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Vepsian Oikonymy

Vepsian oikonyms are village-type settlement names having emerged in a natural way and functioning in an unofficial setting. Official forms fixed in reference collections, lists and maps are Russian and may often be derived from stems totally different from the unofficial Vepsian ones. Such a discrepancy is less frequent in the names of settlement groups (Vepsian *Vilhal* – Russian *Ярославичи*) but it is a norm for separated small villages. For example in the village group Šimozero, which is a nest of numerous small villages, the following Vepsian–Russian parallels can be found: *Pust* – *Доровская*, *Mančimägi* – *Фокинская*, *Laht* – *Кузнецовская*, *Haršimägi* – *Яковлевская*, etc.

In our database there are about 500 oikonyms taken from the territory of the present-day Vepsian population and the same amount of settlement names current in the adjacent Russian area. A number of the latter have preserved relicts of their Vepsian origin. Vepsian oikonymy is represented by names of settlement groups (for details see below), ends or parts of these groups, separate villages and farmsteads that do not belong to groups. This is a rather mixed unity comprising ancient as well as more up-to-date elements. There are a few Vepsian oikonyms, although in forms adapted to Russian, mentioned already in the earliest of the records made of the Vepsian territory in the 13th century. On the other hand, a number of farmstead names go back to the turn of the 19th–20th centuries. Many of the settlement names have forms that bear witness to the age they emerged in, which makes it possible to study the history of how the Vepsian territory became populated.

1. Terms meaning 'settlement' in the Vepsian oikonymy

In the present-day Vepsian dialects there exist several lexemes for the different types of village settlements: *külä*, *derevü*, *posad*, *pagast*. In toponymy, the set is much wider. A good many of the terms either went out of active use or denote settlement types unknown today, such as *tanaz*, *kond*, *usadišš*, *slabad*, *usad'b*, *selišš*, *hutor*.

The lexeme *külä*, which has wide Finno-Ugric connections and is represented in each Balto-Finnic language with the meaning 'village, settlement', plays but a minor role in Vepsian toponymy. The reason for this is to be sought in the semantics of the term as well as in the historical conditions of the formation of Vepsian settlements. In the majority of Vepsian dialects the word *külä* refers not to one single village but a whole group of them, that is,



a nest of settlements. However, there are two steady models of naming settlement nests in Vepsian toponymy: they are formed either with the oikonymic suffix *-l* (*Karhil*, *Pecoil*, *Vilhal*), or are secondary, deriving from the denomination of the natural object near which the village was situated (the village *Mägjärv* on lake *Mägjärv*; *järv* 'lake') — for details see below. From the existence of these two models of denomination of settlement nests it follows that the term *külä* is indispensable only if the type of the object to be named is concretized: *Šokšunkülä* along with the parallel *Šokš*, *Vilhalankülä* and *Vilhal*, etc.

In the toponymy the memory of a few Vepsian terms used to denote an inhabited place has been preserved. One of these is **kond*, which has the meaning 'a peasant's courtyard, farm, plot of land' in the majority of Balto-Finnic languages. It is obvious that the word was gradually ousted from the Vepsian dialects by its Russian equivalent *деревня* (adapted to Vepsian in the forms *derevni*, *deruvni*, *derõni*), which, as is well-known, initially meant 'a peasant's courtyard with an adjacent plot of land' (VORONIN 1935: 70–73). Its numerous traces, however, can be pointed out in Vepsian toponymy as names of hayfields *Ukon/kond*, *Perjan/kond*, *Kondušine* and others as well as village names: *Kond*, *Minan/kond*, *Kondud* (in complex name structures the attributive element is represented by an anthroponym). In the adjacent Russian territories the memory of the former villages is preserved in the toponyms *Кондуши* (frequent), *Кондо/сельга*, *Конда*, etc.

In the past, villages with one single courtyard could obviously be called *tanaz*, *tannaz* (stem *tanha-*) as well, which in present-day Vepsian dialects means 'courtyard (for keeping cattle), cattle-shed'. It is represented by the Vepsian place names *Tanaz* (village Šidjärv),¹ *Tanhoine* (Järved), *Kešk/tanh* or *Keš/tan* (Viŋhal), *Aksin/tanaz* (Pondal), *Marku/tan* and *Virah/tan* (Voilaht). It is also probable that the Russian place name model *Большой Двор*, *Великий Двор* 'big yard', usually denoting settlements with a noble landowner's court, could have supported the frequency of occurrence of this lexeme. It is not by chance that *Tanaz* (Šidjärv) and *Keštan* (Viŋhal) are villages where there used to be landowners' mansions.

