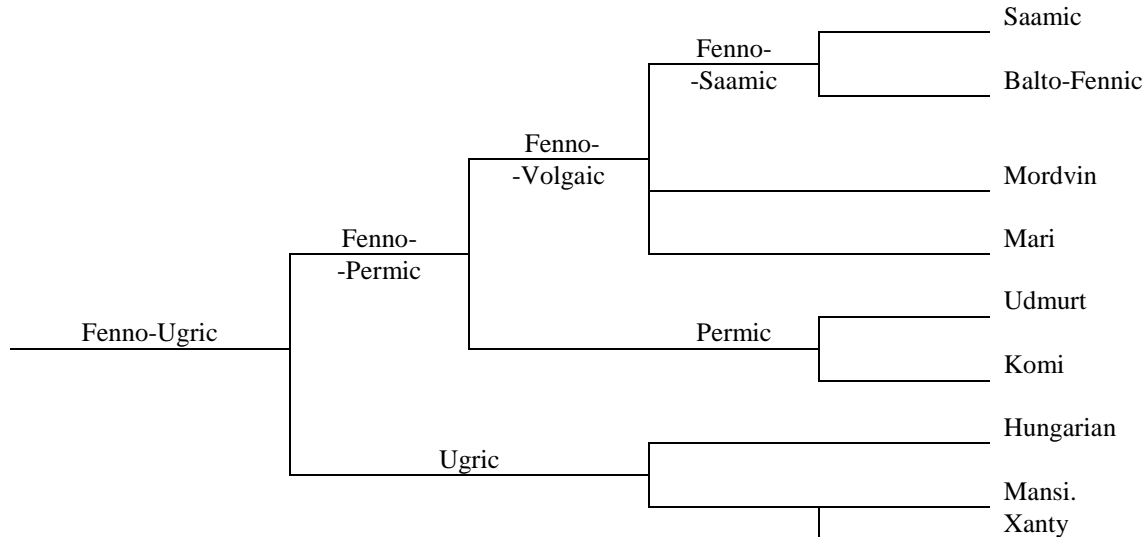


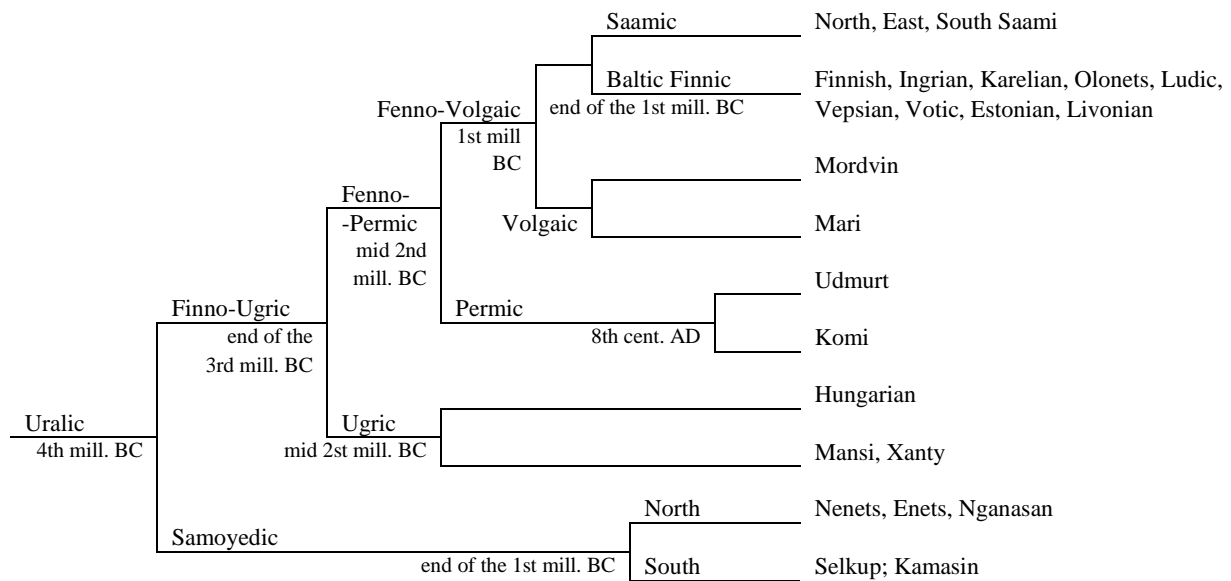
URALIC MIGRATIONS: THE LINGUISTIC EVIDENCE

