

## Arto Mustajoki – a love of words

Arto Mustajoki took his MA degree at the University of Helsinki in 1970, majoring in German philology. He says that he started studying Russian as a form of rebellion against the values and concepts of his parents' generation. In order to support this rebellion, he also grew his hair long. Long hair and Russian studies were not rare forms of rebellion in Finland in the 1960s. But few have kept up their rebellion for 40 years and made it the orientation of their whole lives. Arto Mustajoki's hair is still abundant, and he is known world-wide as a scholar of Russian language and culture.

Unlike many other western rebels in the 1960s, Arto Mustajoki never manifested his rebellion politically. But during four decades he has come to occupy many of the central sites of the rebellion: his own department, the faculty, right up to the highest administrative ranks of the university, to national and international academic administration. Always abreast of his times, he has been active in major EU scientific projects, but in addition to Moscow and Brussels his work has also taken him frequently to China, Kazakhstan and Kirghizistan. As well as being a scholar and an administrator, Arto Mustajoki has also been conscious of his responsibility as a teacher. He began producing textbooks and dictionaries early in his career. When still a young man, he became secretary general of the International Association of Teachers of Russian. His curriculum vitae is amazing: space here permits no more than a brief outline.

Arto Mustajoki gained his PhD in 1981, with a thesis on Russian accentology. The next year he was appointed Professor of Russian Language and Literature at the University of Helsinki, a post he still holds. Since 1982 he has been the head of a constantly expanding department, currently the Department of Slavonic and Baltic Languages and Literatures. He has honorary doctorates from the Russian Academy of Science and Moscow State University. In 1983 he had already been awarded the Pushkin medal by the International Association of Teachers of Russian. Arto Mustajoki has been Dean of the Helsinki University Faculty of Arts, Vice-Rector of the University, Board Member of the Academy of Finland, and Chair of the Academy's Research Council for Culture and Society. He is currently head of the Finnish Academy of Science and Letters.

Mustajoki was elected to the board of the International Association of Teachers of Russian in 1981, and was secretary general of the Association from 1991 to 2003, the first person from outside the former socialist block to hold the post; he is currently vice-chairman. He has held many posts in the European Science Foundation. He has evaluated teaching and research in several Finnish and European universities. He is chair of the research com-

mittee of the “Russia in Flux” research programme at the Academy of Finland. Other board memberships include the Helsinki University finance committee, the Alexander Institute, and the Slavonic Library. One of his most recent tasks has concerned the EU-sponsored project on “Fostering the rebirth of social sciences and humanities in Central Asia”.

What are the subjects of Arto Mustajoki’s own research? In his own words, his main areas of interest include these: Russian functional syntax, Russian accentology, the object case in Russian negative sentences, contrastive analysis of Finnish and Russian, corpus-based studies of Russian, language theory and the methodology of linguistics, communication and its failures, cross-cultural communication and stereotypes, ethnic, cultural and linguistic identity and tolerance, differences in Russian and Finnish communication behaviour, language teaching and its methods.

Mustajoki published his first textbook, on the basics of Russian grammar, in 1974 at the age of 26. The 1970s were a golden age for enthusiasts of Russian in Finland; thousands began their studies of the language under his tuition: “Raz, dva, tri”. Since that time he has also published many other textbooks and dictionaries, both alone and with others.

In his multiple roles in teaching, scholarship, administration and academic politics, Arto Mustajoki has written a mass of articles, columns and essays in different media. He has a great sense of humour: one of his projects during the past decade was a collection of Russian jokes, put together with colleagues and students, entitled “Russian roulette”. In his younger days he was a fine basketball player. All who know him well know that he loves all kinds of games. Department colleagues scarcely recall a single planning or seminar day that did not end with a competition, quiz or game in the evening, under his inspiration.

The editors have called this Festschrift “A love of words”. Arto’s rich career could perhaps be summed up in some of the words he has chosen for the titles of his own writings...

The scholar and textbook writer at play: “crossword word”, “aspect and tennis”, “language and reality”, “language and thought”, “watching one’s words”, “myth, half-truth and the whole truth”, “electric draw”, “master or servant”, “travelling with the master”, “lodka (boat)”, “kapusta (Ru. ‘cabbage’, Fi. ‘ladle’)", “of cabbages and ladles”, “window (okno)”, “ochen’ priyatno (nice to meet you)”, “horosho (good)”, “raz dva tri (one two three)”, “who is who?”, “What? How? Why?”. – The columnist replies: “Catastrophes and values”, “Outcome: the university”, “O highest state authority, help!", “Cash in order”, “Model give and take”, “Façades”, “Power!", “Simple!", “More transparency!", “People-value”, and even “Hi from holiday”.

And finally: “With love”. This is the title of a computer program published with his son in 1990, a title chosen by a father with four children and

eight grandchildren. Arto is firmly rooted in life. He is the right man for demanding tasks, whether in academic administration, research, teaching, the everyday running of a department, or as a family man. Arto is important, but he does not make a big thing of himself. He is a good leader, and at the same time a good colleague. I speak from experience: I have known Arto for 40 years, and we have worked in the same department for 25 years. On behalf of all Arto's friends and colleagues, we hereby dedicate this book to Arto "with love".

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