The other terms current in Vepsian toponymy with the meaning 'settlement, inhabited place' are of Russian origin. This follows from Vepsian territories having been subjected to Russian administration at an early date and over a long period of time, which also meant the adaption of official Russian terms. It should be noted that the toponymic and appellative uses of the terms are different. For example, Vepsians living on the river Ojat' (speakers of the



¹ Here and below the names of the settlement nests or groups are given in brackets after the examples taken from toponymy.

western type of the middle-Vepsian dialect) use the term *pagast*, which goes back to Russian *нозосм* 'settlement around a church', to refer to the village occupying a central position in the nest of settlements. It is fixed in the form *Pagast* in the denominations of such central villages (with a church) in the Vepsian village groups Ladv, Mägjärv, Vi'hal, Järved and Karhil. In the toponymy of northern Vepsians living along the south-western bank of Lake Onega there is reference to such centres being given the Russian name *posad* (*носад* 'settlement near a town, village'), registered in the form *Posad*, *Keškposad* 'middle, central village', *Su'posad* 'big village', *Papinposad* 'priest's village' and occurring in the denominations of central villages practically in all settlement groups. In the present-day northern Vepsian dialect the word *posad* has broadened its meaning and refers to any settlement. On the other hand, southern Vepsians have come to use *derōń*, a word of Russian origin, to name central villages (from Russian *деревня*). This is definitely proved by the fact that in southern Vepsian toponymy the term *derōń* is always used as an individual word, i.e. *Derōń* in the village groups Sodjärv, Šidjärv, Vāgedjärv, Kortlaht. As an appellative, however, *derōń* means any settlement.

Having but a few courtyards, northern villages often ceased to exist and turned into *nyctouuu* 'waste land' (Vepsian *pust*) and *seliūca* 'places of deserted villages' (Vepsian *seliš*). Memory of them is preserved in numerous microtoponyms, names of arable land in different parts of the Vepsian territory: *Pust*, *Pustad*, *Čoga/pust*, *Soušin/pust*, *Pustošin/pust*, *Seliš*, *Seliš/püud*. Some of the waste land could be repopulated later, so the terms could also reappear as place names: *Rodin/pust* (village group Arskaht'), *Makoi/pust* (Laht), *Pust* (Voilaht), *Pust* (Torazjärv), *Pust* (Šimgärv), *Seliš* (Voilaht).

After the system of noblemen's landed property had been established in parts of the Vepsian territory at the beginning of the 17th century, oikonyms of the type *Usad'b* appeared. They referred to villages with landowners' mansions *усадьба*. The same applies to the name *Slabad*, Russian *слобода*, meaning 'a peasants' settlement on land going waste, founded and given preferential treatment by a landowner' (VORONIN 1935: 40). At the turn of the 19th–20th century, when the farmstead system was spreading, the Russian term *хутор* was adapted to Vepsian dialects in the forms *hutor* or *futor* and came to be used in names of farmsteads: *Futor*, *Pešan/hutor*, *Kirikan/futor*, *Tatarvan/hutor*, *Bairin/futor* and others.

Thus, the majority of Russian terms penetrated the Vepsian vocabulary and became established in it as a result of the land of the Vepsians having first been subjected to Novgorodian, then all-Russian administration. The process involved not only the adoption of lexemes but also of settlement types (e.g. PIMENOV 1965: 251).



2. The 'nest' or 'group' settlement system

The habits of naming village-type settlements are mostly dependent on the characteristic features of how their system is formed. In the Vepsian territory the so-called 'nest' system is typical, which means that the settlements are grouped in 'bushes' or nests (the common Russian term is *село*). Some of these may include just a few villages while others take in dozens, all of which, however, are small, having but a small number of courtyards and situated near one another (from a few hundred metres to a kilometre). They usually centre around a village with a church. The names of such nests are rather ancient (most of them are recorded in medieval written sources), whereas those of small villages, not infrequently having just one courtyard, are not particularly stable and can change when a new owner takes over.

The analysis of the names of settlement nests shows that they fall into two rather clear-cut groups: one of them comprises items with the special oikonymic suffix *-l* (*Karhil*, *Pecoil*, *Vilhal*, *Vingl*, *Šond'al*), which is attached to an ancient Vepsian anthroponym (see below). The other group contains secondary names that emerged as a result of the metonymic use of the name of a natural object, such as a river or a lake. The village groups *Enar'v*, *Mäg-järv*, *Humar'v*, *Torazjärv*, *Šimgärv*, *Päžar'*, *Šid'järv*, *Sod'järv* and others are located along lakes with the same name (*-järv* and its rudiments 'lake'). The villages *Pondal Šapš*, *Šokš*, *Kalag'*, *Tožeg* reveal the names of rivers along which they are situated. Names of other geographical realia are rare: *Kort-laht*, *Voilaht* (*laht* 'inlet'), *Vehkoi* (*-oi* < *oja* 'stream'), *Püudkašk* (*kašk* 'forest clearing').

