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THE PERMIAN CENTRE

Rather than specify at the outset what is meant by this title, I will first outline the background against which my subject is projected. This background consists mainly of premises from linguistic typology, dialectology, demography and a number of other domains.

1. Typology. We all know that the one characteristically Finno-Ugric (or, to be precise, Fennic) typological feature which the P (Permian) languages share with some but not all FU languages is the negative conjugation. We also know but do not, in my opinion, state it emphatically enough that the P languages are unique in that they lack precisely those phonological and grammatical features which we traditionally consider as characteristic of FU or Uralic. These features and their absence will now be briefly reviewed.

1.1. Morphology. Nominal stems in P present only one particularity, the reduction of stem-final clusters: K *kosk-/kos* 'loins, backbone', *lymj-/lym* 'snow', *žept-/žep* 'pocket', *šim-/šin* 'eye'. P has no stem-vowel alternations such as in H *tele-/tél* 'winter', no conjugations as in Mari and F, and no suppletion in the verbal paradigm.

Definiteness is expressed explicitly in M, OU, and H by means of the so-called objective conjugations and, in H and M, by the article. BF, L, and M enlist the oppositions between accusative, other cases, and zero ending — also for purposes of expressing definiteness. Permian lacks these devices. Definiteness of the kind discussed here is expressed in P by means of possessive suffixes and, to some extent, by the opposition accusative : zero in the direct object.

The dual is found in the FU branches considered archaic, L and OU, but not in P.

Permian shares with only H the particularity of being very rich in adverbial cases. Local case subsystems in Udmurt and Permiak have developed even further than the corresponding K subsystems. Similarly, U has developed optative and conditional paradigms in the verb.

In regard to morphological paradigmatics, P is strongly agglutinative. This means that the boundaries between stems and suffixes are clearly recognisable and segmentable and that there is a clear correspondence between the form and the function of a given morpheme, i. e., syncretism of the kind found in the K illative and inessive with personal suffixes is rare. In the area of spatial specification, P surpasses all other FU languages in that it has subsystems with highly developed local-case constellations, e. g. egressive/ablative/elative.

1.2. Phonology. Permian has no front-rounded vowels. These are found in BF, H, and in some varieties of Mari. P has no gradation such as is found in BF or L and no voice-alternation as is found in the M stops. Its assimilation rules (in the sibilants and affricates) are less complicated than the M rules governing palatalisation and vowel alternations. In most P vowel systems, there is no long : short vowel alternation. Vowel harmony — the vocalic counterpart of consonant gradation — is absent in P. Apophonic alternations (*Ablaut*) are rare in P.

Permian does share two important phonological features with H: a fully developed and rich system of affricates (P \acute{c} , $\acute{č}$: $d\acute{z}$, $d\acute{ž}$) in all positions, even initial, and a rich and fully developed system of voiced stops, in all positions. Furthermore, voice and affrication assimilation rules in P resemble those of H, e. g., K (Ižma) *sod-as* 'increase, growth' : **sod-ś-* = *sočć-* 'increase (verb, intr.)'.

Taken as a group, the P languages display a wide array of accentuation patterns. Once the symptomatic details have been isolated and identified in a given P language (see, most recently, Harms 1983) each P language and dialect reveals one dominant stress pattern which is convertible into the stress pattern of the other dialects.

In short, then, the phonologies of the P languages are straightforward: they present fewer complications than the phonologies of L, E, M, or OU.

1.3. In the domain of **phonetic** typology there are two subtle areal features which distinguish P, in this case almost exclusively the Glazov dialect of U: the presence of the velar nasal η and of the labio-labial semivowel ω , or varieties of it, e. g. U-Glazov *poŋ* 'end', *wat-* 'hide'. Areally, the presence of these two sounds is significant because U is spoken to the East of Mari and would therefore be expected to display these two traits more pronouncedly than Mari. It is assumed here that the presence of ω and η increases on the phonetic map of Northern Eurasia as we progress from West to East: OU and Samoyed, Ket, some or most Siberian Turkic languages, Tungus, and Palaeosiberian all have ω (generally at the expense of a labiodental υ) and most of them have η . (The coexistence of these two sound-types in one and the same language is rare in modern Europe. English, which is archaic in this respect, is the exception.) In short: the presence of ω and η in some U dialects is unexpected from the viewpoint of the geographical distribution of these two sounds in Northern Eurasia.

