

# Mari

Community of Practice in Uralic Studies (COPIUS)  
Foundations of Uralic etymology

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## Mari: general

- two main dialects and literary standards: Meadow Mari (M) and Hill Mari (H)
- other relevant dialects for Proto-Mari (PM) reconstruction are North-Western dialect (NW), Volga and Upša (mostly relevant for the recovery of Proto-Mari recuded close vowels (PM \**ũ*, \**ĩ* and \**ü*) as Meadow Mari has mostly lost the distinction between recuded and full vowels (PM \**ũ* and \**u* coinciding as *u*, PM \**ĩ* and \**ü* as *ü*), Hill Mari back reduced vowel *ə̂* <ы> continues PM \**ũ*, but PM \**ĩ* and \**ü* have coincided as front reduced vowel *ə* <ѳ>
- Proto-Mari still had two separate sibilants \**s* (< PU \**s*) and \**š* (< PU \**ś* and \**š*) that are in most Mari dialects both continued by *š*, but remain distinct most consistently in East Mari dialect of Malmyž where PM \**s* is in complementary distribution with *s* (preceding back vowels) and *ś* (preceding front vowels)

# From Proto-Uralic to Mari 1 (stops)

- the treatment of PU single stops varies, PU \**k* is lost completely between vowels:

PU \*(*j*)*ikä* ‘year, age’ > PM \**i* > M *ij*, H *i* ‘year’ (Meadow Mari *j* is a secondary hiatus filler)

PU \**luka* ‘10’ > PM \**lu* > M H *lu* ‘10’

PU \**wäki* ‘strength’ > PM \**wi* > M *wij*, H *wi*

- PU \**p* > PM \**w*,  $\emptyset$  (conditions are probably tied to 2-syllable development, but are fairly uncertain)

PU \**kopa* ‘skin’ > PM \**kŭwə* ‘husk’ > M *kuwo* ‘husk’

PU \**repäsə* ‘fox’ > PM \**rŭwəž* > M *rəwəž*, H *ərwəž*

PU \**šepä* ‘neck’ > PM \**šü* > M *šüj*, H *šü*

## From Proto-Uralic to Mari 2 (stops)

- PU \*t > PM \*t (word-finally), \*ḏ (word-internally), \*ć (after PM \*i) (develops into a voiced z between vowels, stays an affricate in clusters and word-finally)

PU \*kota ‘hut’ > PM \*kuḏə ‘summer hut/kitchen’ > M kuḏo, H kuḏə

PU \*kāti ‘hand’ > PM \*kit > M H kit (note that in Cyrillic orthography morphophonological voiceless/voiced distinction is ignored in favour of the voiced, nominative *kit* <кид> : accusative *kiḏə̆m* <кидым>)

PU \*pitä- ‘to hold, cling to’ > PM \*pīće- > M pə̆že-, H pəze- ‘to hold, cling to’

PU \*šeṭa ‘100’ > PM \*šüḏə > M šüḏö, H šüḏə

PU \*wetī ‘water’ > PM \*wūt > M wūt, H wət (note what was said regarding the Cyrillic orthography regarding *kit*)

# From Proto-Uralic to Mari 3 (nasals)

- PU \**ŋ* > mostly PM \**ŋ* (fortified to *ŋg* in Hill Mari)

PU \**poŋi* ‘bosom’ > PM \**poŋəš* > M *poməš* (!), H *poŋəš*

PU \**tüŋi* ‘stem’ > PM \**tũŋ* > M *tüŋ*, H *təŋg* ‘stem, stump’

PU \**wăŋiw* ‘son-in-law’ > PM \**wiŋə* > M *wenɛ*, H *wiŋə*

- but loss in 2 cases (perhaps connected to the change PU \**n* > PM  $\emptyset$  described below)

PU \**jăŋi* ‘ice’ > PM \**i* > M *ij*, H *i*

PU \**piŋi* ‘tooth’ > PM \**pü* > M *püj*, H *pü*

- PU \**n* > PM  $\emptyset$  (succeeding PM \**i* and \**ü* in \**i*-stems)

PU \**meni-* ‘to go’ > PM \**mie-* > M *mije-*, H *mie-*

PU \**peni* ‘dog’ > PM \**pi* > M *pij*, H *pi*

# From Proto-Uralic to Mari 4 (spirants)

- PU \* $\delta$  is uniformly lost in all positions

PU \**a $\delta$ ma* ‘sleep’ > PM \**om*( $\emptyset$ ) > M *omo*, H *om*

PU \**ku $\delta$ a-* ‘to weave’ > PM \**koe-* > M *kue-*, H *koe-*

- PU \* $\delta'$  > PM \* $\delta$  (in \**A*-stems) / loss (\**i*-stem)

