

Slavica Helsingiensia 32

Juhani Nuorluoto (ed., под ред., Hrsg.)

Topics on the Ethnic, Linguistic and Cultural Making of the Russian North
Вопросы этнического, языкового и культурного формирования Русского Севера
Beiträge zur ethnischen, sprachlichen und kulturellen Entwicklung des russischen Nordens

Helsinki 2007

ISBN 978-952-10-4367-3 (paperback), ISBN 978-952-10-4368-0 (PDF), ISSN 0780-3281

Janne Saarikivi
(Helsinki)

Finnic Personal Names on Novgorod Birch Bark Documents

1. Introduction

1.1. Aim of the article

In this article an attempt is made to identify and etymologically analyse those personal names of Finnic origin which are attested in the Novgorod birch bark documents. The material used for this purpose was the birch bark letters¹ themselves (as published by Zaliznjak 2004) and, most notably, the full list of anthroponyms of the birch bark letters (op cit. 834–839). In addition, another alphabetical list is used which was compiled by Alexander Sitzmann This list will be published in the same volume with this article (Sitzmann 2007b; for the Scandinavian names in the birch bark documents, see Sitzmann 2007a). Also those birch bark letters published after Zaliznjak's monograph in *Voprosy jazykoznanija* have been taken into account (Zaliznjak & Toropova & Janin 2005; Zaliznjak & Janin 2006). Thus, the primary material consists of those 959 birch bark documents from Novgorod dating from 11th–15th centuries that have been published thus far, as well as those few dozen birch bark documents from other northern Russian towns, that is, Staraja Russa, Toržok, Smolensk, Pskov, etc., published in the afore-mentioned sources.

This article is written for specialists in the linguistic history of Northern Russia, whether they be Uralists or Slavists. In connection with the Finnic anthroponyms, some toponyms and Finnish surnames are discussed from the point of view of their etymology. At the end of the article, some

¹ In this article, the notions *birch bark document* and *birch bark letter* are used synonymously. Characterisation of these documents is to be found in Zaliznjak (2004: 15–21). A popular introduction to literacy in medieval Novgorod is found Janin (1975).

conclusions are made concerning the Finnic language form behind the anthroponymicon of the birch bark letters, and the character and dating of the Finnic–Slavic contacts, as reflected in them. Further, the question of the reconstruction of the old Finnic personal name system is briefly touched upon in the methodological considerations (Section 2.2.) and conclusions (Section 4.).

1.2. Research history

The first birch bark letters were unearthed in 1951 by A.V. Arcixovskij. It was immediately understood that they represented a remarkable monument of a Slavic vernacular which, in many respects, deviated from both the Old Church Slavonic as well as the language of the Russian chronicles. Furthermore, it was soon noted that the letters included fragments of Finnic.

Up to the present time, the fact that there are Finnic elements in the Novgorod birch bark documents has been general knowledge in both Finno-Ugrian and Slavic studies. These fragments are the oldest literary documents in Finnic and they, therefore, potentially reveal valuable information concerning both the history of Finnic, its ancient division into dialects as well as the cultural context in which Finnic was spoken in the medieval principality of Novgorod. There are several problems related to the graphemic and phonemic interpretation of these documents, however. These are due to the small number of Finnic fragments in the birch bark letters and the modest amount of information concerning the language form(s) they represent.

Most notably, letter 292, written entirely in a Finnic idiom, often characterised as a ‘thunder spell’, has attracted interpretation attempts (cf. Haavio 1964; Meščerskij 1964; Eliseev 1966; Xelimskij 1986; Vermeer 1991; Winkler 1998; Laakso 1999). Another letter with a substantial fragment of Finnic is letter 403 characterised by Laakso (*ibid.*) as a “Finnic–Slavic business travellers lexicon”. This fragment includes a few words and phrases in Novgorod Slavic with their translations in a Finnic idiom. However, the exact interpretation of both of these documents is a matter of dispute. As these fragments have been published and broadly discussed elsewhere (most notably by Xelimskij 1986 and Laakso 1999, and the references mentioned in these sources), they are not considered here in any detail. Furthermore, those few *hapax legomena* regarded as

Finnic borrowings by some scholars (such as *lendom(a)* ‘one boatful of carriage’ [?]), Xelimskij 1986: 252) will not be commented on here.

Several birch bark letters also include Finnic place names and personal names. During the last five decades, this onomastic material has received scientific treatment by a number of scholars.

The first papers concerning the Finnic elements in the Novgorod birch bark letters were dedicated to the anthroponyms in birch bark letter 2 (Mägiste 1957; Popov 1958; Xjamjaljainen 1958). A few years later, in a short but insightful article, A. Meščerskij (1964) also made reference to Finnic anthroponyms in four other birch bark documents.

In 1986, when approx. 600 documents had been unearthed, Evgenij Xelimskij (1986) wrote a short, fairly comprehensive though not very profound commentary on the Finnic fragments identifiable in them. In this article, he considered 27 personal names. Later, further comments on Finnic anthroponyms were made by A.L. Šilov (2002), who discussed several personal names, some of which were already commented on by earlier scholars (*Gjulopa*, *Vozemut*, *Velbjut*), as well as new cases (*Rьmbša*, *Kьrga*, *Neglb*). In addition, Johanna Laakso (2005) has presented a well-founded yet still uncertain hypothesis concerning one possible anthroponym in letter 600 (*vytol(a)*, cf. below 3.5.) and, in a somewhat similar manner, V.B. Krysko (2006) interprets *Imovoloži*, traditionally considered a toponym, to be ultimately a personal name (cf. Section 3.4.).

So far however, no description has been made that strives for completeness regarding the Finnic anthroponyms in the Novgorod birch bark letters, even though they represent the most ancient source of not only the Finnic personal names themselves, but also those appellatives from which the anthroponyms derive. The most comprehensive work by Xelimskij (1986), although very valuable, suffers from an over abundance of etymological explanations and a sketch-like character (27 personal names are handled on three pages). Many of the personal names hypothesised by Xelimskij are not discussed in detail and some of his interpretations are likely erroneous (for instance, those given for the names *Vozemut* and *Gymuj*) or, more frequently, imprecise. Moreover, the corpus of the birch bark letters and, as a consequence, that of the Finnic personal names, has notably grown since the publication of Xelimskij’s article.

