THE SWĪRA LANGUAGE

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Introduction

The Swīra were one of the so-called "Five Invading Tribes" (*Swikogu*), the others being Sekripa, Sɨhel, Nofioʃe, and Halan, as well as the language spoken by them. The first four comprised a group of largely mutually intelligible dialects. "Swīra" has been used collectively to refer to all of them, as well as to the particular dialect of the Swīra tribe, or Swīra Proper. Halan probably belonged to the same family but was much more distantly related. Halan is little-attested and poorly understood because its speakers were destroyed as a political entity before any of the invading languages were regularly written. Swīra *sensu stricto* is studied, in preference to the other languages or dialects, because (1) it is the most direct ancestor of the modern standard language, (2) it was the dialect spoken by the greatest part of the invading force, and the most politically successful one, and (3) it

was the dialect in which *The National Epic* was composed, whereas most of the other varieties are attested mostly in short inscriptions, if at all.

Old Swīra refers to the language as it was presumably spoken before the conquest, when the tribe was still nomadic, and was much the same as the language of the other tribes. It is partly reconstructed, although preserved in some texts and in archaic speech used in ritual context. Proto-Swīra is used to refer to the entirely reconstructed mother language from which more distantly related languages also sprang. Classical Swīra refers to the language spoken by the Swīra tribe and the territory they conquered as a whole, from the time of the conquest for about four hundred years afterward. It was during this time that the heavy importation of learned words from Yuktepat began. New or Modern Swīra refers to the language as it is now, and has been spoken for the last few hundred years or so. Although the current language is clearly different from the Classical variety, there is not a clear dividing line between the two.

The Classical and even more so the New Swīra languages were essentially dialect groups or dialect continua. In the Classical period, the closely related languages were increasingly absorbed into Swīra, but left their mark on the criss-crossing dialectal isoglosses that developed. Classical Swīra was the first language of the ruling clans and the shared medium of communication among all the people of the empire, essentially a lingua franca of northern barbarian tribal languages with a heavy pedantic influence from Yuktepat.

Proto-Swīra Phonology

	Labial	Coronal	Palatal	Velar	Labiovelar	Glottal
Stops	p	t		k	k^w	ʔ
Fricative		s				h
Nasal	m	n		(ŋ)[1]		
Lateral		l				
Glide			(j)		(w)	

i   u
 e ə o
   a

Allophones:
/p/   [p b ɸ]
/t/   [t d θ ɾ]
/k/   [k g x]
/kʷ/   [kʷ gʷ xʷ ʍ]

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[1] Phonetic symbols in parentheses probably existed as allophones of other phonemes. E.g., [ŋ] was an allophone of /n/ in certain positions, and [j] and [w] may have been allophones of the vowels /i/ and /u/.

Proto-Swiric to Old Swīra
1. Post-nasal voicing
   mp > mb
   nt > nd
   ŋk > ŋg
   ŋkʷ > ŋgʷ
2. ə > Ø
3. Nasal assimilation
4. voiceless stop > voiced stop / in short-voweled unstressed open syllables
5. d > r
6. Ø > u / #_r
7. ei > i:, ou > u:
   *sweida > Swīra
8. oi > ui, o:i > u:i

The voiced stops in other positions, such as intervocalic, are believed to have arisen from voiceless stops through the interaction of complex conditions, such as the stress pattern of the word.

A language distantly-related to Swīra:
mp > b, nt > d, nk > g
In another language, geminate consonants are simplified, but there is compensatory lengthening of the preceding vowel, e.g. *atto > āto*.
There are complex correspondences between coronal consonants in Swīra and in more distantly-related languages.

Swīra	Related lang.
r	t
	d
	l
l	

Old Swīra Phonology

		Labial	Coronal	Palatal	Velar	Labio-velar
Stops	Voiceless	p	t		k	kʷ
	Voiced	b	(d)		g	gʷ
Fricative			s			
Nasal		m	n			
Tap			r			
Lateral			l			

| | Glide | j ‹y› | w |

Vowels: a, e, i, o, u, ā, ē, ī, ō, ū[2]
Diphthongs: ai, au, eu, ui, āi, āu, ēu, ūi

Dialectal Changes (before the Invasion?)