Václav Blažek

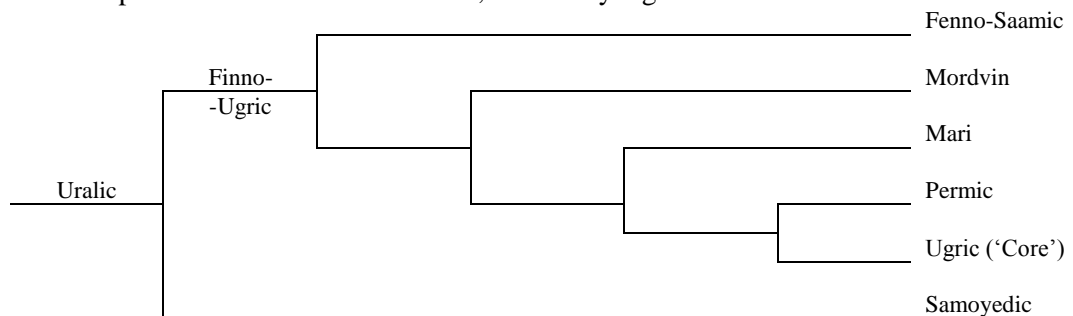
For the classification of Fenno-Ugric/Uralic languages the following scenarios have been proposed:
 (1) Mari, Mordvin and Fenno-Saamic as coordinate sub-branches (Setälä 1890)



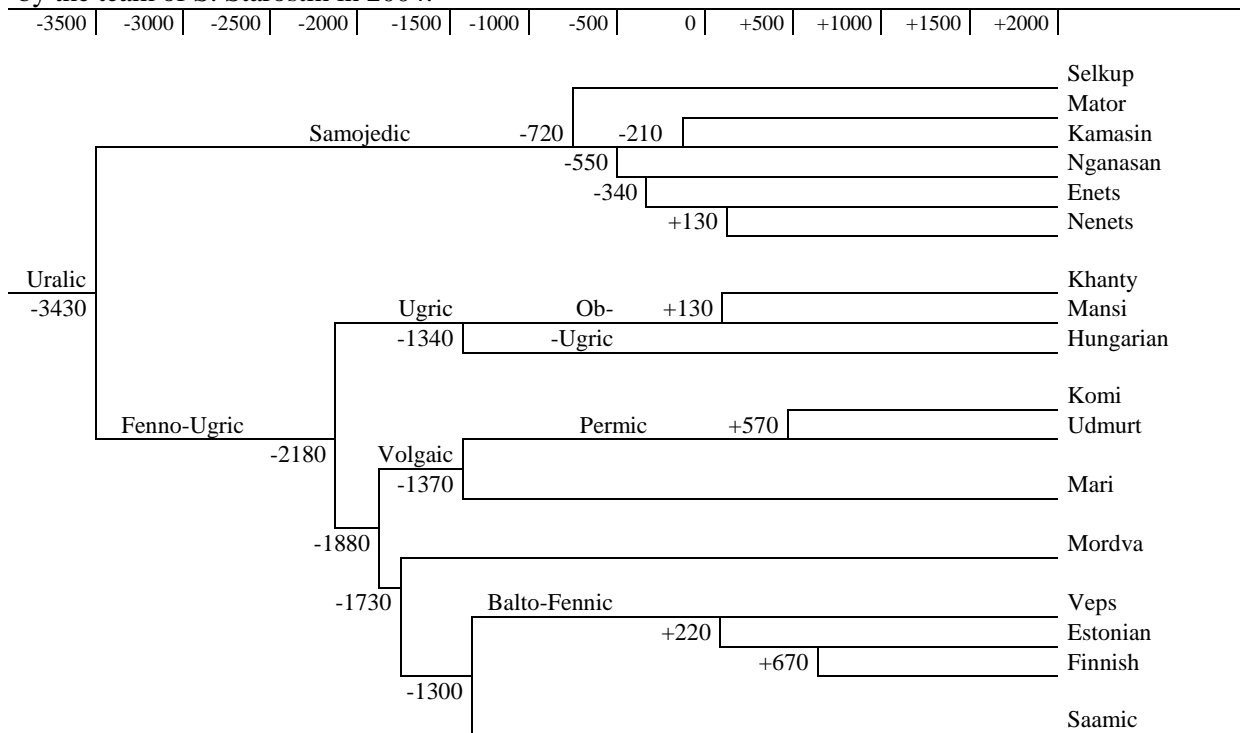
(2) Mordvin and Mari in a Volgaic group (Collinder 1960, 11; Hajdú 1985, 173; OFUJ 1974, 39)