All the afore-mentioned contribute to the need for a reappraisal and updating of Xelimskij’s and other earlier scholars’ research results. Yet another factor is that some significant new steps have been taken in the

research into old Finnic anthroponyms on the basis of surnames and toponyms (cf. below Section 2.2.), currently making it methodologically more reliable to obtain information regarding the Finnic personal names that occur in the birch bark documents than would have been possible 20 years ago.

1.3. On the demarcation problems of ‘Finnic’ personal names in birch bark letters

In a historical context such as the principality of Novgorod, a division of personal names into ‘Slavic’ and ‘Finnic’ presents analytical problems. This is because the principality, as well as the city of Novgorod itself – the founding site of most of the birch bark letters – was multi-ethnic. This means that if some of the Finnic people had used anthroponyms similar to those of the Slavic people or vice versa, it would be very difficult to document this in the light of the birch bark documents.

It is quite evident that the Christianisation of the Finnic tribes and, therefore, also the adoption of the Christian anthroponymicon, was taking place in those centuries in which the birch bark letters were written. In subsequent centuries, the Finnic people have mostly used their own variants of Christian names, in a manner similar to most European peoples. However, in the Slavic sources of the subsequent centuries the Christian names used by the Finnic people have mostly been written in a similar manner to those of the Slavic-speaking people. Thus, the Finnic-speaking people could have referred to a particular man as *Riiko*, *Riikoi*, *Riko* or *Rikko(i)* (cf. SKN 540–541), but in Slavic literary sources, only variants such as *Grigorʹja*, *Griša*, *Grisʹko* or *Grixno* would have been preserved (as already noted by Meščerskij 1964: 195). This is, in fact, the way in which the Christian personal names are used by Karelian and Veps speakers even today. A person referred to as *Santeri* in Karelian may be called *Saša* in Russian, whereas in his passport, the official variant of the same name, *Aleksandr*, is used.

Interestingly, the fact that some substrate toponyms in northern Russia seem to have originated from a Finnic geographical appellative used with a Slavic anthroponymic specific (for instance, promontory and meadow names *Ivanemʹ* [**Ivanʹ* + **neemi* ‘promontory’, cf. Finnish toponym *Iivanniemi*], *Lukomemʹ* [**Lukʹ* + **neemi*, with dissimilation **-nemʹ* > *menʹ*], etc., in the Pinega district of the Archangel region), points to the

fact that some bearers of Christian names likely belonged not to Slavic, but to Finnic tribes (Saarikivi 2003: 147). The possibility that there may be some Finnic variants of Christian personal names in the birch bark documents has also been taken into account in the earlier research concerning birch bark documents (cf. *Taduj* < **Tatu* [< *David*] **Ěkuj* < *Jekku* [< *Jak*], Xelimskij 1986: 258, with reference to A.I. Popov).

However, in many (and probably most of the) cases, the Finnic and Slavic variants of one and the same anthroponym would likely not be reflected in a different way in the language of the birch bark letters, even if the Finnic variant for some reason would have been used in writing. Thus, an anthroponym such as *Karpъ* in the birch bark documents, may reflect a genuine Slavic name, or an eastern Finnic (Karelian, Savo) variant of the same name *Karppi*, *Karp(p)o* (→ Finnish surnames *Karppi*, *Karppinen*, *Karpo*, etc.). Similar cases are the anthroponym *Luka*, which may reflect not only the Slavic name, but also its Finnic counterparts *Luukka* or *Lukka*, *Maksъ* that may, in addition to the Slavic name, also reflect the Finnic *Maksi*, and *Malъ* that may reflect either a Slavic or a Finnic form of *Malafei* (in Finnic, the forms *Mali*, *Mala* and *Maloi* are attested), etc.

On the basis of particular phonematic peculiarities in some documents, undoubtedly not only the Slavs, but also the bilingual Finnic people living in Novgorod wrote birch bark letters (as already proposed by Meščerskij 1964: 202–203 with reference to Arcixovskij). To verify that this is the case, however, one need not necessarily look for misspellings or other possible substrate phenomena in the Slavic writing. Quite likely, people were bilingual in those days as they are today. Thus, certain speculation by Zaliznjak (2004) that particular letters suggesting the non-Slavic writer could not possibly have been written by a non-Slav as they are perfectly spelled, is unfounded. It is indeed quite evident that there were people throughout the principality of Novgorod who would have identified themselves as non-Slavs, at least in particular contexts, yet were able to express themselves in Slavic writing in a manner similar to or nearly similar to, the Slavs themselves. Such fluent bilinguals emerged out of necessity in a context in which Slavic was used in trade, administration, ecclesiastical and other prestige functions in society, while Finnic was spoken by a large proportion of the rural population. Mixed marriages and families in which both languages were used have certainly existed and there have been abundant opportunities for people to grow up completely or almost completely bilingual.

As Finnic lacked a literary tradition, it is only natural that those Finnic-speaking people who could write were literate in Slavic only and, therefore, predominantly the Slavic variants of their personal names have been preserved in literary sources.² In fact, circumstances such as those described above are not so far removed from those prevailing in many bi- or multilingual regions in Russia today.

A similar problem in demarcation regarding Finnic anthroponyms also arises in relation to Germanic names. As with Finnic personal names, Germanic anthroponyms are also known to have been used in the city of Novgorod and have been referred to in the standard editions of the birch bark documents (cf. Sitzmann 2007a). Then again, the same names were used not only by the Scandinavians, but also by the Finnic people who maintained intensive contacts with them. A great number of those old anthroponyms used by the Finnic-speaking people have traditionally been characterised as of Germanic origin (cf. SKN, wherein numerous Finnish surnames have been, in accordance with a long learned tradition, compared with Germanic anthroponyms, in a similar manner to hundreds of lexical items of the appellative vocabulary [cf. LÄGLW]).

The Germanic–Finnic contacts have, with all likelihood, not been limited to western Finland, in the areas of the modern Swedish-speaking settlements, but they have also occurred along the *Austrvegr*, in Russia, especially in the Lake Ladoga and Beloozero regions where numerous archaeological findings have been made that are related to both the Finnic tribes and to the Scandinavians (cf. Makarov 1993).