It was said above that the P languages lack front rounded vowels (\ddot{u} , \ddot{o}) — which also become rarer as we proceed from West to East along the North of Asia. They do, however, participate in the palatalisation-correlation (s/\acute{s} , $z/\acute{ž}$, n/\acute{n} , l/\acute{l} , etc.), which connects them with East Slavic, M, and Nenets. Furthermore, this correlation interlocks with the hissing/hushing correlation (s/\acute{s} , $z/\acute{ž}$), thus contributing to the extreme richness in the area of affricates ($\acute{c}/\acute{č}$) and sibilants which has already been mentioned.

The dialectal correspondence $l : v$ is so widespread, as a feature and in its details (Portuguese, Dutch, French, Serbo-Croatian, Polish — all in different degrees), that it requires no further comment here.

2. Dialectology. The facts concerning K in this connection are well known. See, most recently, Rédei 1978 : 46—53. Komi dialect differences are found mainly in the distribution of (1) * l , (2) \ddot{o} and y (= \acute{e} , \acute{i}), (3) medial and final * d , (4) * $vo-$ ($u-$, etc.), (5) $-d/\acute{t}$, (6) accentuation, and (7) a relatively small number of lexical items. In general, it can be

safely said that the K dialectal differences are very small. In U they are even smaller. This is in marked contrast to some other FU languages, especially E, L, Mari, and OU. — Komi dialect differences seem to form geographical continua, i. e., interlocking chains of dialect areas, with very pronounced constellations in the Pečora and the North-Permiak areas. The precise nature of these chains deserves to be studied in detail because it is highly relevant to the problem which concerns us here.

3. Demography. Textbooks and other reference works are fond of telling us that both the U and the K live in agricultural societies. This is doubtlessly true now, to a large extent, but a glance at the demographic facts suggests that, essentially, the situation may have been different in the past. The fact which never ceases to amaze even the most seasoned veteran of FU studies is the inordinately gigantic area occupied by some 320,000 Komi speakers, as compared to the relatively smaller areas inhabited by some 150,000 Permiak speakers and some 580,000 Udmurt speakers. The population figures in relation to surface suggest that the K are not «agricultural» in the same sense as the Permiak and U. But the K are not nomads, either. The mention of agriculture is therefore misleading. The focus of the question is this: (1) Agricultural societies are stationary, can become very large in the course of time, and display high density per surface-unit. (2) Nomadic populations are relatively small and occupy relatively large areas. U is an instance of (1). K is an instance of neither (1) nor (2). The K occupy an immense area; they are in no sense a typically nomadic population; their number is very large; while they now practise agriculture, their energies were in the past devoted to fishing and to acting as intermediaries between the fur-hunting peoples of the North and the fur-purchasing peoples to their South and West. The expansion of the Komi into the North is connected with their radical re-orientation from the Volga-Kama basin to the basin formed by the rivers which flow North (Dvina, Mezeń, Pečora) into the White Sea and the Barents Sea.

4. The task before us is to propose a model which would explain the typological, dialectal, and demographic features enumerated above and to reconcile these in such a way as to provide us with a unitary, holistic picture of the development of the Permian languages and of the peoples who speak and who spoke them. Specifically, this attempt should throw light on the intimate but nevertheless enigmatic relationship between U and K, including Permiak. This relationship is here called enigmatic because the correspondences between U and K are on the one hand highly regular — this is why we say that they are intimately related — and on the other hand erratic, i. e., unpredictable and unsystematic.

