnish language, which took place in the seventeenth century in academic circles, constituted a part of serious and consequent philological or linguistic research; it was not merely a capricious peculiarity intended to invent a glorious past for one's ethnic group. Even in those days prophecy was a rare phenomenon among scholars, and thus our predecessors could not predict the achievements of comparative linguistics which from the second half of the eighteenth century on was directed along completely new lines. Before that the biblical story of the confusion of languages at the tower of Babel constituted an axiomatic explanation of the variety of languages of the world. In this sense it was not illogical to search for vestiges of the pre-confusional language (as a rule considered to be Hebrew)<sup>23</sup> retained in various languages. A high number of such features could be interpreted as testifying in favour of a special relation with the Holy Tongue, and even a kind of competition can be seen to have taken place in this field. In another article I have referred to a number of parallel word lists which were collected by Sebastian Münster (1489-1552), Sveno Jonæ (died 1642), Olav Rudbeck *junior* (1660-1740), and Eberhard Gutsleff *junior* (1732) with regard to the similarities between Hebrew and German, Swedish, Lappish (Sami), and Estonian, resp.<sup>24</sup> Pierfranceso Giambullari (1495-1555) represents an additional parallel case in his book *Il Gello* (Firenze 1546) in which he refers to Hebrew in order to explain the origins of the Tuscan-Italian language of Florence. I am convinced that the number of these languages supposed to be related to Hebrew could easily be increased by numerous others through a review of the philological literature of the sixteenth-eighteenth centuries.

In Finland this type of research was continued during all of the eighteenth century. Daniel Juslenius (1676-1752), Professor of the (Holy) Languages (1712-1713, 1722-1727) and Theology (1727-1734) in Turku, Bishop of Porvoo / Borgå in Finland (1734-1742), Bishop of Skara in Sweden (1744-1752), a scholar of Finnish history and language, and the most well-known Fennophile of his time, dealt with the relation of Finnish to Hebrew in several publications (his dissertation *Aboa vetus et nova*, 1700; *Vindiciæ fennorum*, 1703; the inauguration speech *De convenientia lingvæ Fennicæ cum Hebræa et Græca*, 1712/1728; the introduction to his Finnish-Latin-Swedish dictionary *Suomalaisen sana-lugun coetus*, 1745).

<sup>23</sup> In contrast to the view of a number of "progressive" scholars, this was the conviction of Svenonius (see Salminen 1978:245-248, 256-257), and it was repeated by his followers, e.g. Daniel Lund (1692: 3).

<sup>24</sup> Tapani Harviainen, 'Ragaz ja rakas. Kai on suomikin heprean sukua?' *Kirjoja ja muita ystäviä*. Onnittelukirja Kaari Utriolle ja Kai Linnilälle (Toimittanut Marjut Paulaharju Karisto Oy, Hämeenlinna 2002): 69-74.

Juslenius was an energetic proponent of the honourable status of the Finnish language who concluded that Finnish was one of the independent cardinal, i.e. basic, languages which, in turn, had given rise to Lappish, Estonian, and Bjarmian, perhaps also to the Slavonic language. The origin of Finnish was to be derived from the Babylonian confusion of languages, and thus “no other language can boast of having given birth to Finnish”; the vestiges of Greek and Hebrew constitute only a part of the Finnish language.<sup>25</sup>

However, in his professoral inauguration speech *Oratio de convenientia linguæ fennicæ cum hebræa et græca* at the Academia Aboensis in 1712 Juslenius stressed the affinities of Finnish with Hebrew (and Greek) as a proof of the importance of the Finnish language.<sup>26</sup> The lexical contacts were described by him in the form of a score of striking equivalents (four of them occurred in earlier lists), though, according to him, there occur six hundred similar ones and, in addition, countless others which by form or reference are more remote but surely related, however. In the future Juslenius wished to return to these counterparts.<sup>27</sup> The words selected by Juslenius for his speech can be seen below (the transcriptions occur only in his manuscript):

Exclamatory אבוי awoi, avoi (‘alas!’) = woi.

Exclamatory אהה ahah, ahah = Finnish ahah.

זה (ze, ‘it, this’; the transcription is lacking in Juslenius) = se.

נערה naara, na’ara; puella (‘a girl’) = naara.

אח ach, ach; focus (‘a fireplace’) = ahjo.

איש isch, ish; vir (‘a man’) = isæ (‘a father’).