Thus, for instance, the personal name *Valʹtyrʹ*, which occurs in the birch bark document 881, may reflect the German *Walter* (as posited by Zaliznjak 2004: 341), but also the Finnic *Valtari*, attested several times in the 16th century Swedish literary sources related to Finland. This Finnic name is, of course, a borrowing from Germanic.³ Moreover, the personal name *Raguilʹ*, which many scholars have been identified as Germanic, can also, from the point of view of historical phonematics, be interpreted as the Finnic: ~ **Rahoi* (a personal name attested in Karelia, 16th century > Finnish surname *Rahunen*, SKN 517) + suffix *-la* (cf. below 3.2., names

² Also, the character of the larger Finnic fragments – a probable spell and a vocabulary that was likely used in the fur trade – indirectly points to the non-literary character of the Finnic languages in the Novgorod principality.

³ In this particular case, however, the early Finnish sources with attestations of the anthroponym *Valtari* are predominantly western and, therefore, this name likely does not figure in the Novgorod birch bark documents.

number 9, 13).⁴

It is for these reasons that the search for Finnic personal names is mainly limited to those personal names which belong to the old, overwhelmingly pre-Christian, Finnic anthroponymicon. Nevertheless, one needs bear in mind that there must have been more Finnic speakers in the community that left the birch bark letters behind than such names indicate. It is indeed likely that many of those people referred to with genuine Slavic names in the birch bark letters were, in fact, Finnic-speakers or bilinguals.

2. Methodological considerations

2.1. Earlier studies regarding the study of Finnic pre-Christian personal names

The first modest attempt to describe the pre-Christian Finnic anthroponymicon was made by Reinholm (1853). He was followed by Forsman (1894), whose monograph, *Tutkimuksia suomen kansan persoonallisen nimistön alalta*, has retained its value up to the present day. Forsman made several valuable observations concerning the use of Finnic anthroponyms both in regard to historical sources and to the Finnish dialects. For instance, he pointed out that the same person was often referred to by several variants of the same name stem, all of which have ultimately been understood as one and the same name (Forsman 1894: 64). He also calls to attention those problems related to the definition of the boundaries of one anthroponymic word nest and further refers to problems related to the division of those personal names occurring in the old literary sources, into Finnic and loan names.

Regrettably however, the treatise by Forsman suffers from an uncritical orientation towards the sources. A major problem is that the author mostly does not cite the relevant sources he used in reconstructing a particular anthroponym.

A more critical early treatise was written by Mägiste (1929). He based his data on limited but relevantly described material on those Estonian personal names which occur in literary sources. Kiparsky (1939) also collected a substantial number of Finnic personal names from literary

⁴ Also in this case, there are other arguments in favour of the Scandinavian version. Therefore, the afore-mentioned merely serves as a reminder of the necessity of skepsis and an example of the problems related to ethnic interpretation of the personal names. Note also, that the name **Rahoi* itself has been interpreted as being of Germanic origin (SKN 516 with reference to Nissilä).

sources related to Latvia. As for those personal names figuring in the historical sources related to the southern Finnic, Paul Alvre has also studied these and published a treatise concerning personal names in the chronicle of Henry of Livonia (Alvre 1984).

Only a few scholars in post-war Finland have been interested in pre-Christian personal names. Most notably, Viljo Nissilä, published numerous studies dedicated to place names where he explains several toponyms based on personal names and in this connection, he also cites the relevant historical sources (cf. Nissilä 1962; 1975). Additional rich material on old personal names can also be found in the Surname dictionary (*Sukunimikirja*, elsewhere in this article SKN, 2000) by Sirkka Paikkala and Pirjo Mikkonen. The authors explain many Finnish surnames for the first time and they base their etymologies on the anthroponyms preserved in literary sources.

By far the most ambitious study concerning old Finnic anthroponyms has been made by Stoebke (1964). Stoebke collected all the Finnic anthroponyms occurring in the medieval sources of which he was aware, as well as those from earlier scholarly literature and made an effort to reconstruct the structure of the pre-Christian personal names in the Proto-Finnic period. For example, according to Stoebke, a typical pre-Christian Finnic personal name consisted of a specific and a generic, in a similar manner as to a canonical Finnic toponym. It is very likely that, at least in some contexts, the specific may have been also used on its own.

Although the monograph by Stoebke could be criticised for attempting to use only a few fundamental lexical models to collect all of the personal names occurring in the literary sources, one has to acknowledge that his materials are a most valuable source of information on the old Finnic anthroponymicon and that they should receive profound attention in the study of the lexical relations of Finnic in the first historical centuries. One has also to keep in mind, however, that his sources were mainly western. Being published in 1964, Stoebke's study apparently included only those few personal names from birch bark documents which had been published in the 1950s.

2.2. New methods in reconstructing old Finnic anthroponyms

As is apparent from the afore-mentioned, the sources used in the reconstruction of the old Finnic anthroponyms have thus far consisted mainly of

juridical or taxation documents or of other historical sources such as chronicles and hagiographies. In addition to these historical documents, there are also other sources which could be valuable in the search for old Finnic anthroponyms, although they have been utilised until now in a somewhat methodologically vague manner. These are, first and foremost, the Finnic surnames and toponyms.

Up to the 1970s, some Finnish toponymists (most notably, Viljo Nissilä) alluded to the possibility that several toponyms of unknown origin may have originated from personal names which have since disappeared from usage. As no criteria for such an assumption were ever established, explanations of this kind were likely to be tautological and, in the recent decades, they have not been considered to be trustworthy by specialists. As a result, the idea of literally unattested anthroponyms has not been carefully studied. However, criteria for reconstructing old Finnic anthroponyms can be established. As it is not likely that all the Pre-Christian Finnic anthroponyms, invectives and nicknames have been preserved in the few medieval literary sources related to the Finnic-speaking people, such criteria may indeed be useful.

Some criteria for reconstructing anthroponyms on the basis of toponyms and surnames have been presented by the author of this article (Saarikivi 2003: 137–138; 2006: 166). Most notably, the majority of the Finnic oikonyms are formed from personal names. For instance, oikonyms with the suffix *-la*, are a common means of deriving estate and village names from personal names (cf., the old personal name *Asikka* → *Asikkala*). One may thus assume preliminarily that also in the cases in which the base of the *-la*-settlement name is of unknown origin, it was once a personal name if there are no arguments favouring any other conclusion.

