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Toponym Contacts along the River Svir

The River Svir connects the two largest lakes in Europe, the Onega and the Ladoga. During the conquests of the north-eastern Europe, this river was the focus of attention for thousands of years. The territory along the Svir is multilingual. Down the river itself and southwest of its banks a Russian population is to be found; the area along its northern tributaries is inhabited by Karelians, whereas in the southern part of the region there are Veps-speaking people.

It is clear that the present-day demographic structure of the area is the result of a long historical process and has emerged as a result of active contacts between various ethnic groups. Of the ethnic groups in this area, the Karelian-Ludes were the last to appear as a result of Karelian-Veps interaction in the 16th–17th centuries. Russians, who are the most populous nationality along the Svir at present, can be divided into two dialectal groups, which not only emerged at different times, but also penetrated into the area in different ways. From west to east a weakening of the Russian element and a growth of Finnic characteristics in the toponymy can be observed.

The Russians penetrated into the Svir area in the early centuries of the second millennium, although for quite a long time their influence was restricted to the western part of the area and the old administrative centres. The Vepsians, who used to form the core of the population, arrived in the Svir area at the turn of the first and second millennia, gradually assimilating the local inhabitants who spoke a language of proto-Saami type. How gradual this settlement process was is well reflected in the multi-stratal toponymy. As a result of this settlement process, the character of contact relations can be best described, not so much with the help of the toponym layers from different periods and different languages, but rather, through an analysis of the means by which toponyms from a foreign language were adapted.

The extensive diversity of language contacts can be traced back to three adaptation patterns of toponyms: direct adaptation with corresponding phonological substitution, morphological and semantic adaptation. The concrete realisation of these adaptation techniques however, depends on several conditions, including certain particularly important factors such as the typological character of the contacting languages, their genetic relationships, the intensity of contacts, the presence or absence of bilingualism, the official or unofficial status of the contacting languages and, over and above all, the so-



cial, historical and ethno-cultural background factors involved in the contacts in question.

1. Veps-Karelian contacts

The language contacts involved in the Veps and Karelian-Lude toponymy can be viewed as resulting from the interaction of two closely related toponymic systems. Further, Veps played a significant role in the formation of the Lude dialect of Karelian. Under such conditions, Veps toponyms were fully integrated into the Karelian system. A shared toponymic lexicon, together with uniform principles of toponym formation and a set of suffixes common to both languages is an objective precondition for the integration. Phonological criteria are not particularly illuminating because toponyms, acquired by immigrant Karelians were easily built into the phonological system of the local Karelian dialects: Veps *Matkoja* ~ Lude *Matkoja*, Veps *Saroja* ~ Lude *Suaroja*, Veps *Ledoja* ~ Lude *Liedoja*, etc. The Lude toponyms listed can be the result of either direct adaptation or mirror translation.¹

If two closely related toponymic systems enter into contact, the methodological problem of how to define either of them becomes interesting. How can elements inherited from Veps be shown to exist in present-day Lude toponymy? One possibility is to look for distinctive toponymic bases that can be traced back to the Veps lexicon. Because the number of lexemes that are productive in place-name bases is, at the same time, rather limited and the Karelian and Veps toponyms are remarkably similar, such bases are not numerous. The names of elevations, *Čuhak*, *Čuhuk*, *Čuhakod*, *Čuhak/mägi*, currently found among the Veps toponyms at the southern reaches of the River Svir include the indisputable Veps word *čuhak*, *čuhuk* ‘hillock, mound’. It does not occur in other Finnic languages, so its presence in the toponyms of the Lude-speaking northern bank of the Svir (cf., the hillock *Čuhakko/mägi*, the promontory *Ču-huk/niemi*) is an obvious reference to Veps. Another illustrative example is the Veps geographical term *kar*, *kara* ‘bay’, which has been appropriated as the appellative *kuar*, *kuare* in the Kuujärvi dialect of Lude. This term is widely used in the toponymy north of the Svir, and not only in Kuujärvi, but also beyond its boundaries, across the northern border of the Svir basin, in the Šuja basin (*Pada/kuar*, *Kuaran/abai*, *Kuar/sel’g*, *Kuare*). The fact that this pattern is frequently found in the Lude-speaking area, although it does not occur in the neighbouring Olonets Karelian region, testifies to its Veps origin.



¹ i.e. translation of the base of the toponym (editor).

Another criterion for distinguishing Karelian and Veps elements is supplied by certain types of toponyms that are characteristic of one of the contacting toponymic systems, yet missing in the other. For example, the hydronymic model *Pää/järvi* (*pää* ‘head’, *järvi* ‘lake’) used for naming source lakes, that is, sources of water systems, is Karelian. This toponymic model is unknown in Veps toponymy, which applies the models *Ladv-*, *Matk-*, *Ylä/järv* (which can, by the way, be found in Karelian toponymy, as well). In this context the absence of the *Pää/järvi* model at the northern reaches of the Svir is important. Here the earlier Veps naming tradition has been preserved.