PU \**ka $\delta'$ a-* ‘to leave’ > PM \**ko $\delta$ e-* > M *ko $\delta$ e-*, H *ko $\delta$ e-*

PU \**šo $\delta'$ a* ‘war’ > PM \**šu $\delta$ ala-* ‘to curse’ > M H *šu $\delta$ ala-*

PU \**šü $\delta'$ i* ‘charcoal’ > PM \**šü* > M *šüj*, H *šü* ‘coal’

PU \**wu $\delta'$ i* ‘new’ > PM \**u* > M *u*, H *u*

# From Proto-Uralic to Mari 5 (sibilants)

- PU \*š and \*ś > PM \*š (voiced to ž V\_V)

PU \**aška/il* ‘step’ > PM \**ǎškəl* > M *oškəl*, H *aškəl*

PU \**šeŋta* ‘100’ > PM \**šüðə* > M *šüðö*, H *šüðə*

PU \**šonta* ‘dung’ > PM \**šǎndə* > M *šondo* ‘urine’, H *šandə* ‘excrement’

- PU \*s > PM \*s > Malmyž s/ś, š elsewhere in Mari (voiced V\_V)

PU \**kow/ysi* ‘spruce’ > PM \**koz* > M H *kož*, Malmyž *koz*

PU \**męksa* ‘liver’ > PM \**moks* > M H *mokš*, Malmyž *moks*

PU \**sala-* ‘to steal’ > PM \**soləšta-* > M H *šoləšta-*, Malmyž *solə̂šta-*

PU \**seŋi* ‘sinew, vein’ > PM \**sün* > M *šön*, Malmyž *śün*, H *šün*



## From Proto-Uralic to Mari 6 (clusters)

- in syllable-final positions, simplification occurs in many clusters:

PU \**epti* 'hair (on the head)' > PM \**üp* > M H *üp*

PU \**ku/olmi* '3' > PM \**kŭm* > M *kum*, H *kə̂m*

PU \**künči* '(finger)nail' > PM \**küč* > M *küč*, H *kəč*

PU \**pučki* 'hollow stalk' > PM \**pŭč* > M *puč*, H *pəč* 'hollow plant stalk, tube'

# From Proto-Uralic to Mari 7 (denasalization)

- denasalization, loss of nasals before an original *\*i* in the following syllable?

PU *\*anti* ‘root, branch, sprout’ > PM *\*āḍar* ‘sprout, shoot, branchy’ > M *oḍar*, Nw *aḍar*

PU *\*jäntiŋ* ‘tendon’ > PM *\*j̄ḍäŋ* > M *jəḍaŋ*, H *jəḍäŋ*

PU *\*kenči-* ‘to look for, search’ > PM *\*kičälä-* (frequentative derivation in Mari) > M *kəčala-*, H *kəčälä-*

PU *\*kunti* ‘length’ > PM *\*kūt* > M *kut*, H *kəʔ* (could also be explained by simplification of word-final clusters)

PU *\*luki-nti-* ‘to count, read’ (frequentative derivation) > PM *\*l̄ḍa-* > M *luḍa-*, H *ləḍa-*

PU *\*seŋti-* ‘to clear (wood)’ > PM *\*s̄ḍä-* > M *š̄ḍa-*, H *š̄ḍä-* ‘to clear (forest)’

- one clear exception:

PU *\*lunta* ‘goose, duck’ > PM *\*l̄ḍə* > M *luḍo*, H *ləḍə*

# From Proto-Uralic to Mari 8 (vowels)

- PU \*a > PM \*o and \*â

PU \*apta- ‘to bark’ > PM \*opte- > M H opte-

PU \*kala ‘fish’ > PM \*kol > M H kol

PU \*kamti ‘lid’ > PM \*komðəš > M H komðəš

PU \*kanta- ‘to carry’ > PM \*kânde- > M konde-, H kande-

PU \*kali- ‘to die’ > PM \*kole- > M H kole-

PU \*wanča- ‘to cross; move cautiously’ > PM \*wânče- > M wońče-, H wanče- ‘to cross’

- but PU \*a > PM \*u (conditioned perhaps by the labial element in the second syllable)

PU \*nataw ‘spouse’s sister’ > PM \*nuðə > M nuðo, H nuðə̂

PU \*śarwi ‘horn’ > PM \*šur > M H šur

# From Proto-Uralic to Mari 9 (vowels)

- PU \*e > PM \**ũ* or \**ĩ* (CV-stems \**ü* or \**i*, no reduced vowels in monosyllabic stems in general) (conditions unknown)