אם em, em; mater (‘a mother’) = emæ, æmmæ vetula (‘a mother’, ‘an old woman’).

תאלה & אלה alah, ala; taalah, ta’ala; juramentum (‘an oath’) = wala.

חזה chasa, chaza (‘he had a look’) vel infinitivum חהס kheso, chezo; videre

<sup>25</sup> *Aboa vetus et nova*, Diss., Academia Aboense, Moderatore Joh. Berhn. Munster, [Aboa 1700]: II:2, III:33.

<sup>26</sup> In 1728 the speech appeared in an abbreviated version (called *Dibre chanukka* in Hebrew) in *Schwedische Bibliothec*, I (published by Chr. Nettelbladt, Stockholm 1728: 157-168); however, a complete manuscript of the speech is kept in the Helsinki University Library, call number A III 80. For Juslenius’ opinions, see also Aarne J. Pietilä’s doctoral dissertation *Daniel Juslenius - hänen elämänsä ja vaikutuksensa* (Tampere 1907): 146-154.

<sup>27</sup> “... ad oculum oriri patet; & quæ quærenti sexcenta occurrunt; præter quæ sono vel significatione aliquantum sunt remotiora, certæ tamen affinitatis innumera, sed jam consulto ommissa, aliqve occasioni, si pacem & vitam concesserit *hòs hypértata dōmata naïei*, reservanda. Nunc vero plura eadem brevitate attingemus” (Juslenius’ manuscript: 2-3; Juslenius 1728: 160).

(‘to see’) = katzo. Chaldaeorum inde ortum חזו chaso, chezwa;  
 aspectus (‘appearance, apparition’) transit in nostrum kaswo facies  
 (‘a face’).  
 טבח tabach, tabach; occidere (‘to kill’) = tappa.  
 ילך jalach, yalach; ivit (‘he walked’) = jalca pes (‘a foot, leg’).  
 יעה jaah, ya’a = ajaa ejicere (‘to drive’).  
 כלא chylla, kulla;<sup>28</sup> omne, totum (‘wholly’, ‘totally’) = kyllæ (= kyllä/in),  
 satis (‘sufficiently’).  
 מדה middah, midda; mensura (‘a measure’) = mitta.  
 מדר maddad, madad = mitata (‘to measure’).  
 קריה (*sic pro* קריאה) kirjah, kirya; lectio (‘reading’) = kirja liber (‘a book’).  
 רבץ rawaz, ravats; accubuit (‘it lay down’, sc. to eat) = ravitze saturavit (‘he  
 fed’).  
 רגז ragaz ragsath (?), ragaz ragzat (?); commoveri affectu (‘to be moved  
 by affection’) = racas, racasta dilectus, diligere (‘beloved’, ‘to love’).

Although we know that the comparative word lists consist of casual similarities, we may pay attention to the remarkable difference between Svenonius’ list and those of his followers inclusive of the one collected by Collin, to be presented below: very few of the equations proposed by Svenonius were repeated by later scholars; instead they were able to find a rather large number of other pairs of words which indeed looked very convincing from their viewpoint. In my opinion, this indicates that, while the basic idea of Svenonius was considered to be correct for a long time after his death, his comparative material was estimated to be defective, unreliable, and perhaps even ridiculous in the view of other scholars who themselves were native speakers of Finnish. In this sense the development of the comparative lists also reflects a constant attempt to amend the quality of the argumentation in favour of the affinity between the two languages.

After the comparison of vocabulary Juslenius returned in his speech to the same morphological, syntactical, poetical, and orthographical categories which were earlier presented by Eric Cajanus (see above). In comparison with Cajanus’ achievements, Juslenius was also able to pay attention to several new similarities in the field of morphology: the pronominal suffixes of the first person singular are *-i* and *-ni* in Hebrew and *-ni* in Finnish; in both languages the difference between singular and plural nouns with a pronominal suffix consists of a change in the vowel between the noun and the suffix (however, in Finnish only in the “accusative”), e.g. *debari* vs. *debaray* = Sanani vs. Sanojani (‘my word’ vs. ‘my words’); similarly (a

<sup>28</sup> Ezek. 36,5.

preposition and) a pronominal suffix can be added to (infinitives of) verbs, e.g. *be-bhorcho* in *fugere eum / cum fugeret = paëtesansa* ('when he fled') and *be-qor' i = rucoillesani* ('when I prayed'); a "particle" (preposition) can be added with personal suffixes, e.g. *neged coram* ('in front of'): *negdi - negdecha - negdo coram me/te/eo = edesæni, edesæs, edesæns* ('in front of me/you/him') etc.; also the fourth "conjugation", i.e. the reciprocal *Hithpaël* (stem) of Hebrew verbs has a counterpart in Finnish, e.g. *hitgallel / hitgalgel = kierin* ('he / I rolled him/myself'). This demonstration of the affinity between Hebrew and Finnish is followed by a description of the parallels which in Juslenius' opinion connect Finnish with Greek.