In the Russian context, especially those settlement names ending in *-ovo-*/*-evo-*, are typically formed from anthroponyms. In a number of cases, those anthroponymic bases occurring in the birch bark letters are also attestable among the northern Russian oikonyms with this ending (cf. *Igala* ~ villages *Ihala*, *Ihalovo*, etc. – several settlements in the Archangel region, *Vihtimas* ~ village *Vihtovo* in Pinega district, *Kavkagala* ~ village *Kavkola* in Primorski district etc.[for details on the referred anthroponyms, cf. below]). Therefore, there is reason to believe that even in those cases in which the bases of the *-ovo-*/*-evo-*-settlement names are not attested as anthroponyms, they may contain old personal names which quite often seem to be of Finnic origin. Some possible cases have been published by

the author of this article (Saarikivi 2006: article 2: 38–41 – cf. somewhat similar methodology used in establishing etymologies for Slavic settlement names on the basis of old Slavic anthroponyms by V. L. Vasiľev [2005]).

Typically, the surnames of the Finnic-speaking peoples provide more evidence concerning extinct personal names. Surnames often originate in old personal names or estate names which are based on anthroponyms. Some surnames, especially those formed from verbal participles, may have preserved the old Finnic anthroponyms in their original form (*Vallittu*, ‘possessed’, *Parantaja*, ‘healer’), in other cases, suffixes are attached to an old anthroponymic base, most notably the originally Eastern Finnic suffix type *-nen*: *-se-* (personal name *Asikka* → surname *Asikainen*: *Asikaise-*).

Thus, the hypothesis that a certain lexeme in the birch bark documents is a Finnic personal name, can be substantiated by searching for parallels in the settlement names (i.e. the village, estate and in some cases, also the field and meadow names) or in the bases of Finnic surnames, especially among those structural types typically derived from anthroponyms. If such parallels are to be found, this would be a substantial argument in favour of the assumption that we are dealing with a literally unattested anthroponym. If in turn, such searches fail, one may have to reconsider such a hypothesis.

2.3. Phonological and morphological considerations

As the Finnic material in the birch bark letters is scarce and, quite probably, reflects several Finnic dialects or languages (cf. Section 4 below), no clear-cut graphemic correspondences can be given for the Finnic phonemes in the Slavic writing. Nevertheless, some phonematical phenomena seem to be interesting from the point of view of reconstructing the Finnic personal names.

For instance, one interesting problem is the substitution of the Finnic **h* that seems to have occurred in several different ways in the language of the birch bark documents, resembling dialectal vocabulary and toponyms (cf. Kalima 1919: 41–42). In most of the cases, **h* has been substituted by the Slavic *g* (*Igala*, *Viguj* < **Ihala*, **Vihoi*, cf. below section 3.3.), but there seem to be cases which point to the substitution by *h* (*Һѣтунь* < ?? **Himo*, section 3.5.) or \emptyset (*Imovoloži* < **Imovolod'* < **(h)imovalta*, section 3.4.). It would seem attractive to suppose that these differences are due not only to different phonemic contexts, but to different source languages of the personal names. Thus, for instance, the name **Imovolod'*, if correctly

reconstructed, would seem to point to a source language. This would mean that the word-initial *x* would have been disappeared in some instances, as it does in Estonian, whereas, for instance, a personal name such as *Gymuj* (number 14) with word initial *g*, would have been borrowed from a Finnic language with Karelian characteristics.

The somewhat fuzzy vocalism of the birch bark letters substantially complicates etymologising of the Finnic personal names. This is especially because the only information on the phonematics of the source languages comes from reconstructions. It is not even clear whether there was just one or several Finnic languages in which these anthroponyms originate. Another difficulty is that the research material is, at least at present, so small that it is hard draw conclusions, for example, on what Finnic sounds substitute, for instance, Russian graphemes *ы* and *ѣ*. The latter grapheme turns out to be especially problematic, because it is, even traditionally, known to have been rendered at least fourfold, in Finnic by *ää* (**mēra* > *määrä*), by *ie* (*věstь* > *viesti*), as well as by *e* and *i* (in vocabulary borrowed after the merger of *ě* into these phonemes). A few relatively clear cases point to the conclusion that the standard assumption by the Slavists according which the **ě* in the Novgorod vernacular was mainly pronounced as an /ie/, is indeed correct (cf. **Nousia* > *Novzě*, *Mělitь*). However, other anthroponyms may originate in language forms with different phonemic characteristics.

As for the vocalism, it looks as if there were no clear cases of the substitution of the Finnic **a* by the Russian *o*, something that occurs fairly frequently in the toponyms and dialectal vocabulary of the Archangel and Vologda regions (cf. *lohta* ‘flood meadow; low bank of the river’ < **lakti* ‘bay’ → Finnish *lahti*). This somewhat surprising fact may be a result of the peculiarities of the Novgorod dialect, as opposed to the dialects spoken in the periphery of the Russian European north. The Finnic **u*, in turn, seem to be substituted in the birch bark documents by *oy*, *u* and *o*.

The authors of the birch bark letters have also mixed up the letters *o*, and *ь*, and *e* and *ь* during a specific period (Zaliznjak 2004: 23–25), and some Finnic personal names seem to have been written in this manner, labeled by Zaliznjak as ‘colloquial’ (*бытовая*) orthography, cf. *Кьрга* (number 22, cf. Section 3.3. of this article), *Рьтъща* (32). These names have been recognised as being Finnic relatively lately (Šilov 2002).

From the morphological point of view, many Finnic anthroponyms in the birch bark letters are possessives, that is, they are formed with the Slavic

derivational suffixes *-ev-/-ov-* and *-in*. In these cases, a reconstruction of the supposed original name has been made by the author. Moreover, the archaic Russian anthroponymic suffix *-la* seems to have been involved in deriving particular names (cf. 3.3.). On the other hand, surprisingly many names seem to have preserved a reflex of the Finnic derivational suffix **-Oj* (cf. the numbers 10, 76, 16, 24, etc.) that is now being interpreted as a Russian masculine gender suffix. In some cases, the reflexes of this derivational suffix suggests that a name that otherwise could also be interpreted as Slavic is, in fact, of likely Finnic origin (cf. 46, 49).

Some of the personal names occurring in the birch bark documents are actually toponyms – names of fields, meadows, settlements, etc. – derived from personal names. Problems of demarcation arise in analysing those toponyms such as when to allow a reconstruction of a personal name on the basis of a toponym, and these are difficult to solve. In the present article, anthroponyms are typically reconstructed according to Zaliznjak (with the exception of *Imovoloži* < **(H)imavalta* where reference is made to Krys'ko 2006).