PU \**čečä* 'uncle' > PM \**čũčə* > M *čüčö*, H *čəčə*

PU \**keri* 'bark' > PM \**kũr* > M *kür*, H *kə*

PU \**šepä* 'neck' > PM \**šü* > M *šüj*, H *šü*

PU \**terä* 'edge, blade; shore' > PM \**tũr* > M *tür*, H *tə*

PU \**elä*- 'to live' > PM \**ĩle-* > M *ile-*, H *əle-*

PU \**meni-* 'to go' > PM \**mie-* > M *mije-*, H *mie-*

PU \**peni* 'dog' > PM \**pi* > M *pij*, H *pi*

PU \**pesä* 'nest' > PM \**pizäkš* (derivation) > M *pəžaš*, H *pəžäš*

# From Proto-Uralic to Mari 10 (vowels)

- PU \**e* > PM \**ü* (PM \**ür* > *ör*, irregular lowering to *ö* in some cases as well), \**o* (preceding a velar consonant)

PU \**eja-* 'under, below' > PM \**ül-* > M H *ül-*

PU \**meksa* 'liver' > PM \**moks* > M H *mokš*, Malmyž *moks*

PU \**mejja* 'berry' > PM \**mür* 'strawberry' > M H *mör*

PU \**ńerka* 'cartilage' > PM \**nüryə* > M *nöryö*, H *nöryə*

PU \**señi* 'sinew, vein' > PM \**sün* > M *šön*, Malmyž *śün*, H *šün*

- some developments where exact conditions are not entirely clear, \**o* perhaps also in labial clusters/geminates

PU \**eppi* 'father-in-law' > PM \**owə* > H *owə̂* (one would rather expect consonant stem PM \*\**op* here)

PU \**δ'ejmi-pu/awi* 'bird-cherry' (\**pu/awə* 'tree, wood') > Pre-Mari \**δ'ejmpV* > PM \**lombə* > M *lombo*, H *lombə̂*

# From Proto-Uralic to Mari 11 (vowels)

- PU \**i* > PM \**ĩ*

PU \**kirä*- ‘to hit, cut’ > PM \**kĩre*- > M *kə̃re*-, Kilmez *kire*-, H *kəre*- ‘to hit, forge, hammer, thresh’

PU \**kiški*- ‘to throw, pour’ > PM \**kĩške*- > M *kə̃ške*-, Kilmez *kiške*-, H *kəške*- ‘to throw, pour’

PU \**pilwi* ‘cloud’ > PM \**pĩl* > M *pə̃l*, Kilmez *pil*’, H *pəl*

PU \**pitä*- ‘to hold, cling to’ > PM \**pĩce*- > M *pə̃ze*-, Kilmez *pize*-, H *pəze*- ‘to hold, cling to’

PU \**šilmä* ‘eye’ > PM *šin-čä* (obscure derivation) > M *šinča*, H *səncä*

- notable exception

PU \**nimi* ‘name’ > PM \**lũm* > M *lüm*, H *ləm* (also irregular *l*, seems to be mirrored in Mordvin E M *l'em*, vowel correspondence and initial consonant does raise doubts about the validity of the comparison)

# From Proto-Uralic to Mari 12 (vowels)

- PU \*o > PM \*u, PM \*ǔ (adjacent to labial consonants)

PU \*kota ‘hut’ > PM \*kuðə ‘summer hut/kitchen’ > M *kuðo*, H *kuðə*

PU \*oksa ‘branch’ > PM \*uks > M H *ukš*, Malmyž *uks*

PU \*ora(-p/wa) ‘squirrel’ > PM \*ur > M H *ur*

PU \*soksi ‘worm’ > PM \*suks > M H *šukš*, Malmyž *suks*

PU \*kopa ‘skin’ > PM \*kǔwə ‘husk’ > M *kuwo* ‘husk’, Volga *kǔwə*

PU \*moški- ‘to wash’ > PM \*mǔška- > M *muška-*, H *məška-*

PU \*woča- ‘to wait’ > PM \*wǔče- > M *wuče-*, H *wəče-*

PU \*wosa ‘merchandise’ > PM \*wǔzale- ‘to sell’ > M *užale-*, H *wəžale-*, Malmyž *uzale-*

## From Proto-Uralic to Mari 13 (vowels)

- PU \**u* > PM \**ǔ* (> M *u*, Volga *ǔ*, NW *ǒ*, H *ə*) (note that you cannot tell PU \**o* and \**u* apart based on Meadow Mari forms alone)

PU \**lumi* ‘snow’ > PM \**lǔm* > M *lum*, H *ləm*

PU \**kunši-* ‘to urinate’ > PM \**kǔža-* > M *kuža-*, H *kəža-*

PU \**luki-* ‘to count, read’ → \**luki-nti-* (frequentative) > PM \**lǔḍa-* > M *luḍa-*, H *ləḍa-*