5. This section will contain selected topics connected with our principal question: What can be held accountable for (1) the typological uniqueness of Permian, (2) the comparative isomorphy among the Komi dialects (and among the dialects of the other P languages), and (3) the exceptionally vast territory occupied by the K since their departure from their original home.

5.1. Monosyllabicity. Many FU languages tend toward monosyllabicity (Mari, OU, E, H) but in none is this tendency so pronounced as in K. (It is less pronounced in U, doubtlessly because of final stress in U.) Examples: U *ajy* : K *aj* 'father', U *vim/vijym* : K *vem* 'brain', U *puny* : K *pon(j-)* 'dog', U *uzy* : K *oz(j-)* 'mud-hut', U *dōdy* : K *dođ'*/*dojd* 'sled'. The same tendency is also found in words in which the U member of the pair contains a derivational suffix: U *čakmyt/čakkes* : K *čak* 'mushroom'. Note also the polysyllabic pairs U *čenari/čonari* : K *čeraň* 'spider' and U *čoryg* : K *čeri* 'fish'.

5.2. U/K vowel correspondences. Specialists (KƏCK; Harms 1967 and literature) assume simply too many such correspondences. Two languages which are as closely related as U and K are expected to display more regular and more predictable correspondences — but they do not; let us think of Estonian and Finnish in this connection. Considering that K and U have seven vowels each, the fifteen proto-vowels postulated for Proto-Permian are suspect and the phonetic properties of the system are unrealistic.

5.3. Komi words with no Udmurt cognates. Again, it is surprising that two languages which are so closely related should display this imbalance and should display it to such a striking degree. Some K words which lack U cognates have convincing cognates in other FU languages: *ešty* 'have enough time to finish a task', *bi* 'fire', *ur* 'squirrel'. Some K words have restricted or questionable cognates elsewhere in FU: *šap* 'foam', *žel* 'splinter', *ryś* 'cheese', *kyr* 'male animal', *gyrd* 'blood' (but cf. *gōrd* : U *gord* 'red'), *čyg* 'hunger'. Some K roots seem to have no cognates anywhere: *sam* 'bait', *san* 'glutton'. Some of these are ancient loans: *vurdys* 'mole'; some are enigmatic: *lōb* 'lip, edge', *gu-* 'to steal' (cf. *gu* 'ditch, pit'). See also *rada* 'swampy forest' in 5.5, below.

5.4. Permian words with uncertain FU etymologies. These can be ascribed to mutual borrowing within FU, but the process of mutual borrowing is too imprecise and not well enough understood to be of service at this time. Examples: K/U *nyl* 'girl, daughter', K/U *zer/zor* 'rain', K/U *don/dun* 'price, payment', K/U *kar* 'city, nest', K/U *žeb/žob* 'weak, bad'.

5.5. Permian words of presumed Baltic-Finnic origin. There are at least four sub-types of these. (1) *majva* 'a variety of small fish', presumably from North-Russian, which borrowed it from BF; K *luška* 'spoon', with a complicated history (not in KƏCK, but see Lytkin 1928 : 21), somehow from or via BF and Russian; and *rada* 'swampy forest', from BF via North-Russian. (2) *rab* 'sediment (in brewing)', from BF, without a Russian intermediary, a word of Germanic origin and therefore important for many reasons; K *roč* : U *džuc* 'Russian', with a similar history and equally important. (3) K *karla* 'stable', a term from the field of animal husbandry, but not attested in U; it is also considered as being of Chuvash origin but see KƏCK. (4) K *rok* : U *džuk* 'porridge', which may be a loan from BF or it may be cognate with BF and Hanti; see KƏCK and SKES 827-8. There is something problematic about all of these words and others like them (note also the large number of words with initial *r-* in this category), but the assumption of linguistic contacts between Permian or early K and BF in the wake of the Varangian expansion remains reasonable and very tempting (See Hausenberg 1982; Lötkin 1970).