3. Material

3.1. Organisation of the material

In the following, the personal names written in Roman transcription are presented in the Cyrillic alphabetical order. The Cyrillic letters are transliterated into Roman letters according to the common practices of Slavic studies. This means that the words appear similar to those on the list of the anthroponyms occurring in the birch bark documents compiled by Sitzmann (2007b). After each name, the number of the Novgorod birch bark document in which the name is attested is given. As for those documents not found in Novgorod, *St.R* refers to Staraja Russa and *Psk.* to Pskov.

The material is presented in four sections. The first consists of anthroponyms based on Finno-Ugrian ethnonyms (3.2.). The second includes those Finnic anthroponymic types occurring in the previously published indexes of old Finnic anthroponyms (3.3.), most notably, in that of Stoebke (1964) or, at least, strongly resembling them. The third section (3.4.) analyses those other anthroponyms occurring in the birch bark letters which are likely to be Finnic. These anthroponyms are, nonetheless, somewhat more ambiguous from the point of view of their identification

than those in the Section (3.3.). The fourth section (3.5.) presents a brief discussion of some possible Finnic anthroponyms mentioned in the scholarly literature which cannot be identified with any great certainty.

All the anthroponyms considered in detail (in Sections 3.2., 3.3., and 3.4.) are numbered (1–55) in order to facilitate referencing.

3.2. Anthroponyms based on ethnonyms

In the following, only those names referring to a particular individual are discussed. However, one needs to bear in mind that several Finno-Ugrian ethnonyms occur in numerous documents referring to an ethnic group (cf. the short notice in letter 590: *Litva v̄stala na korelou* ‘The Lithuanians have attacked the Karelians’, or letter 248 wherein *Korila* and *Lop̄* are mentioned among people who had been involved in a conflict with the Swedes. Quite naturally, there are also numerous other instances.

1. Lopinkov̄ 2
2. Lopin̄ 249

Both of these anthroponyms ultimately derive from the ethnonym *Lop̄*, ‘Saami; Lapp’ to which one or two anthroponymic suffixes (*-in-* and *-in-* + *-k-ov̄-*) have been added to form Slavic patronymic derivative(s).

It is worth noting that both of the instances of this ethnonym in birch bark documents are related to areas which are situated far away from the present Saami population. For example, the name *Lopin̄*, attested in the letter 249, is a nickname, used of a person also known as **Novzě* (number 31). According to this document, he is a resident of **Sevilakši* (probably to be interpreted as **Savilakši*⁵, a parish on the Novgorod–Swedish border, which corresponds to the present day Finnish municipality of *Savilahti*).

Birch bark letter 2, with the patronymic derivative *Lopinkov̄*, comprises a list of fur taxes and the Finnic names of taxpayers (cf. names 10, 11, 12 in the section 3.2.). On the basis of the toponyms it includes, this document has been interpreted as being connected to the Obonež’e region which by today is an entirely Russified area (Janin 1986: 222). One should note that there are clear traces of the Saami language in the toponymy of this region, however, which at some period seems to have formed an ethnohistorically

⁵ Note that Zaliznjak (2004: 624) interprets the same name to be *Savolax* (a [Swedish] province name, in Finnish *Savo*) from the historical sources.

significant eastern border zone of the Saami area proper (cf. Saarikivi 2004: 218–222). Furthermore, in light of the toponymy, there is no doubt that a substantial number of Finnic people resided in this territory prior to the Russians.

Thus, if the location of the territory mentioned in the letter and referred to by Janin is correct, it serves to further corroborate the conclusion that in Obonež'e, as in many regions of Finland Scandinavia, Finnic and Saami populations lived geographically close to each other and, quite probably, divided up the land in accordance with borders based on different forms of livelihood.

3. Čjudinъ 159, 589

4. Čjudka 22

Name 3 is a Russian anthroponymic *-in*-derivation from the ethnonym *čudb*. This ethnonym, frequently occurring in northern Russian folklore as a denomination for pre-Slavic settlers of the Dvina basin and neighbouring territories, is also found as the name of a mythical ancient tribe in folklore of the Saami and Komi. Several groups of northern Russians have also identified themselves as the *čudb*, as have a certain group of the Vepsians (Pimenov 1965). Moreover, this ethnonym also occurs in the Russian chronicles in connection with several different regions. Another group of *čudb* mentioned in the chronicles are the *Zavolockaja čudb*⁶, who lived in the Dvina basin, the region in which most of the folklore related to the *čudb* has been collected.

In the scholarly history, several views have been expressed regarding the ethnic characteristics of the *čudb*. Most notably, Pimenov (ibid.) argued that the *čudb* were Vepsians. The same view was also supported by Haavio (1965). At present, many scholars argue that most likely the Finnic people who resided in the Dvina basin during the Middle Ages belonged to several groups and some of these were different from all the present groups of Finnic people (cf. Matveev 2004; Saarikivi 2006, article 2: 48–57).

The female anthroponym Čjudka (4) is also based on the same ethnonym. It is formed with the help of the diminutive suffix *-k-*.

⁶ This ethnonym has been taken from the region name *Zavoloč'e*, literally 'the area behind the portage'.

5. Korělinъ 243

In letter 243, Seměnka, who adopts the specifying ethnonym *Korělin* ‘Karelian’ to refer to himself, announces that he has moved to a certain plot of land. This letter clearly demonstrates that the Karelians had identified themselves as a separate ethnic group within the inhabitants of the principality of Novgorod. It is, of course, not self-evident that *Korěla* here is an ethnonym and not derived from the toponym *Korela* (today, the town of Priozërsk [in Finnish *Käkisalmi*]). Nevertheless, the use of *Korěla* in contexts such as that of letter 248, wherein several regions with this name are mentioned (pogost names *Kjulolakškaja*, *Kirjažskaja Korěla*), demonstrates that at least some of those scribes who wrote the birch bark letters were also familiar with *Korěla* as an ethnonym.

6. Libinъ 776

The Pskov-based merchant named *Mostok* (47) is referred to as *Libinъ*, ‘Livonian’ in a letter 776 which is related to trade and delivered wares (Zaliznjak 2004: 307). This early attestation, as well as many similar cases in the Chronicle of Henry of Livonia and other similar sources proves that the today nearly-extinct Livonians were a considerable nation in the Middle Ages with trade relations to Novgorod and other directions.

