

Introduction

Cultural information such as people's religious, linguistic and ethnic identity is always reflected in personal names. This is why many of us regard anthroponyms as subjects of great interest. Personal names are not isolated elements in any language or its nomenclature but represent a system with different sub-systems such as the first name system and surname systems. These systems are culture-specific. Some languages use several first names, others patronyms, some prefer names passed on in the family, some employ new names for every generation, etc.

In all cultures, giving a child a name means that he is accepted as a member of the community. Richard Alford (1988) has demonstrated that personal names express the identity of a person in two ways: in the first place, they tell the other members of the community who the individual in question is and secondly, they tell the community who he is or is expected to be. Personal names thus have a significant role in building a person's individual and social identity and constituting links between generations, families, clans and tribes. They express different religious, political, ethnic and other values associated with groups of people. In this connection they also reflect political, religious or value change and build historically multi-layered systems that can be implemented in the cultural reconstruction of the past world views.

In addition to identification, a name also has a function of classification. The personal names do not only identify a person but also make him a member of a group and provide him with a social identity which is often explicitly gendered. They powerfully signify the speakers' sense of local belonging, cultural identity and system of values. While the basic identification function of personal names is the same everywhere, their secondary societal and group linked functions may vary quite a bit, depending on the cultural context. As elements inherited from the past, names often reflect more archaic linguistic and cultural relations, concepts and value systems than the present language use, and are thus of great significance in the investigation of past conceptual realms, inter-group relations, cultural identities and beliefs.

The study of anthroponyms thus is an inherently interdisciplinary field of investigation with implications beyond the pure onomastics.

Notwithstanding the central nature of the anthropomorphic systems as identity bearers and source of cultural information, the Finno-Ugrian personal name systems have been relatively little studied. The research tradition begins in late 19th century, when A.V. Forsman published his monograph on Finnish personal names “by the heathen times”, labeled Volume 1 (Forsman 1894). Unfortunately, the probably planned second volume never appeared.

The only 20th century monographic treatment regarding on the old anthroponymic system of the Finnic-speaking people (Stoebke 1964) is already a half a century old and reflects the point of view of early structural linguistics. Some anthroponymic handbooks especially on surnames (cf. Mikkonen & Paikkala 2000; Rajandi 2005; Černyh 1995) and a handful of modern and well-founded investigations have been published especially on Udmurt tribal (or vorshud) names (Atamanov 1996, 2001), but most of the naming motivations of the Uralic speaking people remain little studied. The toponymic investigations by Mullonen (1994, 2002), Karlova (2004), Saarikivi (2006) and Kuzmin (2014) shed light on some aspects of the old anthroponyms especially in the historical area of the eastern Finnic languages, as reconstructed on the basis of toponymic material, and the same group of names is also investigated in the light of material from Novgorod birch bark letters in an article by Saarikivi (2007). It is obvious that a similar methodology could also be implemented in search of the old anthroponyms in other contexts.

However, the general impression is that while the toponymic research in Finland developed entirely new paradigms from 1970s onwards and reached many fruitful results regarding name typology, distribution of name models and layering of toponyms (see e.g. Ainiala, Saarelma & Sjöblom 2012: 47–60), the historical study of anthroponyms has largely become to a standstill. No attempt for an etymologically relevant reconstruction of the old Finnic or other Finno-Ugrian personal name systems has been published. This is the more regrettable taking into account that new material for such an enterprise is now available not only in the expanding place name collections but also in the field of comparative mythology and folklore where new significant

results have been reached that enable us to reconstruct historical Finnic cultural layers reflected in oral poetry and (pre-Christian) religious practices (cf. Siikala 2012).

This volume aims at partly filling the gap in the field of Finno-Ugrian anthroponomastics. It has been borne by the frames of the project Personal names in Finnic and beyond, financed by the Academy of Finland (more about the project; see <http://blogs.helsinki.fi/personal-name-systems/>).

The present volume enlightens personal name systems in various Finno-Ugrian languages. **Janne Saarikivi** investigates the Proto-Finnic name heritage that is preserved in toponyms in the modern and partly also assimilated Finnic-speaking area. **Jaakko Raunamaa** analyses Finnish village names based on medieval anthroponyms in the historical Castle Province of Raseborg, Western Nyland. He studies what kind of anthroponyms became village names and what influenced that naming. One important conclusion of the article is that settlements which have names based on anthroponyms are not the oldest villages in the region. **Timo Rantakaulio's** paper, in turn, presents a review and an analysis of old personal names in the place names of a few villages of different ages in Finnish South Karelia by using multidisciplinary methods combined with areal linguistics. Personal names in the area examined in the study show a usage and settlement continuity from pre-Christian times.

Veps and Karelian names are in focus in three papers. Firstly, **Irma Mullonen** aims at reconstructing non-Christian Veps names preserved in settlement names with the suffix *-l* (< **-la*). She manages to show that the Veps anthroponymic system was an integral part of the corresponding Finnic system, and comprised both units traditionally termed personal names and names derived from bynames. Secondly, **Denis Kuzmin** analyzes Christian names of Karelians. A central starting point in his article is the propensity of Karelians to absorb various external cultural influences, and to process them to meet the demands of the local Karelian culture and language. Karelian forms of canonical names seems to constitute a quite well arranged system, providing the framework for a fairly easy reconstruction of many of the recorded Karelian vernacular names which had previously had no definite equivalents in Russian. Thirdly, **Olga Karlova** examines

modern Russified surnames, or translated surnames, among the Karelians, which are based on inherited, so-called unofficial demotic surnames in the Karelian language.

Forenames in southeastern Estonia in the 16th and 17th century are in focus in **Evar Saar's** article. The most common male forenames were Low German adaptations of Christian or Germanic names, typical to all of Estonia. However, there are substantial divergences between these names and those found in northern and western Estonia. **Taarna Valtonen** studies anthroponyms in Saami languages, a subject hitherto fairly little examined. The main focus is on North Saami, Inari Saami, and Skolt Saami. **Aleksander Pustyakov**, in turn, studies Mari personal names, both history and current situation. In pre-Christian Mari anthroponymy it was typical to use a multinominal naming form in addition to a simple monominal system: a personal name plus a genealogy name, a name according to place of residence and other modes. According to Mari beliefs, names possessed great power, which could influence the child's life. The choice of a name was determined by beliefs, traditions, and everyday life situations. Finally, **Valéria Tóth** examines history of the Hungarian personal names system in the context of the cognitive-pragmatic description. It turns out that descriptive names, as the name type constituting the backbone of the name system, play a central role in naming and name use in all periods of name history.

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