The nest-type arrangement of settlements can be clearly seen from several names given to the small villages that belong to such a grouping. These are reflective of the geographical location of the settlements in relation to the central one. Thus, there are a great number of place names containing the "situative" word *agj* with its dialectal variants *agǵ*, *agd'* 'end' which function either as individual words or determinates of complex toponyms: *Agj*, *Agǵ*, *Agd'*, *Alaž/agd'* 'lower end' and *Üliž/agd'* 'upper end' downstream the river Šoutarv; *Suv/agd'* 'southern end' and *Pohd'/agd'* 'northern end' in the village group Kaskeza; *Ondri/agj*, *Tihon/agj*, *Semuk/agj* in Lavda, in which the attributes are personal names. Another frequently occurring "situative" lexeme is *sürj*, *sirj* 'countryside', used mainly as an individual word: *Sürj*, *Sürg*, *Sürd'*, *Sirj* are common in many Vepsian village groups. It is preserved in the form *Сурья* or *Сурьга* as a Vepsian heritage in the adjacent region where speakers have become Russianized. Place names with the element *čoga*, *čuga* 'corner', such as *Čoga* (frequent), *Nouman/čug* also refer to the 'corner' or 'end' location of a village in relation to the centre of the village group in question.



The two groups of names of settlement nests mentioned above demonstrate a rather clear-cut area division. Place names with the suffix *-l* are spread in the valleys of the rivers Ojat' and Kapša (the basin of the river Sviř), inhabited by speakers of the middle Vepsian dialect. Such forms are also commonly used by southern Vepsians, i.e. beyond the southern boundary of this territory. Secondary names, on the other hand, are dominant in the northern and eastern parts of the Vepsian territory, in the Onega and Lake Beloje regions. They also occur in the southern area, in the upper reaches of the river Lid'. The distribution is the result of historical development. The *-l*-model area is superimposed on the archeological area of the burial mounds (1st-2nd millennia AD) of the south-eastern Ladoga region. These bear evidence to the appearance of a stable agricultural population and are linked to the ancient Vepsians by archeologists (AK). In connection with this stratification of the areas it seems to be logical to infer that the *-l*-oikonymy is a relict of the culture of the Ladoga burial mounds, i.e. ancient Vepsians. This supposition is in agreement with the conclusions drawn by researchers concerning *-l*-oikonymy in Finnish and Estonian toponymy. This model has been found productive in areas of the earliest adoption of localized agriculture, whereas settlement names deriving from appellations of natural objects are more frequent in territories taken possession of later (NISSILÄ 1962: 92, PALL 1977: 196, 237, VAHTOLA 1980: 137). The early origin of Vepsian oikonymy with the *-l*-formant is also evidenced by its being based on ancient Vepsian appellative lexis. Formations from Christian names are totally absent in it.

The absence of this place name type around Lake Beloje (eastern dialect) and Lake Onega (northern Vepsian) can obviously be explained by the fact that these areas were first occupied for fishing and hunting, which means that the names of water objects, forest belts, etc. were extended to settlements: lake *Šimgärv* > settlement *Šimgärv*, river *Šokš* > village (group) *Šokš*. This model is in harmony with what is known about the history of the Vepsian territory. Regarding details, the relevant linguistic data show that the Vepsians invaded the Sviř and the Beloje region from the basin of the river Sviř, which they had occupied before. In addition to this, the Vepsians are known to have taken possession of the Onega region at a later date, not earlier than the 14th century (PIMENOV 1965: 185).

The overwhelming majority of Vepsian settlements are conglomerates of villages with few courtyards. Besides them, however, there exist some isolated villages, farmsteads and outposts that emerged later than settlement nests. Their names are usually secondary and are based on names of natural objects: the farmstead *Šonsel'g* is named after the landmark *Šonsel'g* (*sel'g* 'mountain, hill of elongated form'), the farmstead *Pihär'* takes its name from the lake *Pihär'*, the same applies to *Sarg* (village and river). Others contain anthroponyms in their bases: *Išan'*, *Krik*, *Vanhiman/sel'g*. The names of these



settlements are of interest because they represent a specific model for the reconstruction of the process of how settlement groups or nests came to be named centuries ago. The settlement nests also arose from one single village and developed into complex conglomerates.