Swīra dialect:
1. p > f /{#_, V_V, _t, _k, _l, l_}
   *kʷewīpa > pewīfa
   *kʷoltōnali > poltounali
   *epte > efte
2. [-cont, -voi] > [αplace] / _[-cont, -voi, αplace]
   *nekʷti > netti
3. kʷ > p
   *kʷewīpa > pewīfa
4. gʷ > w
5. eu > jo, e:u > jo:

Noɦoʃe
1. s > ʃ
2. voiced stops > fricatives and glides
   a. {b, g, gʷ} > {β, ɦ, w} / V_V
   b. ɦ > j / _(i, e)
   c. ɦ > w / _(o, u)
3. voiceless stops > voiced stops
   {p, t, k, kw} > {b, d, g, gw} / {V_V, r_V, l_V, N_V}
4. C: > C

Sɨhel
1. ŭ, ĭ > ɨ
2. ă, ĕ, ŏ > ə / [-stress]

Sound Changes in Borrowings from Yuktepat to Swīra
Cʰ > C
C > [+voice] / V_V (only words that entered via the Eastern Dialects)
q > g
ts > s, tʃ
ŋ > g /#_
ŋ > un /_#
ɯ, ɨ > u, i
ɤ > a, o

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[2] The macron is traditionally used to transcribe long vowels – therefore, [a:], [e:], [i:], [o:], [u:].

ə > a
ei > ē
ou > ō
ɤj > ai
iw > ju
ew > eu, jo
aw, əw > au, ō
ɯj > ī
ɨw > ū

Later (Post-Classical) Sound Changes

1. t > s /_{p, s, k}
   kʷutki > putki > puski
2. tj > tʃ
3. sj > ʃ
4. s > ʃ/_i
5. i > u ([-stress]; [-voiced]_[-voiced])
6. u > Ø/(_#; [-voiced]_[-voiced])
7. m > Ø/_w
8. w > Ø/{_u, u_}
9. j > Ø/{_i, i_}
10. a(:) > e(:) / j_
11. au > o:, ou
12. ju > i
    juki > iki
    puju > Modern *fui*, "winter"
13. wi > u
    awi > au
14. ru > l /_[+stop, -voiced]
    iruka > ilka

Although not regular, there are numerous spontaneous cases of /u/ disappearing after /m/.

Classical Swīra Phonology

Classical Swīra Consonants

		Labial	Coronal	Palatal	Velar	Labio-velar	Glottal
Stops	Voiceless	p	t		k		
	Voiced	b	(d)		g		
Fricatives	Voiceless	f	s		(x)		h
	Voiced	v	(z)		(ŋ)		
Nasal		m	n				

Tap		r	
Lateral		l	
Glide		j ‹y›	w

Vowels: a, e, i, o, u, ā, ē, ī, ō, ū
Diphthongs: ai, au, oi, ui, āi, āu, ūi

Syllable Structure: (C)(G)V(:)(C₂), where G is a glide and C₂ is any consonant except voiced stops
*[-sonorant] / _#
*[r] / #_

Phonological Rules
1. C > [l] /_[l]
2. Ø > [i] /[r]_[j]
3. Ø > [u] /[r]_[w]
4. Ø > [i] /C[w]_[j]
5. Ø > [u] /C[j]_[w]
6. Ø > [u] /[+consonant, +obstruent]_#
7. [+nas] > [αplace] / [+consonant, αplace]

The voiced stops, with few exceptions, occurred only word-internally before unstressed vowels. At one point, they were probably allophones of the voiceless stops, but before the breakup of Proto-Swīra they had, marginally, aquired phonemic status. There was no voiced counterpart to /t/, although [d] occurred phonetically as an allophone of /r/, and later as a phoneme in some dialects. In some respects /r/ acted as a voiced counterpart to /t/. The frequency of /g/ increased rapidly during the early Classic Swīra period due to the influx of Tepat words, many including the uvular phoneme /q/ which was rendered [g] in Swīra.

In Proto-Swīra a syllable could end in a vowel or any single consonant. However, oral obstruents were permitted in syllable-final position only word internally. Only sonorants and vowels were permitted word-finally. In cases where a form ended in a consonant underlyingly, a phonetic [u] appeared in surface representation. The accent in a word, fell, insofar as possible, on the first long vowel in the root. When there was no long vowel in the root, the first syllable was stressed. All kinds of CC combinations were permitted across syllable boundaries (except stop + nasal), although nasals assimilated to a following stop. Geminate consonants occurred intervocally, and a long vowel was not permitted to proceed a geminate consonant in the later language (such combinations that existed earlier were shortened).