On the other hand, the hydronym model *Pühä/järvi* ‘holy lake’, at the northern reaches of the Svir, must be considered of Veps heritage. It is frequent in the Veps toponymic system, whereas in Karelian it occurs only in the area north of Lake Ladoga, that is, in ancient Karelian territory. The model, however, did not spread to the Olonets isthmus or central and northern Karelia with the arrival of the Karelians into these areas. Why the model disappeared from Karelian toponymy can be explained through the semantic change that had occurred in the meaning of the lexeme **pühä*. The primary meaning ‘boundary’, present in hydronyms (the base used to refer to upper, water parting lakes, i.e., to those which are situated in “border” areas), took on a new meaning ‘holy’, which resulted in this base losing its usefulness for naming source lakes. *Pühä/järvi* in Karelia, including the northern Svir area, is a Veps toponymic model. The area it now covers began to take shape during the settling of the region by the Vepses, which preceded the Karelian occupation; that is, the settlement process was going on at a time when the word *pühä* was still being used mainly in its primary sense.

Metaphoric toponyms also belong to those toponymic models which are important. As they are characteristic only of a particular toponymic system, they carry distinctive force and can be used in differentiating toponymic heritage of different languages. For instance, *Kukoi(n)harj*, *Kukiharj* (literally: ‘cock’s comb or crest’) can be quoted as an example of a Veps figurative toponym used for naming elevated ground, a hill or a knoll. This figurative model is in active use in the southern (Veps) region of the Svir, although some names (the hills *Kukuoinhard’*, *Kukuohard’un/selge*, *Kukoi-harja*) have also been attested in the Lude-speaking northern Svir area and beyond the northern boundary of the Svir basin, in the Šuja drainage area. Taking into account that the model is absent in the Karelian toponymy of the territory neighbouring the Svir, one can postulate its Veps origin.

Concerning their geographical distribution, the distinctive Veps models noted above have a peculiar character. All are connected to the water route leading from the Svir to the north and, what is more, it is along this route that the language and ethnic border separating Olonets Karelians and Kare-



lian Ludes runs. Although there is a Veps basis in both the Olonets and the Lude dialects of southern Karelia, it is more discernable in Lude. If one proceeds from the fact that the distinctive Veps models are characteristic of microtoponyms, it may be posited that the Veps influence continued to spread from the Svir basin right up to recent centuries.

2. The adaptation of Finnic toponymy to the Russian toponymic system

2.1. Direct adaptation

Of those methods for integrating Finnic toponyms of the Svir area, the so-called direct adaptation is by far the most important. This means acquisition of the sound structure of the given toponym. About 70 per cent of all substratum toponyms in the Russian-speaking Svir area have emerged as a result of direct adaptation.

The Finnic toponyms that have been integrated into Russian through direct adaptation have different morphological structures and are built into a system of simple basic nouns, often taking on gender markers: *Габнема* < **Hab/nem* (complex toponym), *Ихала* < **Ihal* (simple toponym, with suffixation), *Кайбое* < **Kaiv/oja* (complex), *Пепа* < **Perä* (simple basic toponym), *Немель* < **Nemel* (lit. ‘on the promontory’, i.e., a microtoponym formed with the help of a locative case suffix).

The presence or absence of adaptation models and their productivity in the continuum of microtoponyms in a particular region can serve as a criterion for determining the chronology of the contacts and the russification of the local Finnic population. Changes in microtoponymy occur relatively rapidly owing to its instability. This means that old names, if replaced by new ones, will be abandoned. This is the reason the preservation of Finnic place names, especially a systematic preservation, is indicative of recent contact. In the Svir region, the number of Finnic toponyms incorporated into Russian through direct adaptation perceptibly increases from west to east, which accords with the chronology of Russian penetration into the region. In addition, in the west of the Russian-speaking Svir area, centres with minimal traces of Finnic elements in toponymy exist, as well as areas that are relatively saturated with them, suggesting that the Russian settlements in the territories surrounding the medieval grave-yards were of a “breeding ground” character. It is not surprising that here we find that the number of toponyms belonging to the Finnic substratum layer is the smallest.

Direct adaptation is accompanied by shifts in the phonetic shape of the toponyms, which depend on the characteristics of the phonological systems of the contacting languages. Sounds that do not have adequate Russian



equivalents have been replaced by those closest in realisation to the primary forms. Finnic *h* before a vowel is replaced with *g*: *Гавд/озеро* < **Haud/järv* (*haud* ‘pit’), *Пога* < **Pohj* (*pohj* ‘the end of a bay’), *Лумега* < **Leteh* (*leteh* ‘sand’). On the other hand, the complete disappearance of *h* is not infrequent: the toponyms *Ирбоюшка* (meadow), *Ирвинка* (river), *Иргозеро* (lake) contain Finnic *hirvi* ‘elk’ in their bases. If *h* is dropped before the front vowels *e*, *ä*, *ü*, *ö*, a prothetic *j*, often occurring in Russian, is attached: *Ебо/конда* < **Hebokond* (< *hebo* ‘horse’), *Юбеничи* < **Hübjoil* (< *hüb* ‘eagle owl, *bubo bubo*’).

Word-initial Veps *e*, absent in native Russian words, changed its form of realisation, either being transformed into *o*, with the eventual attachment of a prothetic *в*, or closing to become a Russian *e* [*je*], with a subsequent transformation of *j* into *з*’, which is typical of the Russian dialects along the Svir. As a result, the Veps lake name *Енарв* (< Veps *enä* ‘big’) changed into *Вонозеро* (*Онозеро* in 16th century documents). The Veps river name *Еноја*, from the same base, became *Геноя* or *Генюя*. Therefore, it can be assumed that variants with an initial *o* are older than those with an initial *j*. The former are used in areas that were russified earlier and are linked to the biggest and most conspicuous rivers and lakes, which, of course, acquired their Russian names earlier.