3. Anthroponyms in Vepsian oikonymy

About 50% of Vepsian oikonyms are derived from anthroponyms – names, surnames and nicknames. Because of historical, social, economic and geographical conditions, villages in the north had only one, rarely two or three courtyards when they emerged. Under such conditions the most natural way of name-giving was a reference to the founder or the owner of a village courtyard. This process is amply evidenced by historical documents of the 15th–16th centuries.

Anthroponyms that were used for naming settlements fall into two layers: non-Christian Vepsian names and Christian names coming to the Vepsian appellative vocabulary from Russian. What makes Vepsian oikonymy particularly valuable is that it preserves relicts of the genuine Vepsian anthroponymy lost by the languages. The *-l*-type place names are especially informative of Vepsian appellative lexis. The bulk of it consists of names of settlement nests that do not change over time, which accounts for the presence of ancient Vepsian names in them. The absolute majority of *-l*-type toponyms capable of being etymologized contain non-Christian anthroponyms in their bases. It is well known, however, how difficult it may be to draw a dividing line between nicknames and non-Christian personal names. Their composition is defined by researchers of Balto-Finnic anthroponymy in different ways (FORSMAN 1891, KIVINIEMI 1982, STOECKE 1964). However, in view of both personal names and nicknames being important constituents of the ancient system of appellation, separating them does not seem to be necessary for the purposes of our research.

What follows below is a list of examples of *-l*-type settlement names comprising non-Christian in their bases.

Hübjoil, village on the river Ojat'. The Vepsian anthroponym that can be reconstructed is **Hübjoi*, going back to the Vepsian word *hüb* 'owl' and supplied with the formant *-oi-*, characteristic of Balto-Finnic oikonymy. The anthroponym was also part of the Karelian appellative lexis in the form *Hyypiä* (NISSILÄ 1975: 135).

Kokoil, village on the river Ojat', also *Коквичи*, village in a former Vepsian, now Russianized, area on the river Ojat'. One of the most widespread ancient Balto-Finnic personal names, known to have been present in the Finnish, Estonian and Livian appellative lexis (FORSMAN 1891: 127, 149,



STOEBKE 1964: 38–39) can be reconstructed as its base. It goes back to Balto-Finnic *kokko* 'eagle'.

Terl, now a Russian village on the river Ojat'. The Russian variant *Тервиничи* allows for the reconstruction of an initial Vepsian **Terv(a)l*, in which the suffix *-l* is attached to the anthroponym *Terv*, from Vepsian *terv* 'resin'. What could have motivated its appearance as an anthroponym might have been a form of activity (resin smoking) and also the darkness of its bearer's hair (cf. the similar explanation of the origin of the corresponding Finnish and Karelian anthroponym MIKKONEN—PAIKKALA, NISSILÄ 1975: 152).

Nurgoil, village on the river Kapša. It is thought that the toponym contains a nickname akin to Vepsian *ńurkta* (*ńurbub*) '(cause to) be fed up, keep complaining'. The deverbal noun referring to a person with these features is supposed to underlie the name of the well-known Vepsian village *Винница* – Vepsian *Vingl*, cf. Vepsian *vinkta* (*vingub*) 'shriek, squeal'.

Two of the toponyms quoted above — *Vingl* and *Terl* — occur in the corresponding Russian variants *Вьюница* and *Тервиничи* in a written document of the 13th century, the earliest one mentioning the Vepsian territory.

Such *-l*-type Vepsian village names as *Haragal*, *Härgoil*, *Noidal*, *Ozroil*, *Rahkoil*, *Reboil*, *Kakoil*, *Karhil*, *Pecoil*, *Korvoil*, *Vilhal* and others are also built on non-Christian Vepsian anthroponyms (MULLONEN 1994: 87–92).

Apart from these, a whole group of place names of the type described above is current in the former Vepsian territory bordering the area inhabited by Vepsians at present from the west. Its Russianization went on for centuries, and the Russian models for the adaptation of the original Vepsian name frequently changed. In some cases the process of adaptation was direct:

Пудроль < Vepsian **Pudroil*, in which the anthroponym *Pudroi* can be traced back to Vepsian *pudr* 'thick mush'. This anthroponym is in actual use in southern Vepsian (KETTUNEN 1943: 271) and is evidenced by data from related Balto-Finnic appellative lexis.

Кайбола < Vepsian **Kaibal*, cf. the group of highly popular ancient Balto-Finnic personal name with the stem *Kaipa-* (Finnish *Kaipa*, *Kaipia*, *Kaivas*, *Kaivo*, Estonian *Kaibeste*, *Kawiste*, *Kaibe* — FORSMAN 1891: 167, 179, 246, KALLASMAA 1985: 17) 'long-awaited (child)'.