5.6. Finno-Ugric roots without Permian representation. Examples: F/H *appi/ip* 'father-in-law', F/H *ikä/év* 'age/year', ?F/M *hiiva/čov* 'yeast', F/M *happame-/čapamo* 'sour', F/H *hupa-/sová-ny* 'erodable/thin', F/M *vatka/vatka* (from the domain of food preparation). What are we to make of so many lacunae, on the P side, in so many semantic compartments? Simply to say that there are always lexical lacunae in sets of related languages does not amount to a satisfying answer.

5.7. Fish names. The table given below is based on entries in Fokos-Fuchs 1959, KPC, KƏCK, PKC, PУC, and Wichmann 1942. It was inspired by Hausenberg's stimulating treatment of mammals (Хайзенберг 1972). The list is only a small sample of a very large corpus. Its purpose is to show that the correspondence between K and U in the area of fish nomenclature is very weak. This is not surprising, given the importance of fishing and the highly developed fishing economy among the Komi,

in comparison to that of the Udmurt. Note that there are only a few K/U cognates (1, 3, 4, ?18) and that the correspondences are not always regular. Some fish names are too similar (?20, 21) to be cognates. Some K forms are not phonologically canonical (15, ?18, 19, 21).

| Komi | Etymology | Glosses | Udmurt Gloss or Cognate |
|--------------------|-----------|---------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1 <i>čeri</i> | U ?OU ?L | Fisch | <i>čoryg</i> |
| 2 <i>udž</i> | OU ?L ?S | Nelma, нельма | ? |
| 3 <i>kom</i> | ?U ?F | Äsche, хариус | <i>куну</i> |
| 4 <i>syn</i> | M F L H | Rotaug, язь | <i>son</i> 'голявль' |
| 5 <i>myk</i> | Mari OU | Plötze, плотва, елец | <i>čabak, gordšin</i> |
| 6 <i>šir</i> | OU | Hecht, щука | <i>čipej</i> |
| 7 <i>čir</i> | ?F L S | = 2 | ? |
| 8 <i>lol</i> | ? | grosser Lachs, лох, сёмга | <i>(losoš)</i> |
| 9 <i>jun</i> | ? | Neunaug, минога | <i>(minoga)</i> |
| 10 <i>ar</i> | < 'оcемь' | kleiner Fisch, снеток | <i>(šnetok)</i> |
| 11 <i>gyč</i> | F L V H | Karausche, карась | <i>(karaš, karaka)</i> |
| 12 <i>ar-gyč</i> | | = 11 | ? |
| 13 <i>mulūk-ar</i> | ? | kleiner, schwarzer Fisch | ? |
| 14 <i>kelči</i> | OU ?BF | Rotaug, сорoga, елец | = 4 |
| 15 <i>jodi</i> | L | Brachse, лещ | <i>paja</i> (, <i>lešč</i>) |
| 16 <i>majva</i> | < BF | = 4, 14, сорочка, уклейка | <i>berem</i> (<i>so-ročka</i>) |
| 17 <i>čimi</i> | L | Lachs, сёмга | <i>(šomga)</i> |
| 18 <i>jokyš</i> | U ?OU | Barsch, окунь | <i>juš</i> |
| 19 <i>upri</i> | ? | ein Fisch | ? |
| 20 <i>šalag</i> | ?U | ein Fisch | <i>šalkko</i> 'налим' |
| 21 <i>darga</i> | U ?V | Gründling, пескарь | <i>darga</i> |
| 22 <i>šokat</i> | ? | —, хариус (cf. 3) | = 3 |



5.7.1. Riparian life. The traditional Komi preoccupation with fishing and other activities connected with it suggests that terminology in this area would provide a fertile field of investigation; it was launched by Sirelius (1906). Of special interest would be the dialectal distribution of terms having to do with life along rivers and river basins. Some correspondences in this field seem to be better than in that of fish names. Examples: K *ōzyn* 'place for landing' : U *-ozon*, K *pyž* 'canoe' : U *pyž*. In other instances, the K term has no U cognate: K *zib, zyb* 'pole' (note the two forms), K *čer* 'axe'. Or the U term has no K cognate: U *kaj* 'ship'. What is needed is a detailed and systematic study of K/U correspondences, including dialect data, preferably arranged by river-basins, in the area of all terms related to life along rivers: fish-weirs, traps of all sorts, canoe-building, methods of processing, cutting, salting, smoking, drying, and preparing fish, net-making, net-repairing — in short, all aspects of riparian life.