The different ways of acquisition of certain Finnic phonemes and their combinations are connected not only with changes that have taken place in Russian phonology over the centuries, but also with the evolution of Finnic, and in particular Veps, phonology. The toponymy of the Svir area, for example, reflects different stages in the labialisation of *l*, characteristic of all Veps dialects, with a subsequent series of changes in the emerging diphthong. The hydronyms *Тальгинский* (stream) and *Тойба* (river) can both be traced to *talv* ‘winter’, but in the first name the word is reflected in its early phonological form, absent from the present-day language, whereas the second reflects its modern form (*talv* > *tauv* > *touv*). The simplification of the Finnic stem *-kse-* into *-se-* in Veps is another process whose various stages are reflected in the Russian toponymy (cf. *Мелукса*, *Сермакса* west of the Svir vs. *Вадрусса*, *Вьтмуса* in the eastern area, on the border of the present-day Veps settlements).

2.2. Suffixation

The most significant method of morphological adaptation of Finnic toponyms in the Svir region is suffixation. This can be accounted for by the productivity of the suffixation method of toponym formation in Russian. It is especially important to note that the original meaning of the Russian suffixes used in toponyms is no longer appropriate in most cases. In substratum to-



ponyms, these suffixes can act as formal elements differentiating names from appellatives. This enables them to function in combination with foreign bases in which suffixes are employed as adaptors introducing toponyms into classes of names of the same type.

A comparison of the current use of suffixed models for the integration of Finnic toponyms with their degree of productivity in the Russian toponymic system of the Svir area shows, as a rule, a direct connection: the popularity of a suffix is usually related to its spread to foreign toponyms. This is amply exemplified by river names in the Svir basin, many of which take the suffix *-ка*: (*Сарка, Корбойка, Ягремка, Каномка, Вадожка, Паешка, Муромка* and others) as well as by oikonoms having the possessive derivation suffixes *-ево/-ово* (the villages *Куково, Лембово, Коково, Кургово, Игово, Гайгово*) and *-ино* (the villages *Тойвино, Кургино, Куйвино, Кяргино*). In terrain names the suffixes *-ица/-ец* (*Розменица, Мегрица, Мегренец*) are frequently found. The suffixes listed above are widely applied in the formation of Russian toponyms falling into the afore-mentioned categories.

This relationship between the class of object and a suffix often has a historical character: the suffixes employed as adaptors used to be productive at a particular historical moment when and in the historical area from which the bearers of the Russian toponymic system moved into the Veps-speaking Svir area. The well-known East Slavic river suffixes: *-ица* (*Ейница, Пялица, Сарица, Пагодрица, Урьица*) and *-ина* (*Важина, Ирвина, Савина, Аштина*) are used in the Svir area almost exclusively with substratum bases: by the time of Russian colonisation along the middle reaches of the river (it is to this area that the models *-ина* and *-ица* are linked) the geographical features had already been given names, which were adapted with the help of ordinary Russian suffixes. Because potamonoms with these suffixes are very stable formations, such a reconstruction of events would seem to be quite natural. Similarly, the oikonym suffix *-ичи/-ицы*, which is Proto-Slavic in origin and appears in the north-east concurrently with East Slavic colonisation, does not combine with Russian bases in the Svir area. On the other hand, it is productively present in the adaptation of oikonoms of pre-Russian origin (*Винницы, Вачукинницы, Рекинчи, Уштовичи, Коковичи, Мустиничи, Тервиничи, Имоченицы, Валданицы*). This was not at all accidental.

In the Svir area, the Old Russian oikonym pattern with word-final *-ичи/-ицы* occurs in the integration of original Finnic settlement names with an *-l-* suffix into the class of Russian oikonoms. This is convincingly evidenced by the Finnic and Russian variants of one and the same settlement name: the Veps village *Karhil* is called *Каргиничи*. Other examples are: *Vingl* ~ *Винницы*, *Sagil* ~ *Согиницы*, *Šond'al* ~ *Шондовичи*, etc. Thus, it can be concluded that in the present-day Russian-speaking Svir area a number of



oikonyms of this type emerged according to the following scheme: the Russian suffix *-ичи/-ицы* replaced the Veps suffix *-l*. This supposition is further supported by a remarkable example to be found in the so-called Svyatoslav Charter of the 13th century, in which the present-day village *Юксовичи* (with the *-ичи* suffix), situated in the Russian-speaking Svir area, is called *Юксола* (with the *l[a]* suffix).

Why was it the Old Russian model *-ичи/-ицы* that replaced the Veps oikonymy with *-l*? This may have been caused by the semantic relationship between the bases. Russian toponyms with *-ичи* were derived from personal names in the area west of the Svir. An anthroponymic origin is typical of Finnic oikonymy, too, and includes the Veps *-l* formations: compare *Rahkoil* from the ancient Finnic personal name *Rahkoi*, *Reboil* from the anthroponym *Reboi*, etc. (MULLONEN 1994: 87–97). These names are sufficiently transparent in russianised names with *-ичи/-ицы*: *Валданицы*: compare the ancient personal name *Valta*, *Valto* (Veps *Vald*); *Имоченицы*: compare the Veps anthroponym *Himač* (from the word *himač* ‘wished for, long-awaited [child]’); *Курикиничи*, compare the nickname *Kurik* ‘stupid, fathead’.