Juslenius became a central figure in the cultural life of Sweden and Finland in the first half of the eighteenth century. Thus his special role in the history of supposed Hebrew-Finnish connections was to plant this conception in the minds of a rather extensive readership who at that time were increasingly interested in the glorious past of the Finnish people. As a consequence, Daniel Juslenius is the person who as a rule is later referred to when this Hebrew "track of errors" is mentioned.

A century after Svenonius' studies, on November 26, 1766, Fridericus (Fredrik) Collin (1743-1816), later (1784-1816) vicar of the parish of Helsinki, published the second part of his *pro gradu* (magister) thesis *Dissertatio historica de origine Fennorum* (p. 27-46) at the Academia Aboensis in Turku;<sup>29</sup> the *præses* of the disputation was Johannes Bilmark, the Professor of History and Practical Philosophy. Collin was born in Ruovesi, in the Finnish-speaking province of Häme. He completed his theological and humanistic studies at the Academia Aboensis and was rector of the Grammar School in Hämeenlinna / Tavastehus from 1775 on till his appointment in Helsinki in 1784.<sup>30</sup>

As a methodology to demonstrate his thesis of the Hebrew- Finnish affinity (*convenientia*), Collin first refers (p. 33) to the material features,<sup>31</sup> i.e. to numerous similar words with similar "root characters" (i.e. consonants) in both languages. However, only the similar references of these similar words can serve as evidence in favour of the relation; the root characters

<sup>29</sup> The first part was presented at Academia Aboensis on June 2, 1764 (4+26 pp.; Vallinkoski, Nos. 270-271). Collin considered that a number of Jews deported from Israel and Judah to Assyria and Babylonia moved together with Scythians to the North, where they became ancestors of the Finns; similar habits and customs in addition to the linguistic similarities served as proofs of this hypothesis.

<sup>30</sup> For Collin, see Herman Hultin, *Helsingfors församlings historia* (Helsingfors 1930): 48-49, and Eeva Ojanen, *Helsingin pitäjän seurakunnan historia* (Helsinki 1972): 117-118, etc.

<sup>31</sup> As for the terms "material" and "formal" (see below), Collin refers to Guiljelmus Vottonus and his *Dissert. Philolog. ad Chamberlainæ*.

can vary according to certain rules, however. Second, it needs to be demonstrated that as root characters the consonants are more essential in both Hebrew and Finnish; in contrast, the vowels can vary and transform the reference of words in innumerable ways.<sup>32</sup>

As a demonstration Collin presents (p. 30-33) a list consisting of 77 Hebrew words with their Finnish counterparts which fulfil his aforementioned prerequisites. Collin admits (p. 33) that he himself did not find all of these parallels; a number of them were presented by his predecessors (Daniel) Juslenius, Eric Cajanus, and Olaus Rudbeck; their literary notes were supplemented by oral information provided by (Anders) Lizelius, Dean of Mynämäki parish.<sup>33</sup>

In the period of Collin Hebrew was still included in general education, and thus every learned man was supposed to know the Holy Tongue fairly well. As a consequence, Collin could present the Hebrew words without vowels (which, completely correctly, were maintained by him to be of a minor significance). In favour of the readers of today – as was the case with Svenonius' Hebrew above – I have added to his list below a transcription after every Hebrew entry as well as English translations of the explanations given by Collin in Latin. In this list, too, underlining is added to point out the Finnish words.

This is the list of 77 words provided by Collin:

איש ish; *Hebr.* Vir ('man'), *Isä Fenn.* Pater ('father').  
 אב ab / av; Pater ('father'), in constr. אבי, abi; Appi Socer ('father-in-law').  
 אהה ahah; Aha ah! vox exclam.  
 אנה ana; Anoa & Anon obsecro ('I beseech, beg')  
 ערק arak; fugit ('he escaped'), Arca pavidus ('timid').  
 עשה asa; fecit ('he made'), Ase instrumentum ('instrument').  
 אור or; lux, Sol ('light', 'sun'), Auringo ('sun').  
 אי e, ey; Ei ('no', 'not').  
 אם em; Emä & Ämmä mater & vetula ('mother' & 'old woman').  
 אין en; non, En non ego ('I not', 'not me').  
 אות ot; Aawet signum, portentum ('sign', 'portent, prodigy').  
 אבוי avoy; Woi vā ('alas!').

