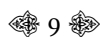


## II Accent and Quantity

### *Accent*

§ 8 Word stress in the Cheremis language is not definite enough regarding syllables. In two-syllable stems, it often falls on the first syllable, e.g., *Jámə* ‘God’, *kédčä* ‘day’, *tálzä* ‘month’, but often enough also on the second, e.g., *mardéz* ‘wind’, *šymbél* ‘brother’, *kandém* ‘I carry’. If the first syllable is stressed, however, the non-initial syllable rather often takes a light stress in Cheremis as well as in Zyrian, its own stress which causes a weakening in the stress of the first syllable and sometimes even leads to its loss. The stress described can even be disregarded, but in such cases the vowel of the suffix usually either drops or it changes into a schwa. If the real word stress lies on a non-initial syllable, the short vowel of the first syllable either disappears or it changes into a schwa, e.g., *älém* or *lém* ‘I live’, *äštém* or *štém* ‘I do’, *ərgém* or *rgém* ‘I sew’, *ädärämäs* or *drämäs* ‘woman’, *äläštäs* or *läštäs* ‘leaf’, etc. In words with three or more syllables either the first syllable is stressed, as in *mómoca* ‘sauna’, *kädärcä* ‘thunder’, or the second syllable, as in *kaváštə* ‘skin’, *savála* ‘spoon’, *tärwänem* ‘I get ready’. Words with many syllables are usually derived from stems with two syllables, and the stress most often remains



on the same syllable as in the original stem. But this stress is lighter than the one described above. Furthermore, it can easily be moved onto the suffix. – In compounds, both words tend to keep their stress. But if the first word has only one syllable, the stress falls usually on the second word or its first syllable, e.g., *kokánja*<sup>72</sup> ‘twice’, *kambádčas̄* ‘three-layered’.

### *Quantity*

§ 9 Quantity in Cheremis cannot be marked accurately enough, because in many cases it seems to depend on the stress and is generally speaking very unstable and volatile. Rather often a stressed syllable can be pronounced both long and short. Words with one syllable ending in a vowel always sound long, but, if more syllables are added to it, the length disappears, e.g. *pyy* ‘tooth’, *pyem* ‘my tooth’, *ii* ‘ice’, *iän* ‘icy’, etc. This also concerns some one-syllable words, which end in the consonants *z* or *ž*. In particular, one has to notice that in two-syllable words the final syllable often seems to get longer if it has stress. – In this opuscle a long vowel is written with two vowel signs but only in those cases where length seems essential.