There was a degree of allophonic variation among consonants. In Proto-Swīra and some forms of later Swīra, when pronounced before another stop, stops were fricated, in the manner [p] > [ɸ], [t] > [θ], [k] > [x], [kʷ] > [xʷ ʍ], [b] > [β], [g] > [ɣ], [gw] > [ɣʷ w].

In a sense Classical Swīra had a dual phonology. The word and syllable types described above for Old Swīra hold for Classical words of native origin. Native and borrowed words can often be distinguished by phonology, because Tepat phonology was extremely different from Swīra. Tepat had a CVC and CVCVC shape for words, with an optional glide or lateral following the first consonant (but not adjacent to any other consonants). Thus Tepat allowed initial clusters which were usually disallowed in Swīra, while forbidding the medial clusters that were common in

Swīra. While Swīra words usually ended in vowels, Tepat words always ended in consonants, including stops. Tepat also did not distinguish vowel length. In Classical Swīra it is usually obvious which words are borrowings because they begin and end in consonants and sometimes have initial clusters with /l/. Consonant clusters in native words were found only between vowels and never initially. Words are certainly native when they contain [a:], [r], [kʷ], or [gʷ].

The Classical Swīra language had a limited range of diphthongs: /ai/, /au/, /ui/. Two diphthongs, /oi/ and /eu/, were shortlived; /oi/ is assumed to have merged with /ui/ shortly before the initial migrations, and /eu/ is believed to have changed to /jo/ shortly afterwards (since the change is also reflected in most Tepat loanwords). Prehistoric diphthongs /ei/ and /ou/ were nearly universally changed to /i:/ and /u:/ respectively among Swīra and its related languages. Classical Tepat [ej] and [ow] became the long vowels /e:/ and /o:/. The diphthong /oi/ was also reintroduced from Classical Tepat.

Dialects

Northern Swīra dialects showed a loss or weakening of phonemic vowel length earliest, and they lost the distinction between short [i] and [u], collapsing them both into a high central vowel [ɨ]. This centralization began in Sɨhel early in the Old Swīra period and spread from there. Phonemic length was also weakened or lost in parts of the south where Swīra was learned as a second language by ethnic Tepat, who spoke a language without phonemic length. Following this, in some varieties the short central vowel merged with an adjacent glide. Thus *wi* became *u* and j*u* became *i*. This change began with medial sequences and in some varieties spread to even initial [ju] and [wi] clusters. For example Old Swīra *puju*, Modern *fui*, "winter."

In the east, a consonant shift began affecting intervocalic consonants, such that the voiced stops were fricated, voiceless stops voiced, and geminate stops simplified. This shift began in Noɦoʃe (<*nogosje) and spread outwards to many other dialects.

In other regions, certain sounds were palatalized, and others labialized; labiovelar stops merged with either labials or velars; final vowels were lost; short vowels were centralized; [oi] merged with [ui], and intervocalic glides were lost. In a couple of the advanced urban centers of Kōswīra[3], final vowels after voiceless consonants are devoiced, and even dropped. Long vowels were typically shortened in these environments. E.g.,

- *putu > put*
- *tukī > tuk*

To this day there are a large number of words with alternate pronunciations of [p] or [k], or [p] or [f], as the dialects mixed after the changes distinguishing them had taken place.

Grammar

The Swīra word classes or parts of speech are the verb, noun, and particle. Most verbs had a root of CVC(V) shape, to which various affixes were added, while nouns almost invariably ended in open syllables, and usually had a shape of CV(C)CV. Particles were usually short, with a CV form. Since the verb is the dominant form of any utterance, and the most complex wordform in the language, it makes sense to start with the verb first. In this section we will be using mainly Old

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[3] Kingdom of the Swīra

Swīra, as it was spoken before it diversified into the dialects spoken by the different invading tribes.

The Verb

The verb is so dominant that in fact, sometimes it is the only part of the sentence, so far as we understand the concept of "sentence." (It might be said that Swīra "sentences" consisting of a main verb and dependent subordinate verbs are more on the level of our paragraphs.) The verb has several moods, which can be classified in the broad categories of superordinate or independent verb forms, and subordinate or dependent verb forms. The independent moods include the indicative and imperative, and the dependent include the subjunctive, gerund, and participle. All forms inflect for person, tense, voice, and polarity.