It may be of interest to add that the model of adaptation described can also be found beyond the northern boundary of the Svir area, in the Karelian-Lude dialect. What is noteworthy, however, is that the Russian suffixes *-ичи* or *-ицы* do not replace the Karelian suffix, but are attached to it: *Kunil* ~ *Кунилицы*, *Jurgil* ~ *Юргилицы*, *Sudal* ~ *Судалицы*, etc. Moreover, a number of original Karelian names do not take the suffix *-ицы* but are adapted by other suffixed models: *Террил* ~ *Тепнульская*, *Нотал* ~ *Хомовская* (with the Russian suffix *-ская*), *Туккул* ~ *Тюккуево* (with the Russian suffix *-ево*). This contrast can obviously be accounted for by the fact that unlike the Svir area, the Karelian territory remained the periphery of an area covered by the Russian model *-ичи/-ицы*. That is why there is a lack of consistency in its use.

In the territory occupied by the southern Vepsians the *-ичи/-ицы* model has not become widespread. Here the original Veps oikonymy of the *l*-type is reflected in Russian either through direct adaptation (Veps *Noidal* ~ Russian *Нойдала*, Veps *Korvoil* ~ Russian *Корвала*); or through a Russian suffix: Veps *Kurgoil* ~ Russian *Курголово*, Veps *Čaigii* (< **Čaigil*) ~ Russian *Чайгино* (JOALAI 1999: 231–232).

Judging by considerable secondary evidence, there are no clear-cut rules, nor is there any noticeable consistency concerning which Finnic structural models underlie those adapted with suffixation. Another important factor involved in the process of suffixal integration of Finnic toponyms is that they are typically adapted to corresponding Russian toponymic classes. As a re-



sult, one Finnic structural toponym type can be adapted in several ways. What becomes prominently emphasised against this background is the consistent replacement of the Veps *l*-suffixed oikonym model with the Russian *-ичи/-ицы* (*Karhil ~ Каргиничи*) north of the Svir. The bilingualism of the population was an obvious contributing factor in the emergence of the correspondence *ичи/-ицы ~ -l* at a time when the toponymy was being “semi-translated” through the replacement of the Veps oikonym formant with its Russian counterpart. This hypothesis is also corroborated by areal data showing that the territorial distribution of the *-ичи/-ицы* oikonym type coincides with that area in which a number of types of toponymic semi-calques² are commonplace.

In Veps toponymy there is also a suffix borrowed from the Russian place name suffix inventory: *-šin* (Russian *-щина*), which is often used in the formation of agronyms, that is, denominations of plots of land, forests, etc. used for agricultural purposes: *Teroušin, Timukoušin, Pehoušin, Ofonoušin, Nazaroušin*, etc. This suffix is attached to anthroponyms, a practice also typical of Russian. In contrast to the mass integration of Finnic toponymy into the Russian place name system, the penetration of Russian models into Veps toponymic formation is extremely rare. Furthermore, the use of the suffix *-šin* is an example of direct toponymic contact proper. It does not affect Veps appellative word formation. It would also seem obvious that the borrowing of the suffix *-щина* resulted from its extremely frequent occurrence in the Russian toponymy of the Svir area. However, social factors are also not entirely negligible: the use of the model with *-щина* in tax documents, that is, in official language, could have contributed to its permanency in Veps toponymy as well.

2.3. Calquing

The semantic adaptation of Finnic toponymy also manifests itself through calquing. Total or partial calquing is a characteristically north Russian way of adapting Finnic toponymy to Russian. An onymic calque is a name borrowed through literal translation. In onomastics it has been a tradition to distinguish total calques, resulting from a complete morpheme-by-morpheme translation of a foreign pattern (*Pit'k/järv > Долг/озе-ро, Долгое озеро*), and semi-calques—compounds consisting of a substratum (untranslated) base and a Russian geographical term, which is the translation of a commonly occurring generic of complex Finnic primary forms (*Kaid/järv > Кайд/озеро, Kiv/oja ~ Кув/ручей*). Semi-calques became widespread in northern Russian toponymy. Although compounding does also occur in Russian toponymy, its



² i.e. partial translations (editor).

role is only secondary. The fact that compound names as a structural type have assumed such a great importance in northern Russia can be explained by Finnic structural and morphological interference. A condition for such interference would be the gradual russification of the local Finnic population through a stage of bilingualism (GUSENIKOVA 1996). Therefore, semi-calques are to be regarded as evidence of substratum interference rather than as examples of borrowing.

In the Svir area there are 19 types of semi-calques, though these do differ in productiveness. Some of them are represented by several dozens of examples:

- болото 'moor, marsh' (*Кайд/болото, Ким/болото, Пурн/болото*)
- гора 'hill' (*Кябель/гора, Кумба/гора, Сай/гора, Чур/гора*)
- наволок 'promontory' (*Кар/наволок, Мадар/наволок, Пель/наволок*)
- озеро 'lake' (*Канж/озеро, Лен/озеро, Перх/озеро, Чик/озеро*)
- остров 'island' (*Из/остров, Колк/остров, Ламб/остров*)
- ручей 'stream' (*Вех/ручей, Кунд/ручей, Лун/ручей, Пехк/ручей, Ян/ручей*).

