

### Mikhail Smorodinov's Mari texts

Academician, Erkki Itkonen's, collection of Mari texts were rediscovered some years ago in the National Archives of Finland. Itkonen had collected language samples of Mari prisoners of war during a positional warfare between 1942 and 1943. Since there was practically no academic contact between Finland and the Soviet Union after the October Revolution, Finnish scholars used this short period to collect linguistic material from nearly 4,000 war captives of Finno-Ugric origin.

Itkonen's Mari sample covers four different dialects: Western or so-called Hill Mari; two different subdialects of Central or so-called Meadow Mari; and one subdialect of Eastern Mari. The most significant sample representing the Yoshkar-Ola subdialect of Meadow Mari consists of 16 fairy tales, plus a few proverbs and riddles. These texts were written on the Mikhail Smorodinov's account of them.

My paper deals with the characteristic traits of Smorodinov's idiolect, raising the question whether they match the description of the Yoshkar-Ola dialect. The largest discrepancies concern the so-called reduced vowels (schwas). Moreover, there are also some divergences involving consonants and grammar.

**Keywords:** *Mari (Cheremis) language, Yoshkar-Ola dialect, reduced vowel*

SIRKKA SAARINEN