 The indicative, or superordinate or superjunctive verb, is the mode of the main verb of a sentence. Within a sentence, there may be only one main verb, which indicates the central action of the utterance, and which the speaker deems most important. All other verb forms in a sentence must be of one of the subordinate types.

 There were two main semantic classes of verbs. Dynamic verbs described actions, performed by one actor, the agent, on someone or something else, or on himself. Such verbs had four voices, active, passive, causative, and reflexive. Stative verbs described states of being and were by nature intransitive. They had only a causative voice and either an active or passive voice (which had no significance either way), being defective in the other voices.

 The various voice and valence-related derivational verb suffixes gave rise to an array of "conjugational" forms in early Swīra. Thus the applicative suffix that allowed the objectification of the goals of motion verbs became the definitive stem of a conjugational class populated mostly by motion verbs. The same happened for stative suffixes. Meanwhile, the aspectual distinction became one of tense, with the imperfective becoming present tense and the perfective becoming past, with a new future tense created.

Morphemes were added to the verb in the following order:
1. subject marker
2. indirect object marker
3. direct object marker
4. applicative
5. directional affixes
6. incorporated noun stem
7. verb stem
8. voice
9. mood
10. aspect
11. polarity

Applicatives
- *au-* from (source)
- *nē-* for (benefactive)
- *kʷu-* with, by (instrumental)

oru   au-arg ʷ-lā
bone   from-arrowhead-make
"make an arrowhead from bone"

orō   k ʷu-seri
knife   with-cut
"cut with a knife"

Directional Affixes
- *ni, nak-* in(to/ward)
- *tos-* out(ward)
- *gai-* out(ward)
- *wa-,wā-* up(ward)
- *sar-* down(ward)
- *mus-* forward
- *per-* backward

Examples:
- *nisuk-* inhale
- *tossuk-* exhale
- *wāpik-* pull up
- *sarpik-* pull down

Voice
- -Ø: active
- *-tar*: causative
- *-os, -eu*: transitive verb suffixes
- *-i, -ar*: intransitive verb suffixes
- *-ē-* adjectival/stative verb suffix

Examples:
*sīn- "die"; **sīnos-* "kill," **sīni-* "die"
*ot- "fall"; **otos-* "drop," **oti-* "fall"
*pari- "begin"; **parijar-* "begin (oneself)"
Sometimes if no suffix is added in the transitive, the root vowel is lengthened.

The adjectival-stative form can be added to transitive or intransitive verbs, like so:
"I pick berries" + STAT = "I am a berry-picker, I am one who picks berries."
…because here picking berries is considered to be a quality of the speaker.

Mood
- -Ø: indicative
- *-u (-w-)*: imperative or subjunctive

- *-tera*: Marks the conditional or hypothetical mood, and is also used in past-time counterfactuals.
- *-(a)nte*: marks the so-called gerund or gerundive form
- *-tak*: marks an optative or desiderative, when the desirer is the same as the agent or actor of the desired action.
- *-tagaru*: marks an optative or desiderative, when the desirer is different from the agent or actor of the desired action. The agent or actor is treated as an indirect object in these cases.
- *-keu* (> *-kjō*): indicates that the action of the verb is not a fact or actual occurrence, but a probability or possibility.
- *-pē*: potential

Aspect

Imperfective: -Ø
Perfective: -li

Examples:

-sīnolli	-sīnili	-sīn(u)li
-otolli	-otili	-ot(u)li
-parili	-parijalli	

kʷo-pari-jal-li
1SG-begin-INTR-PF
"I began"

kʷo-sīn-i-li
1SG-die-INTR-PF
"I died."

Kʷ-ōti-tera-li   *kʷo-sīn-i-li*.
1SG-fall-COND-PF   1SG-die-INTR-PF
"If I fell, I would have died"

kʷo-koma-wesk-uli   (> *pokomaweskuli*)
1SG-hair-wash-PF
"I washed my hair"

Mepgoi   *kʷo-s-t-ōna-li.*
book   1SG-3a-3i-give-PF
"I gave him the book."

Polarity

- -Ø: affirmative
- *-mu*: makes a verb negative. The question particle *-ka* was often added to this later, and merged with it to form the modern question ending, *-nka*.