However, original Vepsian *-l*-type formations lost this suffix in the process of adaptation by Russian, which substituted the ancient Slavic oikonymic suffixes *-ичи* or *-ицы* for it. The analysis of this group of names makes it possible to reconstruct a whole range of Vepsian anthroponyms having gone out of use by now. AUGUST AHLQUIST, the noted Finnish linguist, who visited the Vepsians in the middle of the 19th century, found the village *Русконицы*



still inhabited by Vepsians and recorded the Vepsiant variant of the name *Rusttal* (TUNKELO 1946: 5). This name can be descended from the Vepsian anthroponym **Rusked* – Vepsian *rusked* (stem *rustta-* in the oblique cases) 'red, lovely'. The name of the village *Имоченицы* on the Russian Ojat' obviously sounded **Himačal* in Vepsian. One can see in it the ancient Balto-Finnic name *Hima* with the suffix *-č* (Karelian *-čču*), i.e. **Himač*, meaning 'wished for, long awaited (child)'. Memory of the anthroponym **Kurik* (Vepsian *kurik* 'club, small axe for chopping wood') is preserved in the village name *Курикиничи* (Vepsian **Kurikal*). It is to be supposed that the figurative meaning of the word *kurik* 'thick-headed, stupid person' can be traced in this anthroponym (ZAYTSEVA—MULLONEN). As is well-known, similar semantics is very fertile for a nickname to emerge. The one-time popularity of the anthroponym is shown by its functioning as part of at least two Vepsian settlement names: *Kurikmägi* or *Kurikanmägi* in the south and *Курикина Гора* in the former northern Vepsian territory around Lake Onega.

Old Vepsian anthroponyms can be reconstructed in other *-ичи/-ицы*-suffixed place names in the lower reaches of the rivers Ojat', Kapša, Paša, cf. *Валданицы, Гертиничи, Гоморовичи, Гуреничи, Лембовичи, Мустиничи, Пужевичи*, among others.

While the *-l*-model of Vepsian anthroponyms is mostly formed from non-Christian ones, in other structural models its role is less significant. This is so because of the age of Vepsian *-l*-oikonyms. It is obvious that by the time the Orthodox appellative lexis became current in Vepsian, this oikonymic model had gone out of use. Other structural models of Vepsian place names used clanship nicknames that either turned into official surnames or survived as unofficial ones later. A number of these were lost by the Vepsian anthroponymic system but continued to be used as parts of village names. The inhabitants of the farmstead *Habukad* had the surname *Габуковы* (Vepsian *habuk* 'falcon'). One of the villages belonging to the northern Vepsian village group *Šokša* is known by the name *Hörč* and can clearly be traced back to the nickname *Hörč* 'cantankerous ill-tempered person', which survives in the surname of the inhabitants of *Gerčina*. The village names *Reboi/mägi* and *Reb/agj* preserve the Vepsian anthroponym *Reboi* derived from Vepsian *reboi* 'fox'.

The Russian population penetrated the Vepsian region from the beginning of the 2nd millenium and brought along Orthodoxy, first filling up the set of Vepsian names with Russian Orthodox ones, then replacing them. On the whole, Orthodox anthroponyms have a clear dominance over non-Christian ones. This is related to the fact that the overwhelming majority of oikonyms are not stable and conservative names of settlement nests or groups but show a remarkable mobility and are changing over time, being attached to names



of various villages and ends that belong to the given nest of settlements as well as to outposts and farmsteads. Actually, there is not a single name of present-day Vepsian villages — constituents of settlement groups — whose attestation could be found in the written sources of the 16th–17th centuries. Moreover, the replacement of village names — an officially documented process — was carried out at the end of the 19th century. Such instability also contributed to the loss of Vepsian anthroponyms that used to underlie place names.

On the other hand, the system of Vepsian and the characteristics of Vepsian anthroponymy leave their traces on the currency and use of Russian names. It has to be taken into account that Russian calendar names were borrowed via northern Russian dialects and, consequently, they preserved northern Russian features of the formation of hypocoristic and colloquial forms. Thus, the Russian ecclesiastic name *Анна* is current in the form *Аиua* in northern Russian dialects, so it is this very form that was adopted by the Vepsian appellative lexis, where it took the Vepsian anthroponymic suffix *-ei* (< *-oi*): *Ašei* later. Names of Vepsian villages preserve numerous traces of Vepsian variants of Orthodox names that are gradually fading into oblivion:

– northern Vepsian *Hama/mättaz* around Lake Onega: Vepsian *Hama* < Russian *Фoмa*; *Dimšan/posad*: Vepsian *Dimš* < Russian *Димшa*, diminutive from *Дмитрий*;

– *Doroi/mägi* on the river Ojač: Vepsian *Doroi* < Russian *Дорофей*; *Juš*: from Vepsian *Juš* < *Юшa* from the Russian calendar name *Иван*;

– southern Vepsian *Juhnō* (the Russian variant is *Юхново*): Vepsian *Juhoi* < Russian *Юха*, dialectal variant of the calendar name *Ефим*; *Timō* or *Timoi* < Vepsian *Timoi*, based on Russian *Тимофей*.