(3) A model of a series of sequential separations by **Viitso** (1996, 261-66): Mordvin and Mari represent different separations from the mainstream, formed by Ugric.

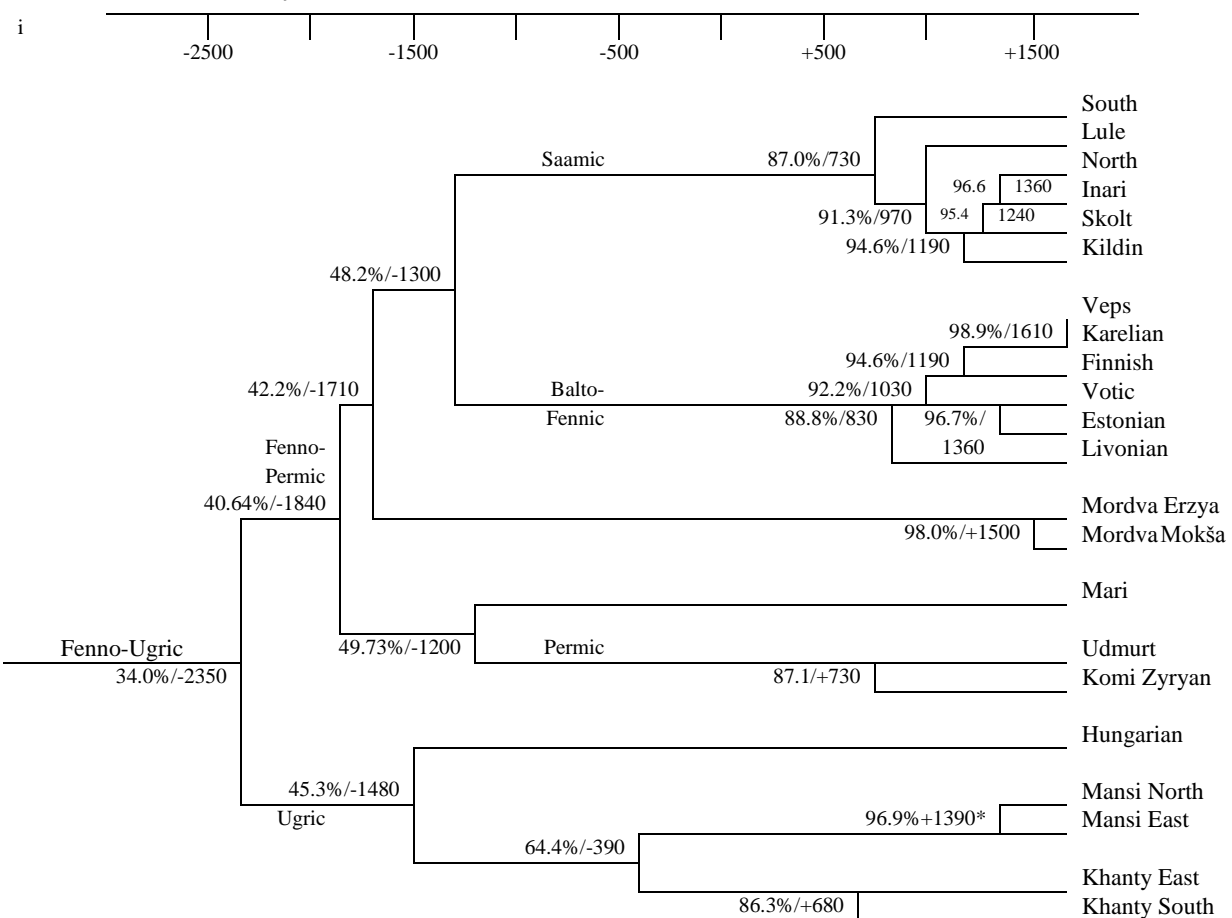


(4) The first application of a so-called ‘recalibrated’ glottochronology to Uralic languages was realized by the team of S. Starostin in 2004.



Note: G. Starostin (2010) dates the separation of Samoyedic and Fenno-Ugric to 3 840 BC.

(5) The same model was obtained by Blažek (conference of Finno-Ugric Studies Association of Canada, Montreal, May 2010)



There are two methods which, in combination, allow us to determine the homeland of a given language group: (a) Linguistic paleontology, based on the geographical location of plants and animals whose designations can be reconstructed in proto-languages, in the perspective of paleobotany and paleozoology (cf. Sebestyén 1941-43/49-50; 1935 for Uralic tree- and fish-names). (b) The study of mutual contacts with neighboring languages. The absolute chronology can be estimated, if the development of the donor language or recipient is reliably documented. Another source of chronological data may be found in glottochronology. According to Hajdú (1985, 156-57), Xelimskij (1989[2000], 15) and Napol'skix (1997, 127-34), in the Uralic lexicon the following tree-names play a diagnostic