- *-ka*: marks a question. This was later often added to the negative morpheme *–mu* to form the negative interrogative *–muka*, and merged with it to form the modern question ending, *-nka*.

Discourse Particles (Enclitic)

- *jo*: assertion
- *ne*: confirmation, agreement
- *wa, wā*: surprise, emotion

Derivational Affixes

- *-koro*: indicates the time when an action takes place. Often serves the purpose of a temporal clause, e.g. *Tawekoro*, "when I eat," "while eating"
- *-muti*: noun indicating the manner of action of a verb. In modern dialects, sometimes found as [ntɕi nɕi ntʃi nʃi].
  seri-muti
  cut-manner
  "way of cutting"
- *-e*: general nominalizing suffix
- *-ā*: general nominalizing suffix

Person Markers
The arguments of a verb were indexed on the verb as prefixes.

	Subject	Indirect Object	Direct Object	Possession	Pronoun
1sg	kʷo-	w-	kʷi-	kʷe-	kʷeja
1pl	mi-	n-	mi-	mi-	meja
1pl incl.	jo-	i-	jo-	i-	ija
2sg	le-	l-	li-	le-/li-	leja
2pl	wa-	w-	wi-	u-	uja
3a	su-	s-	si-	su-/si-	suja
3i	te-	t-	te-	te-	teja

Kʷo-s-wij-ona-li   (> *Posujonali*)
1SG-3a-2PL-give-PF
"I gave you (pl.) to him."

Kʷiken ōtārmwe susikamuli
Kʷi-ken   ōto-ar-mu-e/ā   su-si-kamu-li
1SG-dog   father-exist-not-NOMINALIZER   1SG-3PL-bite-PERF

"My dog bit that bastard."

Noun Incorporation

The object of a verb can be incorporated into the verbal matrix. This often interacts with the use of applicatives, allowing an unimportant direct object to be buried in the verb and drawing attention to an indirect argument or oblique phrase raised to that position. The incorporated noun is inserted in the verb matrix directly in front of the verb stem, triggering certain changes. If the verb stem begins in an unvoiced stop, it is voiced, in the manner:

/p/ > [b], /t/ > [r], /k/ > [g], /k^w/ > [g^w]

ware- +   *pari-*
travel   begin
warebari
"set out on a journey"

This change to verb roots is just one instance of a widespread phenomenon of voicing alternations in initial consonants. It does not affect the consonants /b g g^w s m n r l w y/, at least in the early language (although very few verb stems begin with voiced stops anyway). In later Swīra, the process was extended to all voiceless obstruents, and so /s/ > [z] in such positions. However, this change is blocked when the resulting consonant would be identical to the previous consonant.

      Incorporation sometimes has the effect of backgroudning the direct object, marking it as old information, replacing the function of an article like "the" in English. A newly-introduced noun phrase is rarely ever incorporated; if it is, it indicates that the information is some kind of presupposition. Sometimes, it is used to get one argument of the verb out of the way for another one. The verb can only index three arguments. If a causative or applicative would result in a verb having four arguments, then the direct object can be incorporated, the indirect object moved into the direct object slot, and the peripheral phrase promoted to indirect object. Other times, incorporation can have the effect of lexical coining, as some verb-object pairs become idiomatic. Thus it is like compounding to create new vocabulary. Many such compounds have become lexicalized. For example:

jene-nom-os-
wine-drink-TRANS
"to get drunk"
K^{w}ojenenomolli (> Modern *Pojenemolli*)
"I got drunk."

Verbs of motion can agree with (or incorporate) the area of movement as the direct object, and the point moved toward as the indirect object.

Copula

There is no copula per se. The function of the copula is performed by a verbalizing suffix, *-ase*.

This suffix is attached after a noun stem which represents one half of the identity equation. The other half, the one which is topical, appears as an independent noun, and its agreement prefix is attached to the beginning of the predicate. Formally, the topic is like the agent / agent agreement prefix, and the complement is an incorporated noun.

"I am a dog."
kʷo-kʷon-ase
1SG-dog-be

"Tito is a dog."
Tito su-kʷon-ase
Tito 3a-dog-be

kʷo-igeste-se
1SG-fish-be
"I am a fish."

te-jāk-ase
3i-frog-be
"It's a frog."