5.8. Bird names. The following collection of bird names (from the sources listed above, 5.7) is only the beginning of a larger enterprise. Its purpose is to open the way toward the systematic study of U/K lexical correspondences in a culturally clearly defined corpus which should be large but closed. At this time, no conclusions will be drawn from the table. The reader is asked to inspect the material with a view to (1) its value for reconstruction, (2) its value for the study of animal naming in U and K, and (3) its value as an index of the U and K preoccupation with birds (or lack thereof) and the significance of this

for earlier stages of the language and for the culture of those earlier stages.

The information is arranged into six categories: 1, names with good or fairly good etymologies; 2, seemingly unrelated names; 3, two special etyma; 4, affective forms with palatalisation; 5, the sea gull (Möwe); 6, a strange alternation (-čk- : -rskā-); 7, affective forms, hushing and not palatalised; 8, reduplicated, affective, and other forms.

| Komi | Gloss | Udmurt |
|---|--|--|
| 1.1. <i>tar</i> <i>таp</i> | Birkhahn тетерев grouse, woodcock | <i>tur</i> <i>тур</i> |
| 1.2. <i>kyr</i> <i>сизь</i> | Specht дятель woodpecker | <i>kyr</i> <i>сизь, кыр, сьбод кыр</i> |
| 1.3. <i>đžodžög</i> <i>дзодзөг</i> | Gans гусь goose | <i>đžazeg, đžadžeg</i> <i>айы žазег</i> |
| 1.4. <i>pusta</i> <i>пыста</i> | Meisenart синица tomtit, titmouse | <i>pisleg</i> <i>пислег</i> |
| 1.5. <i>jabōr, jabyr</i> <i>сьбодкай</i> | Drossel? скворец starling | <i>juber</i> <i>юбер, шырчик, сөдюбер</i> |
| 2.1. <i>kolip</i> <i>колип</i> | Singdrossel девичник ? | — |
| 2.2. <i>žon</i> <i>жонь</i> | Dompfaff снегирь bullfinch | <i>шушы</i> |
| 2.3.1. <i>jen-mež</i> <i>енмеж</i> | hoch fliegender Vogel бекас snipe | <i>нюртака</i> |
| 2.3.2. <i>istan</i> <i>енмеж</i> <i>вадор кай</i> | Schnepfe бекас кулик snipe, woodcock | (2.3.1) |
| 2.4. <i>kōrōg</i> ? | Tauchente нырок | (<i>нырок</i>) |
| 2.5. <i>perk</i> | ein Vogel | |
| 2.6. <i>đžojna</i> | kleiner Vogel | |
| 3.1. <i>kuč</i> <i>кутш</i> | Adler орел | <i>kuč</i> <i>ёрзи, (орел)</i> |
| 3.2. <i>kača</i> <i>катша</i> | Elster сорока magpie | <i>kočo</i> <i>кочо</i> |
| 4.1. <i>šyrčik</i> <i>сырчик</i> | Bachstelze, Meise трясогузка wagtail | <i>šyrčyk, šyrcik</i> <i>чечег</i> |
| 4.2. <i>šuž</i> <i>сюзь</i> | Uhu сова, филин | <i>кучыран, уйсы</i> |
| 4.3. <i>čovča, čovfa</i> ? ? (2.3) | — травник улит большой кулик hedge sparrow | <i>čulčo</i> ? ? (2.3) |