PU \**pučki* ‘hollow stalk’ > PM \**pǔč* > M *puč*, H *pəč* ‘hollow plant stalk, tube’

PU \**tuli* ‘fire’ > PM \**tǔl* > M *tul*, H *təl*



# From Proto-Uralic to Mari 14 (vowels)

- PU \**ü* > PM \**ũ* (> M *ü*, Volga *ũ*, NW *ũ*, H *ə*) (note that you cannot tell PM \**ü* (< PU \**e*) and PM \**ũ* (< PU \**ü*) apart on Meadow Mari alone)

PU \**künčä*- ‘to dig’ > PM \**kũňče*- > M *künče*-, NW *kũňče*-

PU \**künči* ‘(finger)nail’ > PM \**kũč* > M *küč*, H *kəč*

PU \**tüŋi* ‘stem’ > PM \**tũŋ* > M *tüŋ*, H *təŋg* ‘stem, stump’

- especially next to a palatal PU \**ü* also PM \**ĩ*

PU \**kütki*- ‘to tie’ > PM \**kĩčke*- > M *kəčke*-, H *kəcke*-

PU \**sükiši* ‘autumn’ > PM \**šĩžə* > M *šəže*, H *šəžə*

# From Proto-Uralic to Mari 15 (vowels)

- PU \**ä* > PM \**e*, PM \**i* (PM \**ir* > *er*, PM \**e* > H *ä* preceding a velar), PU \**jä*- > PM \**j̥*-

PU \**jäntiŋ* ‘tendon’ > PM \**j̥ḏäŋ* > M *jəḏaŋ*, H *jəḏäŋ*

PU \**kälä*- ‘to wade’ > PM \**kelä*- > M *kela*-, H *kelä*-

PU \**käti* ‘hand’ > PM \**kit* > M H *kit*

PU \**läkti*- ‘to leave’ > PM \**lektä*- > M *lekta*-, H *läktä*- ‘to leave, go out’

PU \**lämi* ‘broth’ > PM \**lem* > M H *lem*

PU \**näri* ‘nose’ > PM \**nir* > M H *ner*

PU \**pälä* ‘half’ > PM \**pel(ə)* > M *pel*, H *pele*

PU \**tälwä* ‘winter’ > PM \**tel(ə)* > M *tele*, H *tel*

## From Proto-Uralic to Mari 16 (vowels)

- Mari verbs are divided into two conjugations: I conjugation or the so-called *-am-*conjugation (1 person singular) and II conjugation or the so-called *-em-*conjugation, *am-*conjugation verbs typically reflect Uralic *\*i-*stems and *em-*conjugation verbs Uralic *\*A-*stems, individual counterexamples are easy to come by, however, cf. PU *\*kali-* ‘to die’ > PM *\*kole-*
- Mari nouns are either consonant stems (C)VC(C) (PM *\*tül* ‘fire’) or vowel stems \*(C)VC(C)ə (PM *\*mүнə* ‘egg’, in addition to these main two there exist cases where Mari dialects point to different stems. Consonant stems are more likely to be PU *\*i-*stems and vowel stems *\*A-*stems, but the exact developments still require more research

# Exercise: Mari

Reconstruct Proto-Mari forms based on the dialectal forms given (pay special attention to vowel reduction, follow the majority principle and ignore singular exceptions):

M *jumo*, Volga *jūmo*, NW *jōmō*, H *jə̃mə̃* ‘god’

M *kinde*, Volga *kindε*, NW H *kində* ‘bread; cereal, corn’

M *kə̃žət̃*, Kilmez *kiz̃it̃*, NW H *kə̃zət* ‘now’

M *künčä-*, NW *küñce-* ‘to dig’

M *kürä-*, Volga *kürä-*, NW *kürä-*, H *kərä-* ‘to tear’

M *luḏo*, Volga *luḏo*, NW *lḏḏō*, H *lə̃ḏə̃* ‘duck’

M *luḏo*, NW H *luḏə̃* ‘gray’

M *nur*, Volga *nūr*, NW *nōr*, H *nə̃r* ‘field’

M *nörö*, H *nörə* ‘flexible, pliable’

M *šuḏo*, NW H *šuḏə̃* ‘plant, gras, hay’

M *šula*, Malmyž *sula*, Vo *šūla*, NW *šōla*, H *šə̃la* ‘melts’

M NW H *šur* ‘horn’

M *šur*, Vo *šūr*, NW *šōr*, H *šə̃r* ‘shit, excrement’