The Noun

Nouns refer to people, things, ideas, etc. and can serve as the arguments of verbs. Nouns consist of a stem, and also optionally
1. a pronominal prefix in the case of inalienable possession
2. a vowel suffix serving mainly to mark the word as a noun
3. a suffix identifying the noun as proximal or obviative (greater or lesser interest to the conversation)

Nouns belong to three broad classes: inalienably possessed, alienably possessed and unpossessed nouns. To a degree, there may be some ambiguity of classification regarding certain nouns. But most cases are clearer. Parts of the body, inherent aspects or qualities of a person, kinsmen, a spouse, and a man's dog and horse are considered inalienable possessions. An inalienable noun takes a pronominal prefix.

Most other small objects are alienable. (A man may lose his wife, but so long as she is there, she is "inalienable.") Some of these possessions could, however, be considered inalienable and take possession prefixes if the possessor also made them. Alienable nouns may be possessed via a periphrastic expression with an indirect object. (There was no verb "have" either, instead using a "There is X with Y" construction.) This was taken to mean the Swīra did not have the pettily materialistic, capitalistic worldviews of advanced civilizations which were obsessed with possession. As further evidence they took the similarity of the possessive prefixes to the *indirect object* verb markers.

Unpossessed nouns, usually abstract entities or materials, cannot be possessed at all. To express the equivalent of possession for something like "land," a paraphrase must be used like "the land I live on."

New nouns were also formed by compounding. Like the incorporation of an object into the verb, compounded nouns followed the rule whereby the initial segment of the second element was voiced if it was a voiceless stop. Thus,

$p > b, t > r, k > g, k^w > g^w$

The same condition whereby identical consonants in successive syllables was prohibited also worked here.

New nouns could also be formed by means of affixes. Some of these are:

- *-nesa*: a characterizer suffix on nouns, e.g. *swīranesa*, "The Swīra way, (sometimes) the Swīra language."
- *-kwa*: augmentative
- *-ōwe*: typicalizer, "genuine," e.g. *ērōwe*, "a genuine man, a Swīra man."
- *-ke*: locative, goal, instrument; general oblique-case suffix/clitic
- *-sjoko*: distributive suffix

Some nouns appear to have been formed from verb roots by various derivational processes, e.g., an infix *-n-* that indicates a concrete noun related to, or the result of the action, of a verb. Gemination of the second consonant of the root can have this effect, as well as serving as a diminutive. Suffixation of a vowel to the verb root, which often ends in a consonant, is one process, as is inverting the final consonant-vowel pair.

*sanra > sarna; sanda

Numerals

In Old Swīra the plain numerals were little used. They were effectively collective nouns. They bore a suffix /-ki/, and the /k/ was geminated after short vowels.

	Old Swīra		Later Swīra
1	bitki	>	biski
2	k^wutki	>	puski
3	mikki	>	mikki
4	jonki	>	jonki
5	swikki	>	sukki
6	muiki	>	muiki
7	njotki	>	njoski
8	jakki	>	jakki
9	gokki	>	gokki
10	tōki	>	tōki
~100	maniki	>	manki

In later Swīra, this *-ki* became a generalized counter suffix, used for things when there was no

particular counter suffix, or when the proper counter was unkown. This occurred after the practice of using numeral counters was adopted from Yuktepat. For the most part when indicating the quantity of a particular noun, the numeral root was prefixed to the noun being counted. The numeral prefixes are:

1	bit-
2	kʷut-
3	mi-
4	jon-
5	swi-
6	mui-, muy-
7	njot-
8	ja-
9	go-
10	tō-
~100	mani-

The practice of prefixing numerical roots to nouns became non-productive early in the Swīra period, and remains in only a few fixed forms. It is occasionally used to suggest deliberately archaic style. For example, a man mocking liturgical conventions may say:

mj-ēru
three-men
"three men"

instead of the standard,

ēru   tam-kal
man   three-thing
"three men"

Another set of numbers was taken over from Tepat. This set contains higher numbers such as 10,000 for which no native Swīra words are known. Furthermore, these numbers were quite specific, whereas the Swīra *mani(ki)* "a hundred" was vague and could apply to any very large group of things. In fact in the modern language it simply means "very many."