For various reasons other types of semi-calques are limited to relatively small areas. For example, the lack of productiveness of semi-calques with the determinant *-порог* 'rapids' (*Рынь/порог, Кош/порог, Сагар/порог*) is accounted for by the rarity of the relevant geographical feature, that is, rapids, north of the river Svir. The almost total absence of semi-calques with *-река* 'river' (*Гим/река, Кяй/река, Пай/река*) can be understood on the basis of the fact that Finnic potamonyms in the Svir area mostly consist of one lexeme only and their formation with a determinant is extremely rare. Semi-calques with the basic element *-зуба* 'bay', very popular in Russian toponymy in the vicinity of Lake Onega, are almost entirely absent in the neighbouring Svir area (*Пер/зуба*), because the Russian dialect term *зуба* in the sense 'bay' is practically absent along the Svir.

As for the ethno-linguistic interpretation of semi-calques, it is important to note that they can be linked to a particular area along the Svir. They are frequently found in the upper, north-eastern reaches of the river. Beyond the south-western boundaries of this area the structurally complex Finnic primary forms underwent a process of direct adaptation that is fundamentally different from that described above. In other words, the Veps denomination of the stream *Kiv/oja* was adapted in the south-western reaches of the Svir as *Кивоя*, whereas in the north-east it is *Кив/ручей*, compare also the headland name *Hab/net* reflected as *Габнема* and *Габ/наволок* respectively. It should also be added that the dividing line between the two types has a general rather than a local character, as it is the Svir area that can be considered the outpost of an extensive territory of semi-calques widespread in the region of the earlier Novgorod settlement in northern Russia. The western



boundary of the majority of semi-calques in the Svir area is the same as that separating the Ladoga-Tikhvin and Onega groups of northern Russian dialects, whose formation can be traced back to the 13th–14th centuries. In the Ladoga-Tikhvin zone (especially in its south-western part) the Old Russian settlers' culture flourished and the population became dense enough to lead to a relatively quick assimilation of the local Finnic inhabitants, whereas the present settlement of the Onega zone, in all probability, took shape without any radical change in the ethnic structure as a consequence of the gradual acquisition of Russian by the Finnic-speaking population through a stage of bilingualism. Such conditions were especially favourable for the emergence of semi-calques.

Thus, the areas of semi-calques reflect a gradual russification of the Finnic Svir area from the south-west to the north-east. Moreover, it is within the context of this areal segmentation that the most complex group of semi-calques should be interpreted. These semi-calques contain a dialectal lexeme, borrowed from a Finnic source as their basic component. In the Russian-populated districts of the Svir there are a great number of toponyms with the determinants *-кара* 'bay', from Veps *kar(a)* 'a small inlet in rivers or lakes' (*Габкара, Куккаскара, Ледокара, Ленкара, Умбаркара*); *-орга* 'low-lying marshy land, overgrown dense fir wood', from Veps *org* 'gully; ditch, low-lying land, thick forest' (*Габорга, Вехкорга, Ленорга, Кайдорга, Редорга, Сивдорга*); *-сельга* 'dry hill, overgrown with forest used for agriculture', from Veps *sel'g* 'hill' (*Габсельга, Койсельга, Мурдосельга, Палосельга, Савесельга, Вераньсельга, Кортосельга, Курсельга, Нисельга, Педайсельга, Ребосельга*) and a few others. The basic problem that emerges in connection with the analysis of the word formation model peculiar to this toponym group is whether they are semi-calques (and in this case their determinant is expressed by a Russian dialectal lexeme) or whether they have come about as a result of the direct integration of the Veps toponyms into the Russian toponymic system. Since the territory in which the toponyms listed above are found goes beyond the western boundary of the area of traditional semi-calques, it may be inferred that at least some of these originated through direct adaptation of Finnic toponyms: *Габсельга* < **Habselg*, *Ленкара* < **Lepkar*, *Кайдорга* < **Kaidorg*. What speaks for this is the fact that the phonological changes occurring in *-сельга* and *-орга* are restricted to toponyms in which the bases are not perceived as independent elements of the name although they do correspond to the Russian dialectal lexemes *сельга* and *орга*: compare *Ленсерьга* < **Lepserg* < **Lepselg* (according to the law of dissimilation of *l > r*); *Ейнерга* < **Heiñerg* < **Heiñorg* (*heiñ* 'grass, hay'). However, the existence of toponyms formed through direct adaptation does not rule out the possibility that some of those names with the determinants *-сельга*, *-орга*, *-кара*, etc. have been



formed according to a semi-calque pattern in which the determinative³ is perceived as a native Russian geographical term.

Total calques, externally identical to Russian toponyms, are harder to identify than semi-calques. This can be done successfully if the synchronic or diachronic variants of the toponym are available and one of them reflects the Finnic original while the other can be recognised as its Russian translation. The stream *Кондручей* (< Veps *kondi* ‘bear’) was recorded as *Медвежий ручей* in 17th century documentation and *Гирболото* (< *hirvi* ‘elk’) became established as *Лошей Мох* (*мох* meaning ‘marsh’ in some Russian dialects). The scribes did not use genuine Russian toponyms but loan translations which, however, did not become rooted in oral practice, because the latter favoured semi-calques characteristic of the upper Svir. For example, synchronic variants are represented by the coexistence of two names for one and the same marsh along the lower Svir: *Койвуши* (Veps *koiv* ‘birch’) and *Березняки*.