<sup>32</sup> In fact, the latter thesis concerns a typical phenomenon in the Semitic languages which has been known from the very beginning of Semitic studies.

<sup>33</sup> Anders / Antti Lizelius (1708-1795) was a well-known publisher and journalist in Finnish and a *primus motor* of the new Finnish translation of the Bible published in 1758 and in revised form in 1776.

אַח ach; Ahio focus fabrilis ('a smith's fireplace').  
 תּאֵלָה & אֵלָה ala & ta'ala; execratio ('imprecation, curse'), Wala jusjurandum ('oath').  
 חָלָק chalak; partitus est ('was divided'), Halki fissum ('cloven').  
 חָמָס chamas; vim intulit ('he treated violently'), Hammas dens ('tooth'),  
Hammastan mordicus impeto ('I assail with the teeth, by biting').  
 הַאֲבִיד he'avid; Hiph. punire fecit ('he put/made to punish'),<sup>34</sup> Häwittä perdere ('to destroy').  
 הוֹלֵל holel / holal; insanivit ('he went mad'), Hullu insanus ('folly, infatuated').  
 הוֹלֵלֹת holelut; Hulluus, stultitia ('stupidity, folly'). הוֹלֵלָה holela, idem.  
 הַמּוֹן hamon; strepitus ('noise'), Humina Sonus venti ('the sound of wind').  
 יָלַךְ yalach; ivit ('he walked'), Jalca ('foot', 'leg').  
 כֵּלִי keli; utensile ('utensil'), Calu res, supellex ('thing', 'set of articles, outfit').  
 כֵּלֹת kelot / kallot; terere ('to use up, wear out'), Calutan rodor ('it is gnawed, nibbled').  
 קָמַט kamat, corrugare ('to crumple up, shrivel'), Cammotta caveri ('to beware of').  
 קָפָא kapha; condensare ('to make hard/firm, condense'), Capia arctus ('firm, narrow').  
 חָרַשׁ charash; fabricatus est ('it is forged'), Caraisen induro ferrum ('I steel iron').  
 חָזָא chaza; vidit ('he saw'), Catzon video ('I see').  
 חָצִי chatsi; dimidium ('half'), Caxi duo ('two').  
 גָּלַל galal; volvit ('he rolled himself'), Kelaan conglomerero funem ('I wind a rope').  
 קָרָא kara; clamavit, oravit ('he shouted', 'prayed'), Kerjätä mendicare ('to go begging').  
 כָּלָא in Piel kille; prohibuit ('he forbade'), Kieldää negare ('to deny').  
 קָהַל in Piel kihel; convenit ('he convened'), Kihlata despondere ('to betroth').  
 חַיִּל chayil; strenuitas ('activity'), Kiltti egregius ('excellent').  
 חָרַב cherev; gladius & quodvis instrumentum consumptionis ('sword & any instrument of consuming'), Kirwes securis ('axe').  
 חָכַת chakkot; expectare ('to wait'), Cocotan expecto ('I wait').  
 חָרַב charav / charev; arescere ('to become dry', 'to dry up'), Corwetan ustulor ('I scorch').  
 כָּלָה in Pyal kulla; teri ('to wear away'), Culun atteror ('I wear away').  
 כֵּן ken; sic ('so'), Cuin sicut ('just as').

<sup>34</sup> Perhaps the Latin counterpart is an error; the common Hebrew verb means 'to destroy'.