0	ljom, lum
1	ug
2	nju, nui
3	tam
4	sē
5	on, wō
6	lug
7	set
8	(h)ot

9	gō
10	tjep, uglum
100	jok, uglumlum
1000	tjen
10,000	tjeptjen
1,000,000	min, mun

Swīra took from Yuktepat the use of classifiers or measure words, which appear in Swīra attached to the numeral (usually of Yuktepat origin) as a compound. In almost all cases, numerals were required to be followed by a classifier or counter. Which counter was appropriate was usually determined by the physical properties of the thing counted. For example, the counter *lop* was used to count long, thin, flexible objects. Counters themselves overlapped with nouns, and many could be used alone as nouns, and serve as counters for themselves. Commonly used counters include:

hon	long stiff objects
pē	cup, bottle, indefinite measure of liquid
wa	animals
kal	people
mai	thin flat objects
sut	volumes, member of a series
toi	machines, tools
kai	buildings, monuments

Some counters were added to numbers to perform adverbial functions.

tō	times, repetitions of an action

Some counters referred to specific units of measurement.

mik	smallest unit of time measurement (a little less than 1 second)
nan	small unit of time measurement (about 8 seconds)
sok	medium unit of time measurement (about 84 seconds)
pon	unit of time measurement (about 14 minutes)
wol	largest unit of time within a day (about 2 hours 24 minutes)
li	day
kit	month (cycle of the moon)
sik	season, one-quarter division of the year
tik	year (cycle of the sun)
si	year (referring to the age of something)

Mutational Processes

In primitive Swīra, at least five productive processes caused mutations in the form of words:
1. Final vowel alternation
2. Root vowel ablaut

3. Initial consonant voicing
4. Nasal insertion
5. Gemination

(1) The final vowel of a noun alternated between one form when the word was isolated, and another when the first element of a compound. This alternation applied to some vowels and thus did not affect all words, and in some cases there is an idiosyncratic alternation. In general, the two major alternations were as follows:
-a / -e
-u / -i
Thus, a noun ending in *-a* would change the *-a* to *-e* when joined to a following noun root, and in the same situation a final *-u* would change to *-i*. (This process did not affect the long counterparts of these vowels.) The same process is sometimes seen operating in verbs before a few verbal endings.There a few words which lose the final vowel in compounds:
jāka, jāku, "frog"; *jāk-* in compounds
These are usually stems that ended in a consonant and had a euphonic vowel added to avoid ending the word in a consonant.

(2) Root vowel ablaut occurs in some roots which serve as the base of a noun and a verb. The noun typically has a stem vowel *o* which becomes *e* when the root is used as the root of a verb.

(3) Voicing of the initial consonant when a root becomes the second element of a compound has been discussed above.

(4) Nasal insertion, also discussed previously, is one common way of forming a noun from a verbal root or stem.

(5) Gemination has several functions. Sometimes it is a process that forms nouns from verbs, although not nearly as common as nasal insertion. Secondly, it commonly occurs in nouns to form a diminutive. The third case of gemination is in so-called expressive gemination that is found in some adverbial forms, interjections, and onomatopeia. Geminate consonants are also found in most of the stand-alone numerals. And of course, there are also a few words that have doubled consonants simply as part of their underlying form. In most cases the last consonant of a root is usually affected, because geminate consonants are not permitted word-initially, only intervocally. However, gemination of the initial consonant of the stem in a conjugated verb often indicates intensification. This is possible because verbs nearly always have prefixes, which places the initial consonant of the *stem* inside the *word*, and between two vowels. Gemination does not affect all consonants – neither glides (w, j) nor voiced stops (b, g, gʷ) can be geminated.

Pragmatics

Word order is often completely scrambled due to pragmatic influences, but the basic word order appears to be SOV. At the beginning of extended stretches of utterances, such as at the beginning of a chapter or speech, the position of the verb is often inverted so it comes first. This became standardized as a stylistic convention in later Swīra literature, with the initial verb marking the beginning of a division of text, such as a stanza or canto of a poem. The verb usually came later in the sentence though. The position of noun phrases, adverbial phrases, and of subordinate clauses relative to each other, and the main verb, was determined mostly by pragmatic considerations, especially the newness of the information. Old information generally preceded new information,

although any number of stylistic factors could affect the arrangement of items in particular utterances.

Philology and National Studies

Swīra linguistics is strongly associated with political ideology and particularly the nationalist programme known as *Hokkō* or *Kogunambu*. Both loosely mean "National Studies": the first name is based on Yuktepat roots, according to academic convention and Yuktepat syntax; the second is based on Proto-Swīra roots and preferred by National Studies scholars themselves because of their emphasis on Swīra authenticity.