Analogically, metonymic calques—the use of a translated name for an adjacent reference—can also be regarded as evidence of translation. If *Грязный ручей* ‘muddy stream’ flows out of *Редозеро* (Veps *redu* ‘mud’), it can be inferred that the denomination of the stream is the translation of the original Veps specific. In exactly the same way, the coexistence of the pair *Елчинручей* (< **Jouçen/oja*, Veps *jouçen* ‘swan’) and *Лебежье озеро* ‘swan lake’, from which the stream flows, refers to the name of the lake which has been translated.

Russian correspondences (translations) of particular, for example, metaphoric, naming patterns, whose equivalents are otherwise not frequent in the Russian toponymy proper of the region, can be considered another means of identifying calques. In the Veps Svir area the metaphoric model *Kukoinha’j*, lit. ‘rooster’s comb’ is frequently used as a name for elevated terrain. In the Russian-speaking Svir area this Veps toponymic model takes the form *Петуний Гребень*, which is a calque. The fact that this pattern is not characteristic of the toponymy of adjacent Russian districts also suggests that a loan translation is in question.

Finally, cases in which a mass of substratum toponyms, mostly hydronyms, of a compact area are interspersed with Russian toponyms are also illustrative. This is even more the case if they meet the conditions favourable to translation, as described below.

³ The word *determinative* here refers to the same component of a toponym that, in the English toponymic literature, is also often referred to as a *generic* (editor).



Calques can be shown to exist not only in the Russian—or, to be more precise, russianised—Svir area, but also in its bilingual regions, in the present-day Vepsian and Karelian districts, where both the Finnic and the Russian variants are used simultaneously for certain categories of toponyms. In the first instance, bilingual variants are typical of oikonyms and hydronyms, and applied to major lakes and rivers. They can be found in the official (Russian) language, and are indicated in maps and records of various kinds.

The problem of how calques are formed is closely interrelated with that of translation in toponymy. Why are some of the etymologically transparent toponymic bases translated in the process of adaptation (*Pitk/järv*, *pitk* ‘long’ is changed to *Долгозеро* or *Долгое озеро* ‘long lake’) and others are not (*Kaid/järv*, *kaid* ‘narrow’ remains *Кайдозеро* in Russian use)? To what extent is this process accidental or, on the contrary, regular?

During the work on the *Словарь гидронимов Юго-Восточного Приладожья (бассейн реки Свирь)* [Dictionary of Hydronyms of the South-East Ladoga Area (the Svir Basin)], which comprises of six thousand water names in the Svir basin, certain trends surfaced which are related to the translation of hydronyms. It turned out that of all the semantic classes involved in the formation of hydronyms, it is lexemes with a qualifying meaning that are translated most consistently, and even these are restricted to definite bases: *must-* ‘black’ (*Must/järv* > *Черное озеро* ‘black lake’), *vouged-* ‘white’ (*Vouged/järv* > *Белозеро* or *Белое озеро* ‘white lake’), *pitk-* ‘long’, *vär-* ‘crooked, curved’, *süvä* ‘deep’, in the forest toponyms *laged-* ‘open, forestless’ (in Russian equivalents: *гладкий* ‘flat, level; smooth’). Of other semantic classes, there are two specific toponymic bases that are frequently translated: *hein* ‘hay’ (*Hein/joja*, *-so*, *-järv* > *Сенной ручей*, *Сенное болото*, *Сенное озеро* or *Сеннозеро*) and *haug-* ‘pike’. This tendency is also historically corroborated by 18th century documentation. Furthermore, this is not limited to the Svir, but is typical of the whole of the Onega region, which was settled by a Russian population at about the same time as the Svir area.

It is fairly obvious that one of the essential conditions for the translatability of Finnic toponymic specifics is the presence of an equivalent model in the receiving Russian toponymic system in the same or in a contiguous territory. If such a model does exist, the toponym to be adapted is adjusted to it and thus occupies a place in a ready pattern. However, if a model is not available, the possibility of translation is limited even when the structure of the name is transparent.



What has to be taken into account, besides the afore-mentioned, is the chronological framework for the existence of productive toponymic models.

At an early stage in Veps-Russian contacts in the Svir area, the productive Veps hydronymic base *ahven-* ‘perch’ was translated as *отреу-/остреч-* ‘perch’ as its Russian dialectal equivalent (*Ahnuž/d’ogi* > *Остречина*). However, because this word was later lost in the Russian dialects of the area, the productive Russian topobase also ceased to be used. Since the corresponding base *окунь* ‘perch’ is neither used in the territories of late russification nor in those of bilingualism, the Veps base *ahven-* remains practically untranslated: *Ahvenjärvi, Ahnjärv* > *Агвеньозеро, Агнозеро*. Thus, the problem of translation is closely connected to the chronological framework of use of the given toponymic patterns and understanding this framework is vital to the solution of problems connected with the linguistic as well as the ethnic history of a particular territory.