כמר kamar; contraxit ('it became tighter, contracted'), Cumarran flecto me  
 ('I bow down').  
 קבה kebha; cavum ventris ('the stomach cavity'), Cupu ingluvies avium  
 ('the crop of a bird').  
 חמם chamam; calidus fuit ('was hot'), Cuuma fervidus ('hot').  
 כלה kullo; totum ejus ('its totality', 'all of it'), Kyllä satis ('sufficiently').  
 אדמה adama; Maa terra ('land, soil, earth').  
 מדה midda; Mitta mensura ('a measure').  
 מעט me'et; *in Piel* exiguus est ('is minor, scanty'), Mieto tenuis ('mild, light,  
 weak').  
 מזה miz-ze; Mistä a quo sc. loco ('whence', i.e. 'from which place').  
 נערה na'ara; puella ('a girl'), Naara puella prostratæ pudicitia ('girl of  
 prostrated chastity').  
 נכה nakha; percussit ('he stroke'), Nacka abjicere ('to throw away').  
 נעם na'am; amœnus fuit ('was charming'), Namu cupidiæ (= cuppediæ)  
 ('dainty dishes, tidbits').  
 נוח nuach; quiescere ('to rest'), Nuckua dormire ('to sleep').  
 פלה pala; separavit ('he separated'), Pala frustum ('a piece').  
 פקוד pakod; mandare ('to order, command'), Pacottaa cogere ('to compel').  
 בן ben; filius ('son'), Penicka catulus ('whelp, puppy').  
 פתה pata / pote; improvidus ('improvident, apt to be deceived'), Petettä  
 seduci, falli ('to be seduced, misled, deceived').  
 פלאות pela'ot; occultare ('to hide'),<sup>35</sup> Pilata (= pilailla) illudere ('to jest').  
 בנה binna; *In Piel* exstruere ('to pile up, construct'), Pinota struem conficere  
 ('to prepare a pile').  
 בוח (an error *pro* פוח) puach; locutus est ('was spoken'), Puhua loqui ('to  
 speak').  
 רבץ ravats; accubuit ('it lay down', sc. to eat), Rawitsen saturo ('I feed').  
 רגוז rogza; commotio ('a motion'), רגז ragaz; commotus fuit ('was moved'),  
Rakas / Rakasta dilectus, diligere ('beloved', 'to love').  
 רכב rekhev; currus ('chariot'), Reki traha ('sledge').  
 ריק rek; inane ('empty, void'), Ricka minimum quid ('a minimum quantity  
 of something').  
 רנה rinna; cantus ('song'), Runo carmen ('song').  
 זה ze; Se ille ('this, it').

<sup>35</sup> Obviously an error, since *pela'ot* is a plural noun referring to 'miracles, miraculous events'; the dictionary by Ganander (see below) does not offer a Hebrew counterpart of this verb pilaan - 'I jest' (Ganander 1997: 704), either.

צמא & צמא tsama & tsim'a; sitis ('thirst'), Siemen (= sieme, siemaus)<sup>36</sup>  
 haustus, potus ('draught', 'drink').  
 דגן dagan; frumentum ('corn, grain'), Taikina massa ('dough').  
 דעת da'at; scire ('to know'), Taito / Tietä scire ('skill' / 'to know').  
 דכא dakha; contundere ('to beat, crush, squeeze together'), Takoa tundere  
 ('to beat, hammer, strike').  
 תלל talal, accumulavit ('he heaped up, accumulated'), Tallillan (= tallataan /  
 tallailaan) concutior ('it is pressed together').<sup>37</sup>  
 תהו tohu; inane ('empty, void'), Tyhjä inanis ('empty, void').  
 תהו orach; via tecta ('a paved/treated way'), Ura via nive tecta ('a way  
 paved/treated in the snow').  
 בעל ba'al; dominatus est ('he is ruler'), Walda / Wallita potentia ('might,  
 power' / 'to rule').  
 טמא tame; inquinatus fuit ('he was polluted'), Tahmia lentore inquinare ('to  
 pollute with a sticky substance').  
 יעה ya'a; ejecit ('he drove'), Ajan urgeo, pello ('I urge', 'I drive').  
 קריאה kerī'a; lectio ('reading'), Kirja liber ('a book').  
 הביש hevish; pudefacere ('to make ashamed'), Häväisen pudore suffundo ('I  
 pour shame upon').  
 שדד shadad; bellum gerere ('to carry on a war'), Sodin bellum gero ('I carry  
 on a war').  
 שלל shalal; spoliū ('booty, spoil'), Saalis praeda ('prey, booty').

A comparison with Svenonius' list clearly indicates that Collin paid strict attention to his propositions, which demanded similarity of both the consonantal structure and the reference of the words. In this sense he did demonstrate the correctness of his hypothesis. In addition to this "material similarity", he repeated once again the aforementioned morphological, prosodic, and syntactical, i.e. "formal features"<sup>38</sup> which also according to Daniel Lund, Cajanus, and Juslenius connected Finnish with Hebrew (p. 33-35). Parallels in material culture, manners and customs,<sup>39</sup> were added to

<sup>36</sup> Cf. Ganander 1997: 867 where the same Hebrew counterpart is mentioned in connection with the word sieme 'a draught of potion'.