role: **kawse* "spruce, *Picea*", **ńulkz* "fir, *Abies*", **j3w3* "pine, *Pinus*"; **siks3* "Siberian stone pine, *Pinus cembra Sibirica*". Napol'skix (1997, 130-34) adds **mura* "blackberry, *Rubus chamaemorus*" and some zoonyms: **kunta* "reindeer", **poča* "(calf of) reindeer", **śarta* "deer, reindeer", **tewä* "elk, deer", **ńuk(3)-śe* "ermine, marten"; **püŋe* "partridge, hazel-grouse"; **küje* "snake"; **kärz* "sterlet, Caspian sturgeon, *Acipenser ruthenus*", **kew3(-ŋk3)* "salmon, whitefish", **korz* "*Coregonus lavaretus/muksun*", **onč3* "*Stenodus nelma, Coregonus njelma*", **totka* "tench, *Tinca tinca*", and also FU **śampe* "sturgeon, *Acipenser*" (with a probable cognate in Sm **su/ümpâ-ŋkâ* "muksun", where **su/ümpâ* means "back of fish", so typical for "sturgeon"). These species determine the borders of the area of the **Uralic** proto-language: between the Ural Mountains in the west and the middle Yenisei River in the east, and from the Arctic Circle in the north to the southern border of taiga in the foothills of the Sayany and Altai mountains. Any location west of the Urals is problematic with regard to the closest relative of Uralic: the small Yukaghir family, localized in the 18th century between the lower streams of the Lena and Anadyr. The Uralic-Yukaghir divergence is dated to 6600 BC by G. Starostin (2010).

