

Main grammatical features of Old Finnish

Future-tense constructions:

pitää tekemän:

Biblia:

jos sinä tule-s käy-t, e-t sinä pala,
if you fire-IN go-2SG no-2SG you burn
ja liekki-n e-i pidä sinu-a sytyttä-män
and flame-GEN no-3SG shall you-PART ignite-INF.INSTR

"If you walk in fire, you will not burn, and the flame will not ignite you" (Isaiah 43:2)

Swedish: *skall göra*, German *soll tun*

tahtoo tehdä:

Agricola, Preface to NT:

Ja mine tadho-n hene-n Waldakunna-ns wahwista ijancaikisesta.
and I will-1SG he-GEN realm-3SG strengthen forever
Mine tadho-n olla hene-n Ise-ns / ia hene-n pite
I will-1SG be he-GEN father-3SG and he-GEN shall
ole-man minu-n Poica-n
be-INF.INSTR me-GEN son-1SG

"And I will strengthen his realm forever, I will be his father, and he shall be my son."

Swedish *vill göra*, German *will tun*

on tekevä:

Agricola, NT:

<i>Mite sijs</i>	<i>nyt</i>	<i>Winatarha'</i>	<i>Herra</i>	<i>o-mpi</i>	<i>teke-ue ?</i>	
what	then	now	vineyard(-GEN)	Lord	is-3SG	do-PARTIC
<i>Hen tule-pi</i>		<i>ia</i>	<i>hucka-pi</i>	<i>ne</i>	<i>Winatarhamiehe-t</i>	
he	come-3SG		and	destroy-3SG	those	vineyard-man-PL
<i>ia</i>	<i>anda-pi</i>	<i>se-n</i>	<i>Winatarha-n</i>	<i>mu-i-lle</i>		
and	give-3SG	that-GEN	vineyard-GEN	other-PL-ALLATIVE		

"What now will the Lord of the vineyard do? He will destroy the workers in the vineyard and give the vineyard to others." (Mark 12:9)

Swedish *warder görandes*, Latin *facturus sum*

Local cases:

Inessive -s, -sA

Agricola, NT:

Ja hen sano-i hene-lle Aha sine hyue paluelia
and he say-IPF.3SG him-ALLATIVE aha you good servant

ettes ol-i-t wähe-s wskolinen
that be-IPF.2SG little-INESSIVE faithful

sinu-lla pite ole-man walla-n kymenen Caupungi-n ylitze
you-ADESSIVE shall be-INF.INSTR power-GEN ten city-GEN over

"And he said to him, aha you faithful servant, because you were faithful in little, you shall have power over ten cities." (Luke 19:17)

Martti's Land Law, 1580:

Sencaldais-i-s asio-i-s taicka mu-i-sa sencaldais-i-s,
such-PL-INESSIVE issue-PL-INESSIVE or other-PL-INESSIVE such-PL-INESSIVE

nijn pitä
then must

caike-n Ruotzi-n cansa-n kuninga-lle-ns cwliaise-t ole-man
all-GEN Sweden-GEN people-GEN king-ALLATIVE-3PL obedient-PL be-INF.INSTR

"In such issues, or in other likewise issues, must all of Sweden's people be obedient to their king."

West Finnish dialectal feature

Allative *-llen*

Westh, 1540s:

<i>O</i>	<i>Jumala,</i>	<i>ioca</i>	<i>miehe-n</i>	<i>ia</i>	<i>wimo-n</i>	<i>ole-t</i>	<i>sitonut</i>	<i>ychten,</i>
O	God	who	man-GEN	and	wife-GEN	be-2SG	bound	together
<i>ja</i>	<i>ole-t</i>	<i>hei-lle</i>		<i>andanut</i>	<i>sencaltaise-n</i>	<i>hyuestisiunauxe</i>		
and	be-2SG	they-ALLATIVE		given	such-GEN		blessing(-GEN)	

"O God, who has bound husband and wife together, and who has given them such a blessing."

Archaic feature

Essive fused to consonant stem with occasional assimilation:

Ljungo, City Law 1609:

<i>E-ij</i>	<i>mahda</i>	<i>mös</i>	<i>ikänäns</i>	<i>se</i>	<i>radhi</i>	<i>mies-sä</i>	<i>olla,</i>
Not-3SG	may	also	ever	that	council	man-ESSIVE	be
<i>io-lla</i>		<i>e-ij</i>	<i>ole</i>	<i>istuu</i>	<i>perus</i>	<i>caupungi-sa</i>	
that-ADESSIVE		not-3SG	be	sitting	base	city-INESSIVE	

"Not may that person ever be a councillor, that does not have a permanent residence in the city."