<sup>37</sup> Cf. tallaan and tallailen in Ganander's Dictionary (1997: 948) which are connected with the Hebrew verb *talal*; in fact these Finnish verbs mean 'to tread, stamp (underfoot)'.

<sup>38</sup> See above, note 31.

<sup>39</sup> Though I have expressed above my dislike for the attempts to describe the achievements of our predecessors in a ridiculous light, a connection proposed by Collin between the unleavened Passover bread of Jews and the Finnish Easter pudding *mämmi*, the name of



the chain of evidence. In theory, the close connection between Hebrew and Finnish was now demonstrated as multi-laterally and convincingly as the paradigms of the current philology could ever demand.<sup>40</sup>

The word list of Collin was to receive a permanent position in the study of Finnish, when it was included by Christfrid Ganander, pastor of the parish of Rantsila (1741-1790), in his extensive dictionary of the Finnish language; in contrast to the earlier lists Collin's achievement was obviously considered to be most reliable. *Nytt Finskt Lexicon* was completed by Ganander in manuscript form in 1786-87; in it the author offers Hebrew etymologies and/or counterparts for almost one hundred Finnish words without mentioning the source of these notes. Nevertheless, the identical spelling mistakes, printer's errors etc. in Ganander's Hebrew indicate that he in fact copied the whole list of word comparisons collected by Collin in his dissertation; a few other words were added from other sources. Unfortunately, however, the dictionary by Ganander did not appear in print earlier than

which clearly originated from Hebrew, probably transformed into Finnish from the biblical celestial bread *manna* (p. 43-44), is too amusing to be passed by without a note. In part, Collin has taken the reference to *mämmi* from Daniel Juslenius, who in the *Aboa vetus et nova* (1700, III: 28) and in his Dictionary (1745) wrote that *mämmi* is eaten in Turku at Easter in memory of the unleavened bread.

<sup>40</sup> Still later, these "formal" arguments were repeated by Carolus Gustavus Weman (1740-1803) and his respondent Benedictus Jac. Ignatius in the *De convenientia linguarum hebraeæ et fennicæ*, a dissertation defended at the Academia Aboensia in 1767 (Vallinkoski, No. 4276), although according to Weman (p. 16), Collin had demonstrated the affinity both "in materialem & formalem" in his dissertation. As for the vocabulary, however, Weman was satisfied with a quotation of Henricus Ganander (p. 13), who in his grammar of Lappish published in 1743 (in fact, it is an open question whether this grammar was ever published, cf. Nuutinen, in: Christfrid Ganander 1997: xi) had offered the following six comparisons which in his opinion are shared by Hebrew, Lappish, and Finnish:

צָנַף tsanaf, circumligavit	Zianam ligo	<u>Sidon</u>
צִינֹק tsinok, Nervus	Suodnac funis ex nervis	<u>Suonicko</u>
צֵלֶם tselem, Imago	Zialbme oculus	<u>Silmä</u>
יָלַךְ yalakh, ambulavit	Juolka pes	<u>Jalka</u>
יָד yad, manus	Kiedta manus	<u>Käsi</u>
יָדָא yada, manavit, civit	Jodam profiscor	<u>Judan</u>

A footnote by Weman shows that he did not understand Judan, a north-Finnish loan from Lappish, because he wishes to correct it to Joudun, *pervenio, pergo celeriter. Forte etiam nomen Juhta jumentum huc referri potest. Manavit and civit mean 'to flow, spread, move, stir', and both the Lappish Jodam and Finnish Judan 'I journey, travel'.*

On p. 14-15 Weman refers to (Olav) Rudbeck *filius* according to whom the Finns originated from the ten lost tribes of Israel.

1997.<sup>41</sup>

However, only a few decades after Collin and Ganander the study of comparative linguistics was to acquire a totally different direction under the leadership of Wilhelm von Humboldt, Franz Bopp, Rasmus Rask and Jacob Grimm. Our predecessors could not predict future developments. As part of the European community of scholars they followed the scholarly paradigm of their own period.

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<sup>41</sup> A scholarly edition: Christfrid Ganander, *Nytt Finskt Lexicon*, ed. by Liisa Nuutinen, I-II, Helsinki-Hämeenlinna 1997.