| | | | |
|-------|---|--|----------------------|
| 4.4 | <i>čikyš</i> <i>чыкыш</i> | Schwalbe ласточка swallow | <i>ваёдык, пёскы</i> |
| 4.5 | <i>čižyk</i> | Goldammer | — |
| 5.1 | <i>čički</i> (5.2) | Möwe | |
| 5.2 | <i>kala, kalla</i> <i>каля</i> | Möwe чайка sea gull | (чайка) |
| 5.3 | <i>čeri-gada</i> (5.2) | Möwe | |
| 6.1.1 | <i>gerskàn</i>  <i>герчкан</i> | Wiesenknarrer коростель, дергач corncrake, land-rail | <i>куажы</i> |
| 6.1.2 | <i>gečkan</i> | ein Wiesenvogel | |
| 7.1.1 | <i>džydž</i> <i>джыдж</i> | Uferschwalbe стриж martin | <i>ярдур пёскы</i> |
| 7.1.2 | <i>džydž</i> <i>сюзь</i> (4.2) | Käuzchen сыч dwarf-owl | <i>кучыран</i> |
| 7.2 | <i>džydž-kaj</i> | Schneeammer | |
| 7.3 | <i>džekan</i> | Drossel (8.2.3) | |
| 8.1 | <i>тшаксан-кай</i> | каменка | |
| 8.2.1 | <i>тшаккай,</i> <i>тшаккиль</i> | дрозд-деряба | |
| 8.2.2 | <i>чак-чак</i> | дрозд-деряба | |
| 8.2.3 | <i>тшак-тшак</i> | дрозд (1.5) | <i>пурьсь, юбер</i> |
| 8.2.4 | <i>čakčej, čargej</i> <i>čakčej</i> | Drossel? дрозд, spec. thrush | |
| 8.3 | <i>čikkej</i> | kleiner Vogel | |
| 8.4 | <i>čačaci</i> | grauer Vogel | |
| 8.5 | <i>пелысь(-)кай</i> | дрозд-рябинник | |
| 8.6 | <i>tuğu, tuksej</i>  <i>тютю</i> | Tauchente, spec. птичка | (<i>tutu</i>) |

*

The question has now been posed. The symptomatic areas from typology, dialectology, and demography have been spelled out. Supporting details from adjacent areas have been either supplied or suggested. This concludes the setting of the scene for the proposals which follow. These proposals are preceded by a brief historical digression.

6. History. This very cursory sketch is restricted to pivotal events in the Permian area and to those aspects of the early history of the Permians which are essential for an appreciation of the ideas put forward in section 7. Pivotal events: The Volga-Bolgar intrusion in the eighth century, presumably caused by pressure emanating from the steppes. The disruption of Permian unity and the beginnings of the emigration of the Proto-Komi in the eighth or ninth century, or perhaps even earlier. Varangian (Viking) expansion, from ca. 800 (Ladoga) until the 11th or 12th century, due to the warm and dry spell which lasted from about 800 until about 1200. The tenth century, especially, was feverish. The Kievan Ruś both wage war on the Volga Bolgars and trade with them; they destroy the Xazar kingdom, penetrating as far South as the Caspian; the Volga Bolgars adopt Islam (922) and the Xazars adopt Judaism

(965). All of these events took place to the North, the West, and the South of the Permian area and must have left their marks on the early Permians. From the 11th to the 14th century there is pressure on the Permian area from the part of Velikij Novgorod, as well as trade with it. The Tatar hegemony begins in 1236. This is another source of pressure. The local onset of the Little Ice Age during the late 13th century brings about the withdrawal of Varangian power from the coasts and, presumably, from the interior; the inland (continental) climate of this part of European Russia may not have been radically affected by the climatic changes on the coast. Meanwhile, the Komi territories are continuing to expand. They are incorporated into the Russian state in 1478. Russian-Komi contacts become closer from about 1500 on. The appearance of the Stroganov family on the Kama (1558) and resulting social and economic changes bring about closer Russian-Udmurt contacts (1600-). The Komi reach the Ižma and the Pečora in the 16th century. By this time they have been incorporated into the Russian network.