7. *Imovolod 844, 573

The ethnonym *Imovoložane* occurs in two birch bark documents as well as in other early Russian literary documents. This denomination of people from a particular *pogost* (small administrative unit) has been analysed by several scholars, although mostly from the point of view of localisation.

In a recent article, V.B. Krys’ko (2006) analyses once more all those primary materials and papers related to this lexeme and proposes a phonologically and semantically very well founded etymology, suggesting that the name of the pogost is originally derived from a personal name **(H)imavalta ~ *(H)imavalto(i)*, from appellatives **hima ~ *himoi* ‘lust; desire’ and **valta* ‘power; force’, or a name resembling that.

If the etymology by Krys’ko indeed was to be accepted, the name in question would point to a very different substitution of the Finnic *h* as in many other personal names occurring in the birch bark letters (cf. **h > g* in

10, 11, 12, 15, 16, etc. and one possible case of the substitution **h > h* mentioned below in 3.5.). This being the case, one should have to suppose that the name **Imovolod* would have to be borrowed either in a different period or, what is more likely, from a different kind of Finnic source language, than those names with the substitution pattern of the Finnic **h > Slavic g*. The fact that the name **Imovolod* reflects a full *polnoglasie* points to an early borrowing. As we are dealing with a toponym derived from an ethnonym, we must take into account that the toponymic borrowing of **Imovolod* may have taken place substantially earlier than the writing of those birch bark documents on which the ethnonym *Imovoložane* is attested.

3.2. Anthroponyms of previously attested types

8. **Avi ~ *Ava* 278

The patronymic *Aviničъ* figures in a birch bark letter 278 together with many other Finnic anthroponyms (numbers 19, 20, 21, 24 30 and 50). The whole name of the person referred to is *Siduj Aviničъ*. This is a patronymic derivative formed with two suffixes or a compound suffix (*n + ič*) and it hints at the anthroponymic base **Avi*, or **Ava*.

This name has been compared by Xelimsij (1986: 256) to the Finnic personal names *Auva*, *Auvo*, *Auvi*, *Avo* (– all of these classified by Stoebeke as instances of one and the same name [Stoebeke 1964: 136]). The authors of the SKN are of the opinion that the anthroponymic bases *auva-* ~ *auvi-* (→ Finnish surnames *Auvinen*, *Auvoinen*, *Auvainen*) and *avi-* (→ *Avikainen*) are ultimately of the same origin and regard them as borrowings from a Germanic personal name group *Ava*, *Ave*, *Avi*, etc. (SKN 75). However, the former could also derive from < *auvo* ‘power; glory; wonder’.

Even though the Finnic *Auva-* and *Avi-*names may or may not belong together, their occurrences would be hard to distinguish in the historical sources written in Slavic. Surnames derived from both of the bases are relatively frequent in Eastern Finland and Finnish Karelia and that can be considered a fact supporting the idea that similar name may have occurred already in the birch bark documents. On these grounds, and on the basis that there does not seem to be relevant Slavic parallels for the anthroponymic base under investigation, one may consider its Finnic origin to be likely.

9. Valitъ *m.* 130

This name is likely a Finnic past passive participle, *Vallittu*, meaning ‘one that is reigned over’ (< **vallittak*, ‘rule; reign over; dominate’), which is a derivation based on a Germanic borrowing of *valta*, ‘power’ (< Proto-Germanic **waldā* → Swedish *våld*, German *Ge-walt*, ‘violence’, etc.). This personal name has been preserved in a Finnish surname from the Karelian Isthmus (approximately 130 instances at present, SKN 722). This comparison is presented in several sources, among them, Haavio (1964), Holthoer (1981) and Xelimskij (1986). It is also phonemically and semantically possible that the name under consideration reflects the participle *valittu*, ‘a chosen one’ (from *valitak* ‘choose’ – this is also a Germanic borrowing [→ Swedish *välja*], cf. Xelimskij *ibid.*), although there is not so much factual evidence concerning names of this kind. It is therefore suggested that the first-mentioned version is to be preferred.

The historical sources related to Novgorod and the Karelian Isthmus contain several similar names, for instance, in 1377, a Novgorod boyar *Valitъ* was mentioned in a chronicle (SKN, *ibid.*). This is evidence that a Finnic personal name of this kind was in use in the principality of Novgorod and, therefore, testifies to the correctness of the aforementioned etymology. It could be suggested that the meaning of the anthroponym *Vallittu* was, approximately, ‘possessed by gods or good spirits’.

10. Vigui 25

11. Vigarъ 130

12. Vigala 260

These three names are derived from Finnic **viha*, ‘anger; hatred’ (→ Finnish *viha*, Estonian ‘id.’) which also has cognates also in Permian (~ Komi *vež*, Udmurt *vož*). Ultimately, the word appears to be a Proto-Aryan borrowing (< **viša*, ‘poison’, SSA III: 436). This comparison, regarding the names *Vigarъ* and *Vigala*, has been made earlier by Xelimskij (1986: 256–257), who also correctly rejected the other etymological proposals by Haavio (1964) [< Finnish *viikari*, ‘jolly; happy (child)’] and Holthoer (1981) [< Finnish *vikuri*, ‘undisciplined (mainly horse)’], *ibid.*). Several Finnic anthroponyms derived from this word stem, which is both nominal and verbal, have been attested in the historical sources (**Vihoi*, *Vihattu* [past passive participle], *Vihava* [present active participle], *Vihavalta* [a

compound name, as for the generic, cf. name number 9 above], etc.; see Stoebke 1964: 105 for details).

Of those three names occurring in the birch bark documents, *Vigui* straightforwardly corresponds to the Finnic denominal **-j*-derivation **Vihoi* that has been reconstructed by Stoebke on the basis of literary sources (ibid.). Further, the Finnish surname *Vihonen* (predominantly in the provinces of Southern Karelia and Savo, SKN 743–744) must have been based on a similar derivation. *Vigala*, in turn, is a *-l*-derivation similar to *Igala* (number 17 in this section) and ultimately must originate from **Viho(i)la*. The fact that there is a Finnish surname *Viholainen* attested in the same regions as *Vihonen* (SKN ibid.) is evidence that this kind of personal name must also have existed in Finnic.⁷

The suffix *-la*, attached to the personal name base to form the name *Vihala* may also be of Slavic origin. In the birch bark documents, as well as in the other early Slavic sources, there are numerous personal names derived with a help of a similar suffix, cf. *Bratila* < *brat*, ‘brother’, *Gostila* < *gostb*, ‘guest’, *Dobriila* < *dobryj*, ‘good; nice’, and *Tverdila* < *tvěrdyj* ‘hard’. Many anthroponymic name stems of Christian origin also exist that occur with a similar ending, cf. *Manujla*, *Gavrila*, *Samujla*, etc. Also, it has probably been borrowed into Finnic. This seems possible from the fact that those Finnic personal names with this suffix do not seem to correspond to those (few) appellatives with ending *-la* in Finnic (*manala*, *etelä*, etc.). The question of the relationship between the Slavic and Finnic *-la*-anthroponyms is a complicated one and should be treated in a case study, however.