Ethnographers have concluded that “the majority of Vepsian villages are built on clanship relations to a certain extent, uniting one or the other clan” (MALINOVSKAYA 1930: 186). It is obvious that the oikonyms preserve the ancestors’ names, who founded villages on a “clanship” basis. It is not by chance that some of the oikonyms of this type have common features with present-day surnames frequent in villages: village *Melka/mättaz*: inhabitants’ surname *Melkhižed* (Russian *Мелькины*), *Mikša/mägi*: surname *Muukinny*, *Marku/tan*: “street” (i.e. unofficial) surname *Markinad* (Russian *Маркины*).

The core of Vepsian oikonymy consists of anthroponyms. Besides them, there are also a relatively small number of “situative” (see above) names and names reflecting types of village-like settlements. A small group of oikonyms (not more than about 50 items) comprises names referring to features of the countryside: village *Kangaz* (Vepsian *kangaz* ‘pine forest’), *Rand* (Vepsian



rand '[river] bank'), *Sar'* (Vepsian *sar'* 'island'), *Nem* (Vepsian *nem* 'cape'), *Mägorc* (Vepsian *mägorc* 'mountain peak') and others. The names convey some information about the physical-geographical characteristics of the region that was given preference when it was being populated: these are mainly banks of rivers and lakes as well as land situated at a higher level and suitable for cultivation.² It should be noted that, evaluating the extralinguistic information that toponyms convey, one should also take into account the role of the toponymic system itself in the act of nomination as well as the mutual influence of and interrelation between the elements within the system. The contrast between the oikonyms *Mägi* (*mägi* 'hill') and *Org* (*org* 'low place') in some Vepsian village groups is an illustrative example. It based on by requirements of individualization in the naming process rather than real geographical features.

On the whole, the semantic characteristics of Vepsian oikonymy are in close connection with such characteristics of the villages themselves as settlement types, time and conditions of their emergence. Thus, deanthroponymic formations prevail among the names of settlement nests. These formations generally emerged from the non-Christian appellative lexis, whereas secondary oikonyms originated in the metonymic extension of geographical realia to the settlements. As opposed to this, secondary oikonyms are less significant in village names, and in the anthroponymic type the dominance of formations from Christian names is obvious. What is reflected in names of ends of settlement groups is their location in relation to the centre (*Agj*, *Čoga*, *Sürj*), the relief of the countryside (*Org*, *Mägi*, *Rand*), and also the settlement type (*Posad*, *Kond*, *Tanaz*). It seems to be difficult to find the most characteristic semantic models for names of single villages and farmsteads as they may belong to any of the semantic types mentioned above, which may be explained by the young age and instability of the objects named.

4. Structural properties of Vepsian oikonyms

As regards their structure, Vepsian oikonyms fall into simple and complex formations. Compared to other classes of Vepsian toponymy, in which complex constructions consisting of a head and its attributive determiner prevail, in oikonymy there are a great number of simple names, about 50% of all Vepsian oikonyms. The reason for this is that, in contrast to other categories of Vepsian toponymy, oikonyms take a whole range of specific oikonymic suffixes that function as heads.

² Compound heads are better indicators of villages being often situated in higher places. Terms like *mägi* 'hillock' (*Semoi/mägi*, *Kukoi/mägi*), *mättaz* 'small hill' (*Marku/mättaz*, *Haragan/mättaz*), *sel'g* 'hill elongated in its form' (*Vaiñhimansel'g*) are particularly active in this role.