Archaic feature (retained in e.g. Finnish *läs-nä* 'present')

Dative genitive

Martti, Land Law 1580:

<i>häne-n</i>	<i>pitä</i>	<i>tö-tä</i>	<i>teke-män</i>	<i>aighastaia-n</i>	<i>cu-nkin</i>	<i>marka-n</i>	<i>edhest,</i>
he-GEN	must	work-PART	do-INF.INSTR	year-GEN	each-GEN	mark-GEN	for
<i>ensin</i>	<i>syynsanoia-n</i>	<i>ia</i>	<i>sitte</i>	<i>kuninga-n</i>			
first	accuser-GEN	and	then	king-GEN			

"He must do work for each mark for a year, first for the accuser and then for the king."

Compare the same phrase in Abraham Kollanius' 1648 translation:

<i>häne-n</i>	<i>pitä</i>	<i>työ-tä</i>	<i>teke-män</i>	<i>ajastaja-n,</i>	<i>cu-ngin</i>	<i>marcaa-n</i>	<i>edhestä ,</i>
he-GEN	must	work-PART	do-INF.INSTR	year-GEN e	ach-GEN	mark-GEN	for
<i>ensin</i>	<i>syynsanoja-lle,</i>	<i>sitten</i>	<i>Kuninga-lle</i>				
first	accuser-ALLATIVE	then	king-ALLATIVE				

Infrequent in Agricola and early texts, even more infrequent later on. Has long been taken to be an archaic Uralic feature, despite the occurrence in only Old Finnish and Livonian. Nobufumi Inaba however argues it is a result of Swedish influence (with the indirect object case being overtaken by the direct object case in datival function in early modern Swedish).

Reflexive verbs

Agricola, Prayer Book (Psalm 102):

<i>Hen</i>	<i>kienne-xen</i>	<i>nijn-nen</i>	<i>ylenannettu-den</i>	<i>Rucous-ten</i>	<i>polen</i>
he	turn-REFLEXIVE.3SG	those-GEN.PL	abandoned-GEN.PL	prayer-GEN.PL	towards
<i>ia</i>	<i>e-ij</i>	<i>ylencatzo</i>	<i>heide'</i>	<i>Rucous-ta-ns</i>	
and	NEG-3SG	overlook	their(-GEN)	prayer-PART-3SG	

"He turns towards the prayer of the abandoned, and does not overlook their prayer."

Agricola, NT (Luke 4:40)

<i>Ja</i>	<i>quin</i>	<i>Auringo</i>	<i>lask-i-hin</i>	<i>nin</i>	<i>caiki</i>	<i>io-i-lla</i>	<i>ol-i</i>	
and	as	the sun	set-IPF-REFLEXIVE.3SG	then	all	who-PL-ADESSIVE	be-IPF.3SG	
<i>Sairah-i-ta</i>								
sick-PL-PART								
<i>moninais-i-s</i>		<i>Taudh-i-s</i>		<i>we-i-t</i>		<i>he</i>	<i>hene-n</i>	<i>tygens</i>
many-PL-INESSIVE		disease-PL-INESSIVE		bring-IPF-3PL		they	he-GEN	to

Occurs in Agricola. The form has clear (eastern) dialectal roots.

Third person plural imperfect -t

Biblia 1642, Matthew 26:57

<i>MU</i>	<i>ta</i>	<i>ne</i>	<i>jo-tca</i>	<i>Jesuxe-n</i>	<i>ol-i-t</i>	<i>kijnniottanet</i>	
but	they	that-PL		Jesus-GEN	be-IPF-3PL	arrested	
<i>we-i-t</i>		<i>häne-n</i>		<i>Caipha-n</i>	<i>ylimmäise-n</i>	<i>Papi-n</i>	<i>tygö</i>
bring-IPF-3PL		he-GEN		Caiaphas-GEN	highest-GEN	priest-GEN	to
"But they that had arrested Jesus, brought him to Caiaphas the high priest."							

Personal pronoun accusative: generally -n (also with necessitive verbs):

Biblia 1642, Matthew 26:56

<i>Silloin</i>	<i>caicki</i>	<i>Opetuslapse-t</i>	<i>jät-i-t</i>	<i>häne-n</i>	<i>ja</i>	<i>paken-i-t</i>
then	all	disciple-PL	leave-IPF-3PL	him-GEN(-ACC)	and	flee-IPF-3PL

"Then all the disciples left him and fled".

