

## PREFACE

On October 20<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Elena Skribnik celebrated her 70<sup>th</sup> birthday. She figures among those scholars whose contributions to the role of information structure in grammatical choices have led to what we can call an *information structural turn* in Uralic studies (see e.g., Skribnik 2001). Her research areas, however, are much broader than merely Uralic. After working with East Asian languages in her academic youth, she became a well-known Mongolist (see e.g., Skribnik 2003), has worked with Siberian Turkic languages (see e.g., Skribnik 2014), and can be called a *Ural-Altaicist* in the best sense of this word. Under the tutelage of her teacher Maja Čereminsina, she as an already established linguist first came into contact with Mansi in a field expedition in 1984, and soon lost her heart to it. In addition to her many articles on various morphosyntactic problems and functional operators (see *The Oxford Guide to the Uralic Languages 2022* : 1091 for a partial overview), she has contributed greatly to making Mansi more accessible to scholarly and lay communities through, inter alia, her North Mansi textbook (Скрибник, Афанасьева 2007), spearheading the creation of the Ob-Ugric Database (OUDB) at <http://www.babel.gwi.uni-muenchen.de/>, and co-authoring the immensely information-dense North Mansi sketch in the recent *Oxford Guide to Uralic Languages* (Bakró-Nagy, Sipőcz, Skribnik 2022). With the present thematic issue of *Linguistica Uralica* we want to commemorate Elena Skribnik's 70<sup>th</sup> birthday and her influence on Mansi studies.

The papers assembled in this issue are dedicated to different aspects of Mansi studies. Jeremy Bradley and Rogier Blokland review the practicalities of print realization and the role of Unicode in the history of Uralic minority languages with a focus on Mansi. Bernadett Bíró and Katalin Sipőcz survey the newspaper *Лүимā сәрипос* (*Lūimā Sēripos* 'Northern Dawn') for writings which reflect on the Mansi language in Mansi. Two papers are devoted to grammar problems of North Mansi: Csilla Horváth and Nikolett Mus present the results of an experiment on variation in copula use in nominal clause types, and Susanna Virtanen looks at non-clause-initial placement of subjects. The final paper by Gerson Klumpp investigates differential object marking in West Mansi, where direct objects may be flagged with a multi-functional dative-lative case.

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A note on language designations: the reader may observe an alternation between e.g., *North Mansi* and *Northern Mansi*. In our view *North Mansi* is the appropriate designation of the literary language, but studies often rely on data beyond standardization and belong to the northern etc. varieties of Mansi. We thus desisted from standardizing the designations in this volume and left these choices to the authors, as we did with glossing conventions.

We hope that this thematic issue succeeds in showing and celebrating the eminent impact of Elena Skribnik in advancing Mansi studies.

Uppsala, Vienna, and Tartu in November 2023,  
Rogier Blokland  
Jeremy Bradley  
Gerson Klumpp

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