It is the terms listed above with the meaning 'settlement' that are used as heads of compound oikonyms: *Kirikan/futor*, *Radin/pust*, *Aksin/tanaz*, *Suř/posad* and others, however, they cannot be said to be particularly active. The complex oikonymic models with the heads *-mägi* and *-mättaz* (the latter in northern Vepsian around Lake Onega) are much more widespread: *Juši/mägi*, *Johork/mägi*, *Konoi/mägi*, *Lařa/mägi*, *Levoi/mägi*, *Mikša/mägi*, *Mina/mägi* on the Ojat', *Bořa/mägi*, *Fedra/mägi*, *Maksi/mägi*, *Omos/mägi* in Šimzero, *Hama/mättaz*, *Marki/mättaz*, *Mina/mättaz*, *Koiran/mättaz*, *Seňkan/mättaz*, *Kirikon/mättaz* in northern Vepsian. In general, the words *mägi* and *mättaz* mean 'hillock, hummock' and, at an initial stage of oikonym formation, could have reflected the geographical characteristics of the place of dwelling. The primary sense, however, fell into the background and the heads *-mägi* and *-mättaz* came to be perceived as nomenclature terms referring to the class of the object to be named. It is not accidental that in the Onega region the head *-mättaz* is synonymous to the head *-posad* 'village': *Dimšan/mättaz* = *Dimšan/posad*, *Ostašun/mättaz* = *Ostašun/posad*.

In accordance with the rule common for Balto-Finnic oikonymy, the attributive element of complex oikonyms is expressed by a noun or an adjective: *Suv/agd'* 'south-end', i.e. 'southern end', *Suř/posad* 'big village'. The genitive form is characteristic of attributes expressed by anthroponyms. In them, the genitive has a possessive function: *Vaňkan/posad* ~ *Vaňkam/posad*; *Seňkan/mättaz*, *Markan/deřuuň*, *Radim/pust*. Some settlement names used to take the *-n* marker of the genitive but, having lost it, coincided with the nominative on the surface: *Mel'ka/mättaz* < **Mel'kam/mättaz* < **Mel'kan/mättaz* 'Mel'kin's hill', *Hama/mättaz* < **Hamam/mättaz* < **Haman/mättaz* 'Gamov's hill'.

Oikonyms simple by their structure fall into derivatives and non-derivatives. Non-derivative settlement names are homonymous to the appellatives underlying their formation: villages *Čoga* < *čoga* 'corner', *Hapšom* < *hapšom* 'aspen grove' and to the anthroponyms: *Feňk*, *Minač*, *Orešk*, *Ofoň*, *Paňč*, *Savič* (Vilhal), *Juš*, *Kukoi*, *Kürš*, *Makar* (Ladv), *Ignáš*, *Semoi*, *Johorovad* (Järved) on the river Ojat'; in the Onega region: *Dokuć*, *Ondřuška*, *Fil'a*, *Mitrei*, *Kiitaš* (< nickname of an inhabitant who served as a military clerk in China in the 1st World War); southern Vepsian: *Juška*, *Kľui* (< surname *Клюев*), *Nikanor*, *Bušak*, *Timō*, eastern Vepsian: *Gouroi*, *Miron*, *Ontip*, *Onton* and others. Some of them have their parallels in the complex formations: *Hotoi* ~ *Hořa/mägi*, *Lućk* ~ *Lućkam/mättaz*, *Mitrei* ~ *Mitreim/posad*. That is why it seems to be difficult to give priority to either of them. Part of them are probably elliptical, especially as reference to their bicomposite structure is to be seen in the Russian variant of the name in question: *Krik* – *Крюкова Сельга* (< **Krikun/sel'g*), *Lućk* – *Лучкина Гора* (< **Lućkam/mättaz*).



Derivative oikonyms are formed with a derivational affix. Of the Vepsian oikonymic suffixes, *-l* (**-la*) is of special interest. It takes its origin from the ancient Finno-Ugric *-l*-type suffix, which became widespread in Balto-Finnic oikonymy. It is supposed that the process was promoted by the small productivity of this suffix in the appellative lexis, where it was initially used for the formation of derivatives with a locative meaning from terms of family relationship first of all: *setä-lä* 'uncle's dwelling', *miehe-lä* 'husband's dwelling' (HAKULINEN 1968). In Vepsian, the suffix cannot be found in the appellative lexis at all: it has either disappeared altogether or functions as an exclusively toponymic heritage of the ancient Balto-Finnic oikonymic system. In Vepsian, as also in other Balto-Finnic oikonymic systems, the suffix is attached to anthroponymic stems. In contrast to other systems, however, in which it actively forms toponyms from Christian names, in Vepsian the *-l*-model is practically used with non-Christian anthroponymy only (see above for examples). Along with the fact that the model is mainly used in names of settlement groups that are noted for being long-lived and stable, this is also indicative of how ancient the model is in Vepsian oikonymy. Its ancient origin is also supported by the corresponding Russian forms which take the ancient Russian oikonymic formant *-ичи/-ицы*, replacing the Vepsian *-l*-model in the southern reaches of the river Svir: Vepsian *Reboil* – Russian *Ребовичи*, Vepsian *Vingl* – Russian *Винницы*, Vepsian *Šond'al* – Russian *Шондовичи*, Vepsian *Ozroil* – Russian *Озровичи*. Dozens of the settlement names with the formant *-ичи/-ицы* of the neighbouring Russian territory are hidden Russian adaptations of former Vepsian *-l*-type oikonyms (*Кургеницы*, *Вачукиницы*, *Уитовичи*, *Рекиничи*, *Шутиницы*, *Куневичи* and others). There is some evidence of this Russian model having gone out of use by the 15th century (MULLONEN 1996). Consequently, the original Vepsian settlement names cannot be younger than the 15th century.