The tendency of translating Veps hydronyms as described here is not at all regular or obligatory (cf. translations of specific Veps metaphoric toponyms noted above). Rather, it should be examined from the point of view of how it reveals the criteria used in the translation of toponyms.

Unlike semi-calques, total calques do not show any clear-cut territorial distribution, or rather this cannot be demonstrated due to the external similarity of Russian toponyms and calques.

The analysis of the material of the Svir area testifies to the Finnic heritage having mainly a substratum, that is not borrowed, character in the Russian toponymy and taking shape in the process of the gradual russification of the local Finnic population. The traces of superstratum, that is, the influence of the Russian denomination system on that of the Finnic, if examined against this background, are minimal. Furthermore, it would be more precise to speak about adstratum interrelations that were not accompanied by the assimilation of recent Russian arrivals amongst the local population, but which were brought about by their coexistence in a common territory. The most conspicuous example of Russian influence in the Veps and Karelian toponymy of the Svir area is the afore-mentioned adaptation of the Russian suffixed model *-щина* in the form *-šin*. In other cases the interaction is restricted to the introduction of Russian variants of Finnic place names into the Veps and Karelian toponymy. As a rule, this affects the names of rivers and settlements that are widely spread in the Russian-speaking community because of their use in the official language. These have been adapted by the bilingual Finnic inhabitants of the Svir area: the Veps name of the river *Sara* has been integrated into Russian toponymy as *Сарка* (with the suffix *-ка*, typical of Russian potamonyms). This Russian toponym, in turn, has been reintroduced by bilingual Vepsians as *Sark*. In a similar way, the Veps oikonym *Norj* was turned into the Russian village name *Норгино* (with the



Russian possessive suffix *-уно*), and has later become widespread as *Norgin* among Veps speakers.

An exploration of the regularities of toponymic contacts contributes to the understanding of ethnic processes in the past. The first important conclusion that can be drawn from the analysis of Finnic-Russian toponymic contacts is that Finnic heritage must inevitably be taken into account in the analysis of Russian dialects. As regards the method of adaptation of Finnic toponyms in the Russian-speaking Svir area, three microzones can be distinguished: south-western, central and north-eastern. The boundaries between these areas have been established on the basis of toponymic evidence coinciding with dialectal boundaries. One of these separates the Ladoga-Tikhvin dialect zone from the Onega zone, the other divides the Ladoga-Tikhvin dialects into two groups: western and eastern. The mechanism of adaptation of toponymic types suggests various patterns of Finnic-Russian contacts in the areas concerned. In the south-west (the Pasha basin), Russian settlement was obviously more populous and vigorous, dispersing the Finnic-speakers in such a way that the language of the latter is now reflected in the western dialects of the Ladoga-Tikhvin zone only in isolated instances of toponymic and dialectal vocabulary. On the other hand, the north-eastern fringe of the Svir area (the Onega dialects) is mainly populated by Finnic-speakers who have changed their language to Russian. The emergence of semi-calques characteristic for this region has occurred in a bilingual situation. Between these two poles there exists a buffer zone, the eastern dialects of the Ladoga-Tikhvin area, in which some adaptation models (e.g. oikonyms with *-ичи/-ичы*) have arisen as a result of bilingualism.

The second conclusion, of an ethno-historical character, which is no less significant, concerns the various chronological layers of colonisation of the different territories in the Svir area. The fact that Finnic microtoponymy is so well preserved in the east can to a great extent be accounted for by the relatively late russification of this territory. The transition to Russian, needless to say, was by no means an instantaneous event. In the Svir area there are a few centres in which, although the Finnic layer is poorly attested, the adaptation of Finnic place names took a different course from that in the neighbouring region, with different models of adaptation being employed. As a rule, such centres coincide with old administrative ones.

Another essential ethno-historical conclusion that follows from the application of different adaptation patterns along the southern border of the Svir area on the one hand and along its northern border on the other is that such a distribution of adaptation patterns may be the result of somewhat different processes in the Old Russian settlement. One of the corridors of Old Russian infiltration could obviously have been the territory where the River Pasha



suddenly bends eastwards and the riverbed comes closest to the River Tikhvin. In this south-western corner of the Svir area Finnic microtoponymy is practically absent and, conversely, a great variety of Russian microtoponymic bases is present with a wide range of suffixes and prefixes. There are items from the Novgorod dialectal lexicon that have long been obsolete in the present dialects of the core Novgorod area, but which are fixed in the toponymy of this region. Besides this incursion from the south there must have been another wave of penetration into the Svir area proper, marked, for example, by hydronyms with the old Slavic suffix *-гост/-гоиць*: *Милогость, Рудогоиць, Вязгость, Онегость* in the lower reaches of the Ojat' and Pasha. This suffix can also be traced in Novgorod territories proper, but the western Svir is the easternmost boundary of its distribution in the Onega-Ladoga region.