There are many questions the answers to which would clarify our understanding of the above events. Only four will be mentioned here. (1) The identity of the *Pečora*-people. (2) The time, place and — especially — the precise nature of the contacts between the Komi (or Permians?) and the speakers of Baltic-Finnic languages — see section 5.5. What is needed here is an examination analogous to Raun's (1957) penetrating study. (3) The identification of the forces which propelled the Komi first to the Northwest, in the direction of the Mezeň and Dvina, and later toward the Pečora. Are these forces to be sought mainly in fishing or other natural resources, in trade, in overpopulation, or elsewhere? (4) The nature and the degree of intimacy of the contacts between Komi and Ob-Ugric speakers and the changes which these brought about in Komi economy (Sources: Décsy 1973; Kruger 1961; Lamb 1982; Лашук 1972; Lytkin 1928; Очерки по истории Коми АССР 1955; Rédei 1969; Токарев 1958; Ульянов 1932; Жеребцов 1974).

7.1. Hypothesis A. The Proto-Komi left the Permian Centre (or Permian homeland, hearthland) for reasons generally ascribed to the Volga-Bolgar intrusion. (Question, in passing: to what extent was the Permian Centre agriculturalised by this time?) The phenomenal expansion of the Komi and their vigorous economy (which is here assumed to account for their energetic expansion) could, however, be connected not only with the Volga-Bolgar intrusion but also with two other events: first, the appearance of the Varangian power and, second, with its withdrawal. These early contacts could account for the Baltic-Finnic and «Germanic» loans. See Lytkin 1928; Lötkin 1970; Hausenberg 1982; Décsy 1973 : 136: the Komi were in contact with the Veps «bis zum 10. Jahrhundert.» The withdrawal of the Varangian presence could explain the further expansion of Komi territories toward the Northwest. The vacuum thus created may perhaps even explain the Komi expansion toward the East and Northeast (in the direction of the Ižma), either because the Komi fell heir to the Varangians' spheres of influence (if the Vikings had succeeded in penetrating so far to the East) or simply as the result of the momentum accumulated through Komi economic successes — in these new, sparsely populated, nomadic-pastoralist, hunting-fishing territories.

7.2. Hypothesis B. But the Komi expansion should not be imagined as merely a series of centrifugal radiations from the Permian Centre. Rather, the expansion of the Komi ought to be thought of as being connected with an equally important centripetal force. It is therefore proposed here that the Komi both emigrated from the Permian

Centre, from the nuclear area, and re-immigrated into it repeatedly. This double — or circular — movement may have lasted uninterruptedly for two or three or four centuries, or it may have been intermittent during such a period. The process of emigration and re-immigration should be imagined as a cyclical refreshment or refuelling of a colonial population, a population periodically pendulating between a *Kerngebiet*, the Centre, and various outposts in the extended periphery.

This model, the interplay between centrifugal and centripetal forces, can perhaps explain the «premises» with which we began.

The economy of the Permian languages, i. e., the absence of typically Fennic or Finno-Ugric typological features, both in grammar and in phonology (section 1) may thus be ascribed to the intensive and accelerated interaction among small groups of speakers, a levelling-out brought about by contact between returning colonists and their kinsmen who had remained behind. The two Udmurt sound-types mentioned in 1.3 would then be relics — strangely enough, in the nuclear area and not in the periphery. The relative uniformity of both the Udmurt and the Komi dialects should also be seen in the light of these centrifugal and centripetal forces. One may hazard the guess that, due to the feverish interaction among groups of speakers, a given dialect only rarely found the time to develop very far in a specific direction because it was repeatedly or constantly being influenced, perhaps in the direction of conservatism, by returning colonists whose dialect had not changed in a generation or two.

The demographic picture (3) fits the model neatly: colonists emigrated, re-immigrated, and re-emigrated, thus creating a perpetually expanding frontier.

