

Possessive suffixes in Urbanus Rhegius's *Sieluin vahvistos*

The Westh Codex, written in the 1540s, is one of the oldest hand-written records of Finnish literacy. The book contains various religious texts and a “soul healing handbook” of which this is the only surviving Finnish translation. Urbanus Rhegius's work titled *Sieluin vahvistos* [Strengthening the soul] provides an opportunity to study Finnish phonetic notation before the introduction of uniform orthography. The present paper examines possessive suffixes in the text. Given that Finnish phonetic notation was not yet consistent at the time of the translation, the variation in the suffixes is partly due to the different ways of spelling, partly due to instability in the paradigm itself at the time. There is also some degree of diversity in the spelling of the suffixes, because of the fact that the translation is evidently a draft in which the various translators applied various notations and these were not consolidated later on. Dialectal factors also played a part in variability. The phenomenon of vowel deletion (*loppuheitto*) is characteristic of the western dialect, which is analysed in the paper in detail. In today's Finnish language, the possessive suffix is added to strong base words, while in old texts, weak bases were also frequent.

Keywords: West Codex, possessive suffix, vowel deletion

MERI JUHOS