3. Pre-Finnic heritage in the Veps toponymy of the Svir

The Svir toponymy preserves convincing pre-Veps traces, which are especially conspicuous in the hydronymy, that is, in river and lake names. It would seem very difficult to explain how this ancient toponymy was integrated into the Veps naming system, mainly because it is not known which language its creators spoke. Whether that language was related to the Finnic languages and how many languages there were in the region is also unknown. The analysis of the ancient Svir toponymy and data forthcoming from other relevant fields of study suggest that it could have been Proto-Saami. The reflection of Proto-Saami vocalism in, for example, the first syllable, is fairly consistent here. Early Proto-Finnic **a* is represented through two Proto-Saami variants on the Svir: *o* (*Sondal* < **sōnte-* 'sever, cut off') and **a* (*Палгозеро* < **pālk* < '[reindeer] path'). The ancient **ä* moved from front to back and turned into Proto-Saami **ā* accordingly (*Ваблок* < **vāvlē* 'waterway, navigating channel').⁴ In bases with a second syllable open vowel the first syllable *e* opened to become **e*, which is reflected in the north as **a* (*Päll'ärvi* < **peljē* 'ear'). The Early Proto-Finnic close vowels **i* and **ü* eventually coalesced in Proto-Saami **i* < **e* (*Илекса* < **elē* 'upper'—for more details of the phonetic peculiarities of ancient Veps toponymy see MULLONEN 2002).

An analysis of this material makes it possible to draw some conclusions about the specific features of the language contact. Most Svir toponymic bases are not rare, but found in areas that extend beyond the region and include Karelia, the adjacent districts of Finland, spreading south to the Upper

⁴ This happened in the first syllable before the second syllable open vowel. Before the second syllable close vowel **ä* > **ē* (editor).



Volga and east to the Northern Dvina. Such an areal distribution is rather convincing testimony to the substratum character of interrelations, and means that this toponymy has become part of the Veps system of geographical names as a result of linguistic assimilation, that is, the gradual “vepsification” of the creators of the ancient toponymy. That is also the reason why the phonetic integration of the ancient toponymy is so consistent and systematic in character.

For objective reasons, the pre-Finnic toponymic heritage evidenced in the Svir area does not give a sufficiently clear picture of the mechanism involved in integrating the ancient toponymy into the Veps toposystem along the Svir. The exact rules of phonological adaptation cannot be established: all that can be stated is that the relationship of the two phonetic systems—the adopted and the adopting—does not provide enough information to reveal them clearly.

It is also for this reason, the genetic linguistic relationship of the contacting languages, that the process of the structural adaptation of this toponymic layer is not sufficiently apparent either. A structural analysis of toponyms in the Onega area testifies to the absence of specific substratum determinants⁵ similar to the Finnic ones in the Russian toponymy (cf. the island *Маяк-сарь*: Veps *sar'* ‘island’; the stream *Кивоя*: Veps *oja* ‘stream’; the lake *Чукарь*: Veps *-ar' < -jārv* ‘lake’). This factor is vital for understanding the mechanism of adaptation of ancient toponymic forms. The results of research into Finnic-Russian contacts demonstrate that direct adaptation with an unchanged determinant is possible if a) the determinant cannot be translated adequately b) there is not an equivalent structural model in the receiving system c) the model is rare. It seems obvious that the absence of reliable traces of substratum hydroformants in our case can be explained by their having been consistently translated or, to be more precise by the adjustment of the basic elements of disyllabic substratum hydroformants to the Veps system of names, this being so on account of the kinship between the toponymic system to be perceived and the original. As a result of this, semi-calques emerged in which pre-Veps attributes were supplied by a Veps determinant.

Structural adaptation is even more manifest in suffixed models, as for instance with the formation of a foreign base with the Veps diminutive suffix *-ine* (lake *Ānine*) or with the suffix *-nd ~ -nž*, which expresses similarity to what is named by the deriving base (river *Суланда*, river *Ухтинжа*).

There may be a good reason to claim that the genetic relationship reflected in the closeness of the material form of “native” and “foreign”, that is, those



⁵ i.e. formants (editor).

adapted from the previous toponymy, could have led to an adaptation of specific Early Proto-Finnic toponyms to become a number of Finnic place names. In fact, there may be earlier (conditionally, “Proto-Saami”) primary forms behind Veps and Karelian toponyms, especially behind those which belong to the hydronym category. These were totally adapted into the Finnic system of names. Judging by the toponymic evidence in the Onega area, the process of “direct” adaptation was accompanied by the translation of the attributive element of the name. This type of calquing is represented by the names of two adjacent rapids: *Рынь/порог* and *Лись/порог* (от *Лисий порог* ‘fox’s rapids’). It stands to reason to suppose that 1) *Рыньпорог* comes from Saami, compare Kildin Saami *rīmné* ‘fox’, and 2) *Лисьпорог* is the Russian calque of the Veps **Reboi/kosk* (*reboi* ‘fox’). The emergence of the Veps toponym could also have been supported by the name *Рыньпорог* nearby. Analogically, the Veps primary forms **Enä/järv* (Veps *enä* ‘big’) and **Ändem* < **Änemä* (with the “river” suffix *-mä*) can be reconstructed on the basis of the Russian hydronyms *Вонозеро* and *Яндема* (the name of the river flowing out of *Вонозеро*). The name of the river can evidently be traced back to Proto-Saami **ene* ‘big’, which leads to the conclusion that the lake name **Enä/järv* is a loan translation. Similar links, even when the material collected is of high quality, are difficult to establish. The few examples available are, one is led to think, just the tip of an iceberg. The reality is that semantic adaptation must have been widespread, especially if two genetically related systems were in contact.

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