Such Fenno-Ugric tree-names as **nakrz* "cedar-nut", **näŋ3* "larch, *Larix Sibirica*", **śala* "elm, *Ulmus*", plus Fenno-Permic **ńine* "bast", **ńine-puw3* "linden, *Tilia*", and zoonyms **maja* "beaver", **śijele* "hedgehog", **ćorz* "salmon, whitefish", **tokta* "diving-duck, *Gavia*", shift the area of the **Fenno-Ugric** proto-language to the west in comparison with the Uralic homeland. From the original Proto-Uralic territory the southwest of Western Siberia and the Central and South Urals remain, while the basins of the upper streams of the Kama, Pechora and Vychegda rivers may be added to the Fenno-Ugric homeland (Napol'skix 1997, 140). The disintegration of Uralic is traditionally dated to the 4th mill. BC (Hajdú; S. Starostin: 3430 BC, G. Starostin: 3840 BC). In the meantime, before the separation of Fenno-Permic from Ugric in the 24th cent. BC, the first contacts with Indo-Europeans had begun. While ancestors of the Tocharians influenced Fenno-Ugric only during their migration to the east in the late 4th mill. BC, Indo-Iranians and their descendants (Jacobsohn 1922; Korenchy 1972; Joki 1973; Toporov 1981; Blažek 1990, 1999, 2003ab, 2005; Xelimskij [1998]2000; Katz 2003) became southern neighbors of the Fenno-Ugrians, possibly from as early as 3000 BC, and remaining so until their (Indo-Iranians) assimilation by Slavs and Turks in the first mill. AD. Crucial to the westerly spread of Fenno-Ugrians was the Kama River. This biggest tributary of the Volga led the ancestors of the Permians, Mari and Mordva (plus the now extinct Merya and Muroma) to the middle and upper basins of the Volga, while the ancestors of the Fenno-Saamic people continued to the basin of the Baltic Sea. During their habitation of Fenno-Scandia, the ancestors of the Saami assimilated some older population(s) (cf. Toivonen 1949-50; Xelimskij 1996[2000]). In Mari, Mordva and Fenno-Saamic the Baltic (Thomsen 1870; Vaba 1983; Blažek 1999, 2004) and in the latter case also Germanic (Thomsen 1870; LGL; Ritter 1993; Xelimskij 1995[2000]) influences are apparent. During the last millennium the influence of Russian and various Turkic languages has grown. In the Volga basin the Kama also brought the ancestors of the Hungarians west after their separation from Ob-Ugric in the

15-14th cent. BC. The Hungarian lexicon indicates significant influences from tribal languages contacted or assimilated during their route along the lower Volga through the Caspic and Pontic steppes to Pannonia, especially Turkic of the Bulgar-Čuvaš type (Gombocz 1912), Sarmatian-Alanic (Sköld 1925; Abaev 1965;) and Pannonian Slavic (Xelimskij 1988[2000]; Richards 2003).

Xelimskij (1989[2000], 15-17) localized the **Samoyedic** homeland in the Southwest Siberian taiga, in the area limited by a triangle formed by the cities Tomsk - Krasnojarsk - Eniseisk. In the taiga region between the middle Ob and Yenisei rivers there are attested trees and animals whose names are (i) inherited from Uralic: Samoyedic **kâât* "spruce, Picea", **hulka* "fir, Abies", **je* "pine, Pinus"; **tjteŋ* "stone pine, Pinus cembra Sibirica"; (ii) attested only in Samoyedic: **tojmâ* "larch"; **ki(j)* "sable", **muntjo* "ibex", **pajtjz* "roe", **pińz* "ermine", **p3nso(j)* "flying squirrel", **tet* "otter", **wiŋkânce* "wolverine", **käs3rä* "Nucifraga caryocatactes", **huanš* "diving-duck", **seŋkš* "grouse". According to S. Starostin the ancestors of the Selkups were the first to separate in the early 8th century BC. They moved to the north along the Ob'. The North Samoyeds separated in the mid 6th cent. BC and migrated to the north along the Yenisei. In Taymyr they assimilated some kind of substratum, reflected especially in Nganasan. The disintegration of Kamasin-Koibalsan and Mator-Taigi-Karagas around 200 BC could have been caused by Huns attacking the Minussin Hollow. The former group moved to the south in the Sayany Mountains, the latter group migrated to the east between the Kan and Mana, right tributaries of the Yenisei. The oldest borrowings in Samoyedic can be identified from Tocharian (3rd mill. BC?; see Janhunen 1983; Blažek, Schwarz 2008) and proto-Turkic (early 1st mill. BC; Janhunen 1977). The contacts with Komi, Ob-Ugric, Ket (Xelimskij 1982), Tungusic (Anikin, Xelimskij 2007) and various Turkic languages of Siberia (Joki 1952; Róna Tas 1988) are later.

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Note: For a correction of English the author owe John D. Bengtson.