In Vepsian oikonymy there are suffixes with collective semantics in appellative use. Thus, the name of a settlement may also convey the meaning 'community of inhabitants'. The suffix *veh* is not particularly productive: *Agveh*, *Orgveh*, *Sel'gveh* (Mägjärv), i.e. literally 'inhabitants of the villages *Agj*, *Org*, *Sel'g*'; *Zinkveh* and *Mišukveh* (Toižegi), which can be descended from the surnames of inhabitants *Зинков* and *Мишукков*. The collective suffix *-išt* is more widespread. It is well known in two areas: the regions of the lakes Onega and Beloje. In both of them the suffix is used only for the formation of oikonyms, remaining practically unheard-of in an appellative function.³ The suffix is attached to stems expressed by Christian names: in the Onega region *Deremišt* (Vepsian *Derem* from the Russian calendar name *Еремей*),



³ Both in the Ladoga and Beloje regions the suffix *-žom* is used as an appellative suffix with a collective meaning.

Fedorišt, *Vasilišt*, *Tihoništ* and others; around Lake Beloje *Prangatišt* (metathesis, cf. its Russian variant *Панкратово* from the name *Панкрат*), *Kindišt* (Russian Orthodox *Киндей*), *Kaišt* (Russian calendar name *Kaiŭ*).

Along with the collective suffixes *-išt* and *-veh*, the formant *-d*, which goes back to the plurality marker, should also be given consideration. It is used in names of villages belonging to settlement nests as well as in names of farmsteads: *Arhipovad*, *Čigovad*, *Fetkovad*, *Jerkovad*, *Johorovad*, *Maimistad*, *Mikšovad*, *Nilkičud*, *Petrojevad* and others. Before going over into the class of oikonymic suffixes, the formant *-d* underwent a transitory stage of development as an anthroponymic suffix referring to communities of inhabitants. Many of the *-d*-type oikonyms are derived from Russian surnames with *-ov/-ev*, which is indicative of their being relatively new. The given model is most widespread along the river Ojať.

In the area populated by the Vepsians several settlement names reflect the adaptation of Russian names with the possessive suffixes *-ино*, *-ов/-ев*: *Totorou* – *Татарово*, *Vočou* – *Бочево*, *Juhnō* – *Юхново*, *Zaharin* – *Захарино*, *Pāšin* – *Паньшино*, *Kiškin* – *Кишкино*. Such a model is current around Lake Beloje: *Rizou* – *Пузово*, *Turžin* – *Туржино*, *Kalinou* – *Калиново*. These territories are the southern and south-eastern limits of the Vepsian area. The peripheral position and the long-time contact with the Russian population have exerted considerable influence on both the Vepsian dialects and toponyms here.

With the exception of *-veh*, each of the formants described above has its own area of spreading, which can be explained by linguistic (e.g. a drive for separation from appellative suffixes) and extralinguistic factors (the circumstances and time of settlement, contacts, etc.).

The feature uniting all the suffixed models listed above is their being attached to anthroponymic stems. The reason for this is to be sought in the circumstances of the settlement process: villages that had only one courtyard at the time of their formation were named after their founders or the owners. Even today the majority of suffixed oikonyms are names of small villages, parts of settlement groups, farmsteads, outposts, some of them preserving the connection with surnames, names and nicknames of the inhabitants. Settlement names of the *-l*-model are exceptions in this respect. They emerged as names of villages with one courtyard only. As the villages grew and began to be segmented, the model was extended to the whole settlement nest.

Apart from an area of spreading, each of the described formants has its own chronology. This fact makes it possible to draw conclusions as to the history of occupation by the Vepsians of the region between the two lakes. The study of oikonymy seems to prove that the Vepsians could have taken pos-



session of the Ojat' and the adjacent areas earlier than the territories around the lakes Onega and Beloje. Analogical oikonymic types to be found in these latter regions may have come about as isolated instances consequences of immigration from other districts.

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