The third personal name attested in birch bark document 130, *Vigarb*, has been compared by Xelimsij (1986: 257) to the personal name *Vihari* which was mentioned by Forsman (1894: 162). This name has subsequently been classified as being questionable by Stoebke (1964: 174). Nevertheless, such a Finnish surname exists, (although it is very rare indeed with a total of less than 18 instances, VRK) and as it is based on regular derivation, it may well reflect an old personal name.

⁷ There is no single attestation of the surname **Vihalainen* in Finnish, but *Viholainen* is rather common (582 instances, VRK).

13. Vihtimasъ 2

This personal name can be compared to a Finnic name element (-)vihtV(-). It is attested in such personal names as *Vihtari*, *Vihtiä* and *Vihtimeeli* (< *meeli ‘mind; intellect’), found in historical sources (cf. Stobke 1964: 105–106). The comparison regarding the name in birch bark document 2 was first proposed by Mägiste (1957: 98–99).

The existence of this anthroponymic base in the Finnic languages is further corroborated by the Finnish, originally South Karelian surname, *Vihtonen* (< *vihtoi-, cf. SKN 744) and several settlement names which are to be found in Finland and in Russified areas alike, for instance, the name of a Novgorod pogost, *Vihtuj*, already attested in 1137, that can be connected either with the village *Vihtovo* in the Pinega district, or with the branch of the Severnaja Dvina *Vihtovskij* in the Primorski district of the Archangel region, the *Vihti* municipality in western Uusimaa, Finland, the *Vihtilä* house in Kalvola, Southern Tavastia, the *Vihtiälä* house in Kangasala, Laukaa, Ristiina and Vammala (in the regions of Tavastia, Central Finland, Savo and Satakunta, KKP), etc.

The anthroponym *Vihtuj* is, with all likelihood, based on the same Finnic stem (Saarikivi 2003: 138, with references). As for the suffixal component of this name, one is inclined to adopt the point of view of Stobke (1964: 97, note 127) that the ending ultimately originates from *mees ‘man’ (> Fi. *mies*, Est. *mees*). This is supported by the fact that in the other sources used by Stobke, the forms *Vichtemes* and *Vichtymes* are attested and these strongly support the reconstruction *Vihtimees.

Despite its high frequency among Finnic personal names, the element *vihtV-* lacks a generally accepted etymology. Yet it has been considered a Germanic onymic borrowing by Vahtola (referenced by SKN *ibid.*) and could, although with great caution, be connected to the Germanic *wihti, f. ‘thing; creature’, pl. ‘demons’ ~ Old Norse *vettr*, ‘thing; living creature’ (→ German *wichtig* ‘important’, *Gewicht* ‘weight’ cf. Kluge 2002: 986), which could provide an understandable basis for the use of such a lexical element in an anthroponym.

Much less likely, although still phonetically possible, is a connection between the names attested in the Russian sources and the surname *Vihko* from the Karelian Isthmus (SKN 743). This is based on a similar appellative that also occurs in several toponyms and originally meant ‘bunch’. The personal name may have originated, for instance, from a

description of hair (cf. similar motivation for the old Finnish personal name *Karhapää* < *karhea*, ‘rough; ruffled up’ + *pää* ‘head’, etc., SKN 197). The phonemic correspondence Russian *-ht-* ~ Finnic *-hk-* in toponyms and northern dialectal lexicon has been demonstrated by several scholars (Kalima 1919: 234–235; Saarikivi 2006, article 2: 24).

14. *Věljutъ 2*

15. *Věljakazъ 2*

These anthroponyms, occurring in a list of payments with several other Finnic names, have been explained in two ways. The first explanation by Popov (1958: 97–98) relates them to the Finnic **vilja-* (→ Finnish *vilja*, Estonian *vili*: *vilja*) ‘grain; corn’ (→ *viljava* fruitful, *viljan* ‘plenty; much’), a base used in several Finnic anthroponyms, especially in the southern Finnic (cf. Estonian names *Villika*, *Villikasti*, *Viljandi*, etc. Stoebe 79, 80 with reference to Mägiste 1929). This argument is also supported by Xelimskij (1986: 257), who connects the name *Věljakazъ* with the Finnish derivation *viljakas* ‘fruitful; productive’.

The second explanation and a diverging opinion, is expressed by Xjamjalainen (1958, with reference to A.A. Beljakov) who made the connection between *Věljutъ* and the Karelian derivation *veljüt*, ‘(dear) brother’. That the word for ‘brother’ was indeed used in Karelian anthroponyms is supported by its occurrences in 16th century sources related to the Karelian Isthmus, as well as by the existence of the South Karelian and Ingermanland surname *Vellonen* (< **veljOi-*; the name should have the dialectal geminate palatalised *-ll-* and today it has over 200 bearers).

A phonemic problem arises regarding the etymology proposed by Xelimskij. This concerns, why it is that the Finnic *i* has been substituted by the *ě* that most typically substitutes the **ee* and several diphthongs in the early Slavic writing of 14th century. Xjamjalainen’s version could thus be regarded as being phonemically more likely than a connection with the Finnic **vilja*, ‘grain’. However, the etymon proposed by Xjamjalainen fits in better with the anthroponym *Věljutъ* which indeed corresponds to a Karelian anthroponymic and derivational type. The name *Věljakazъ* turns out to be more problematic.