Common west Finnish dialectal feature

Accusatives with -t occur occasionally in the earliest texts and Agricola:

Agricola, NT (Matthew 20:25)

<i>Mutta</i>	<i>Jesus</i>	<i>cutzu-i</i>	<i>heide-t</i>	<i>tyge-ns</i>	<i>ia</i>	<i>sano-i</i>
but	Jesus	call-IPF.3SG	they-ACC	to-3SG	and	say-IPF.3SG

"But Jesus called them to him and said"

3rd person singular *-pi*

Agricola, NT, Preface

<i>Wastoin</i>	<i>si-te</i>	<i>Kirous-t</i>	<i>hyuestisiugna-pi</i>	<i>nyt</i>	<i>Euangeliiu'</i>	<i>caike-n</i>	<i>Mailma'</i>
against	that-PART	curse-PART	bless-3SG	now	gospel	all-GEN	world(-GEN)
<i>se-n</i>	<i>cansa</i>	<i>ette se</i>	<i>iulkisesta</i>	<i>wloshwta</i>	<i>ia</i>	<i>selkest</i>	<i>ilmoita-pi</i>
that-GEN	with	that it	publicly	proclaim	and	clearly	report-3SG
<i>Ette ioca</i>	<i>teme-n</i>	<i>Abrahami-n</i>	<i>Siemene-n päle</i>	<i>Usko-pi</i>	<i>se-n</i>		
that	who	this-GEN	Abraham-GEN	seed-GEN	upon	believe-3SG	that-GEN
<i>pite</i>	<i>hyuestisiugnattaman</i>						
shall	bless-PASS-INF.INSTR						

"Against this curse the Gospel now blesses the whole world, with that it publicly proclaims and clearly reports that whoever believes in this seed of Abraham will be blessed."

Most common in Agricola, more commonly with shorter verbs and contraction verbs, never with modal verbs.

Note in the above: **prefigated verbs** (*hyuestisiugnapi*, *wloshwta*). These are particularly common in Agricola, but less so already in the 1642 Bible. Some have survived into Modern Finnish (*ristiinnaulita*, *allekirjoittaa*).

Ablative agent with passive

Biblia, 1 Samuel 31:3

<i>Ja</i>	<i>sota ol-i</i>	<i>angara</i>	<i>Sauli</i>	<i>wastan</i>	<i>ja</i>	
and	war be-IPF.3SG	hard	Saul(-PART)	against	and	
<i>joudzimiehe-t</i>	<i>käw-i-t</i>		<i>häne-n</i>	<i>päälle-ns</i>	<i>jous-ten</i>	<i>cansa</i>
bowman-PL	came-IPF-3PL		he-GEN	upon-3SG	bow-GEN.PL	with
<i>ja</i>	<i>haawoite-ttin</i>	<i>pahoin</i>	<i>joudzimieh-i-ldä</i>			
and	wound-PASS.IPF	badly	bowman-PL-ABLATIVE			

"And the war was hard for Saul, and bowmen came upon him with their bows, and (he) was wounded badly by the bowmen"

Clear contact-induced feature (Swedish *av*, German *von*, Latin *ab*), widely used throughout the Old Finnish period and even accepted into the 19th century.

General tendency: postpositional constructions where Modern Finnish would prefer local case constructions.

Westh (1540s):

<i>Ja Sano</i>	<i>Pappi</i>	<i>Heidhe-n</i>	<i>tyghiö-ns</i>		
and say(-3SG)	priest	they-GEN	to-3SG		
<i>Aijatel-ka-t</i>	<i>näi-nen</i>	<i>Jumala-n</i>	<i>Sana-in</i>	<i>päle</i>	
think-IMPER-2PL	those-GEN.PL	God-GEN	word-GEN.PL	upon	
<i>ja muista-ca-t</i>		<i>ne visusti</i>	<i>ja pan-ga-t</i>	<i>täysi vsco</i>	
and remember-IMPER-2PL		those surely	and place-IMPER-2PL	full belief	
<i>nij-nnen</i>	<i>tyghiö</i>				
those-GEN.PL	to				

In "Modern" Finnish, this would be something like:

ja sanoo pappi heille: ajatelkaa näitä Jumalan sanoja ja muistakaa ne visusti ja pankaa täysi usko niihin