During the long peace of the Awagukot[4] period, Kōswīra turned to introspection, figuring out what it meant to be Swīra within a society that was developed largely by the incorporation of foreign Tepat elements, and often looking to the past for answers. The so-called National Studies movement initiated by Mūtol Tokunara believed that the Swīra were alienated from their true spirit by shamelessly adopting Tepat culture, and that by studying the native elements of their culture this spirit could be restored and the existential question answered. These scholars reconstructed as much of pre-civilized Swīra culture as they could by comparing records of the earliest Swīra history with the culture of contemporary nomadic tribes to the north. Swīra linguistics developed as a handmaiden to National Studies, although it took its technique from Tepat grammars (and indeed the whole National Studies movement would not have existed without the example of the Tepat scholastic tradition). Though perhaps scientifically unsound, aspects of the early Swīra language became the basis of countless inferences concerning the culture and even psychology of the nation's forefathers.

Swīra national studies scholars of the later age took the late development of tenses as an indication the early Swīra had no concept of linear time, which was instead imposed by over-enthusiastic appropriation of Tepat philosophy. Instead of having access to all of nature and humanity past and present, which was believed to have been the experience of the primitive Swīra, the Swīra had inherited from the Tepat an illusory division of past, present, and future which alienated man from his origins and his hopes and dreams, confining his experience to "the moment." Nationalist philologers decried this "Tyranny of Time." Unlike Yuktepat, Old Swīra had no word meaning "time" specifically – the closest was a noun derived from the verb "to pass." The seminal scholar Mūtol Tokunara justified this belief metaphysically by describing time as a continuous flow, like movement through space, with no clear "boundary" between "present" and other times. Imperfective aspect was unmarked – continuous action, being dynamic, is the fundamental, natural condition.

In Old Swīra only inalienable possession was marked. If necessary to indicate, alienable possession was indicated by a construction with an indirect object. In general only a few things like body parts and relationships (and interestingly, some other things – one's horse and dog, for example, were treated like kinship terms) could be inalienably possessed. Generally one could not possess abstract, immobile, and inanimate things – like water or land, unsurprisingly for a nomadic people. There was no verb "have" either, instead using a "There is X with (or at) Y" construction. The possessive prefixes were also most similar to the *indirect object* verb markers. This was taken

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[4] The second dynasty of the Swīra, which established order in the realm after two hundred years of civil war among the feudal aristocracy

to mean the Swīra did not have the petty materialistic worldviews of advanced civilizations which were obsessed with possession and preoccupied with economics above all else.

Some nouns have been formed from verb roots by various derivational processes. For example, an infix -*n*- that indicates a concrete noun related to, or result of action, of a verb. Gemination of the second consonant of the root can have this effect, as well as serving as a diminutive. Suffixation of a vowel to the verb root, which often ends in a consonant, is one process, as is inverting the final consonant-vowel pair. This mutability of the shape of the morpheme, which is recognizable in various forms by a certain non-linear "similarity," was taken by scholars as a manifestation of the "intuitive" nature of the Swīra spirit, in contrast to the overly-rationalistic, categorizing nature of the Tepat.

Some of the inferences drawn from this historical study were completely sound. The importance of livestock to pastoral life is borne out by the ancient term for "herd," **peiku*, which gave Classical *fīcu*, "wealth, possession."

Genetic Affiliation of Swīra

Swīra's prehistory and genetic history is not wholly clear, despite the efforts of National Studies scholars. While Swīra is certainly related to some other languages of nomadic tribes in Northern Swidira, the full extent and membership of the Macro-Swiric family is unknown. In part its resolution has been bogged by political issues. Enthusiastic romanticizers of the "free" pastoral life wanted to demonstrate the brotherhood of all the northern tribes and assigned all their languages to the Macro-Swīric family without reservation. Their fanciful reasons for making the assignations has sometimes confused serious searches for genetic affiliations, and many of the similarities are clearly due to areal influence or coincidence. There is also the question of whether or not the language of the Koreli-nas is related to the family. Despite its divergent phonology, its early stages show very similar grammatical patterns, and there are resemblances in basic vocabulary. (These are sometimes obscured now by the heavy influence exerted by its participation in the East Coast Sprachbund.) But the desire of many nationalists to differentiate themselves from East Coast countries and their urban commercialism discouraged research in this direction.