The topics briefly enumerated in 5 must also be viewed against the backdrop of our model: Monosyllabicity (5.1) results from wear-and-tear; one need only contrast K with U. The difficulties which attach to the K/U vowel correspondences (5.2) may also be symptoms of prolonged dialect mixture. The skewed etymological correspondences within Permian (5.3), so unexpected — it may be repeated — in the case of two so closely related languages, present another challenge which ought to be considered in the light of the demographic scenario outlined here. Finally, the striking lacunae in Permian (5.4) from the point of view of Finno-Ugric — etyma which are not found in Permian — suggest the question: are they connected with the rotation proposed here and, if so, how?

The examples adduced from fish and bird nomenclature and from the area of riparian life (5.7, 5.8) were adduced to suggest at least three instances of *realia* which deserve further study in the light of what is being proposed here.

7.3. This centripetal/centrifugal model, then, is superimposed on the traditional *Stammbaum*-model of the Udmurt/Komi family relationship. One of the many difficult questions which arise from what has been said will now be singled out. It is the question of the duration of this dynamic situation. How long did it last? Are there historically attested events which can be better explained by implementing this model?

Was the emergence of Stefan Xrap (St. Stephen of Perm', born between 1335 and 1340 and died 1396, consecrated bishop in Ust'-Vym' in 1383) and were his successes an index of an existing, well-functioning network of the kind suggested by the model under discussion? Let us remember that the conversion of the Komi was carried out by the Komi and in the Komi language, unlike the conversion of many or most comparable ethnic groups (Décsy 1973 : 136). Stephen's success may have derived from an already available and operative set of avenues of com-

munication among the colonial Komi, avenues which had previously served to maintain cultic, tribal, family, institutional, and commercial connections among various Komi groups and to bind the periphery to the Centre. Was it such a *Stammbaum*, thus overgrown with additional alliances of another kind (the colonial), that provided Stephen with the unique proselytising opportunities which he so successfully exploited?

8.1. It is not impossible that the train of thought pursued here has no foundation, i. e., that the hypotheses are wrong and therefore deserve to be discarded. Before they are rejected, however, they deserve to be tested against the very premises (1 to 5) which originally suggested the idea of a Permian Centre. Further avenues for confirmation or grounds for rejection could be sought in a geographically oriented study of social institutions, of folklore, and, if possible, of specific dialectal features in Udmurt and in Komi. Such studies should, plainly speaking, provide an answer to the question: Did certain groups of colonists return to specific foci in the Permian Centre? What is needed, in broader strokes and beyond the confines of linguistics, is an accurate reconstruction of what the French school of geographers calls the *genre de vie* (Sarre 1948) of the Permians in general and of the emerging Udmurt, Komi-Permiak, and Komi in particular, from the tenth to the fifteenth century. This should amount to a reconstruction of their economic, social, and spiritual life, plotted as minutely and as accurately as is possible on specific points on the map.

8.2. Who should undertake such an arduous task? Those who are best equipped to undertake it: the present and the future generations of Udmurt and Komi scholars, the traditional and therefore the prime bearers of Permian culture. It is they who know better than anyone else how to interpret the last line of the Komi poet G. A. Juškov's poem «КОМИ КЫВ»:

Кыдзи парма, көн рөдмылім ми!

9. The idea of a Permian Centre can also be expanded and grafted on a larger set of coordinates. It could serve as a model or framework for thinking about the original dispersion and the subsequent history of the earliest groups of speakers of the Fennic and the Finno-Ugric languages.

Is it an accident that, in terms of geographical reality, the Finno-Ugric Centre was, *grosso modo*, identical with the Permian Centre?

Abbreviations

Languages and language groups: **BF** — Baltic-Finnic; **E** — Estonian; **F** — Finnish; **FU** — Finno-Ugric; **H** — Hungarian; **K** — Komi; **L** — Lapp/Saam, Saamic; **M** — Mordvinian; **OU** — Ob-Ugric; **P** — Permian; **U** — Udmurt; **V** — Vogul/Mansi; **S** — Selkup.

Dictionaries: **КРС** — Коми-русский словарь, Москва 1961; **РКС** — Русско-коми словарь, Сыктывкар 1966; **РУС** — Русско-удмуртский словарь, Москва 1956.

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