Those personal names referred to in earlier research concerning this name are of a southern Finnic character. The birch bark document with the

anthroponym *Věljakazъ* is more likely related to northern Finnic, however. This is evident in the light of other anthroponyms in the same document (for instance, *Lopinkovъ*, cf. 1 above), the context related to payments in furs and the toponym *Gugmar-navolok* (cf. Zaliznjak 2004: 619–620). This toponym is likely derived from *huhmar*, ‘mortar’, a word that does not have the **h* at the word beginning in the southern Finnic (cf. SSA I: 176), and from the northern Russian *navolok*, ‘promontory; flood meadow’, a dialectal lexeme that has typically been used as a translation of Finnic **neemi* ‘promontory’ in northern Russian substrate toponyms. Moreover, the toponym belongs to a structural type of toponyms characteristic of northern territories (cf. Saarikivi 2006, article 2 for more details). Therefore, one is inclined to think that the personal name *Věljakazъ* is a Karelian one.

One should take into account that numerous cases in which the Slavic *ě* and *i* are interchangeable are found in the birch bark letters; this phenomenon has been explained as being connected with the Krivič Slavic, (cf. Zaliznjak 2004: 52–53). If we would have the correspondence *ě* ~ *i* in this particular case, we could, with caution, compare the anthroponym *Věljakazъ* with the surname *Viljakainen* (oblique stem *Viljakaise-*) that is of southern Karelian origin (SKN 749). This surname seems to have been formed from *Viljakka*, a historically attested name form. Were the name *Věljakazъ* to have been borrowed from an oblique stem of a diminutive anthroponym derived with the suffix *-nen-*, this would be the first attestation of such a name, subsequently becoming the most common structural type of Finnish surnames (those with the suffix *-nen*).⁸ In any case, it is safer to assume a ‘diminutive’ origin attested several times in personal names than an *-s*-derivation *viljakas* that is not attested in the personal names.

Based on these observations, an etymological connection with *veli* ‘brother’ should be considered likely in the case of *Veljutъ* and a connection with *vilja* in the case of *Věljakazъ*. These names are thus to be separated from each other as they probably represent different Finnic lexemes.

16. *Gymuj 403

The anthroponym-based possessive adjective *Gymujevъ*, which is, most likely derived from **Gymuj*, is attested in birch bark document 403 that

⁸ Birch bark document 2 is dated from the first half of the 14th century.

also includes a small Finnic–Slavic lexicon (cf. above Section 1.2.). The first part of this document is a list of debts that includes several Finnic toponyms and anthroponyms. According to this list, *Gymuj* lives in a settlement named *Sandalakši* (< likely Karelian *santa*, ‘sand’, *lakši*, ‘bay’). The generic *-lakši* makes it reasonably clear that we are dealing with the Karelian-speaking region, as of all the Finnic languages only Karelian has a word for ‘bay’ with the form *lakši* (in the other Finnic languages, an analogical phonetic change has yielded *laht(i)*).

**Gymuj* is a *-j*-derivation similar to many other personal names in the birch bark letters. Eliseev (1966: 302) has argued that it could be based on the Finnic **himo(i)* ‘lust; desire’ and this explanation has since been accepted by Xelimskij (1986: 257), and also by the author of the present article (Saarikivi 2006, article 2: 41).

There are certainly many anthroponyms derived from *(*h*)*imo(i)* and they are widely attested both in old documentary sources and in the Finnish surnames connected with Karelian settlements (cf. Stobke 1964: 20–21; SKN 120). At present, however, I consider the interpretation of **Gymuj* in the birch bark document 403 on the basis of these names to be less likely on phonological grounds. It seems that there may be another personal name derived from this word stem (see Section 3.5. below), whereas **Gymuj* should more likely be related to another group of old Finnic personal names, those consisting of the names *Huima*, *Uimi*, etc. (→ surnames *Uimonen*, *Uima*, *Huima*, etc.). All these derive from a highly varying word nest (probably **huima*) meaning ‘frisky, dizzy; crazy, etc.’ (cf. Saarikivi 2006: 168; SSA I: 178).

The fact that this anthroponymic base was used by the Finnic-speaking population of northern Russia can be corroborated by the settlement name *Uima* in the Primorsky district of the Archangel region⁹, an area that also has various settlement names derived from other Finnic anthroponyms, as well as from the ethnonymic base *Korēla* ‘Karelian’. Owing to the different substitution of the **h* in anlaut, this toponym is derived from a different dialect than the anthroponym attested in birch bark document 403, or has been borrowed to a dialect with different substitution patterns.¹⁰

⁹ Today, this settlement is practically a suburb of the city of Archangel.

¹⁰ In this connection one could ask whether the tribal name *vymolčy*, occurring in document 248 as the denomination of a hostile people attacking the Karelians in Kjulolakši and Kirjažskij pogosts, could also be linked to this group of Finnic personal names. In this case, the word initial *ui-* would have yielded a prothetic *v* before the *ui*

17. Gjuvij 249

This personal name is attested in a document that includes several Finnic personal names (the numbers 2, 18, 22, 29, 31, 36). This document has been interpreted as a complaint by the Karelians under Novgorod rule concerning the attacks by the other groups of Karelians under Swedish rule (Zaliznjak 2004: 623–624). It has been argued that some of the toponyms occurring in the letter might be identified as sites along the Orexoveckij (Fi. *Pähkinäsaari*) border between Novgorod and Sweden (**Sevilakša* < ethnonym *sevilakšane* [cf. the names 1 and 2], *Konevy Vody* [< ?? **Orivesi*], etc., Zaliznjak 2004: 624).

This name is, as already pointed out by Popov and Xelimskij (1986: 257 with reference to Popov), related to a group of old Finnic personal names formed from the adjective **hüvä*, ‘good’, compare *Hyviä*, *Hyvö*, *Hyväri*, etc. (Forsman 1894: 154; Stoebke 1964: 84, 136; SKN 140–141). Of those personal names attested in literary documents, it is *Hyvöi* (attested on the Karelian Isthmus in the 16th century) that can be most directly compared to the form *Gjuvij* attested in a birch bark document at the end of the 14th century. Moreover, the personal names derived from **hüvä* (< Western Uralic **šüjä*, cf. SSA I: 201) continue to exist in Finnish surnames (*Hyvärinen*, *Hyväri*, *Hyvätty*, etc., cf. SKN *ibidem.*).

18. Igala 249

19. Igalinъ 278

20. Igolaidovaja 278

These names are connected to a large group of Finnic personal names formed with the specific *iha* ‘delightful; charmy’ (→ literary Finnish *ihana* ‘lovely’, *ihailta* ‘wonder [verb]’). This word, which has a cognate in Mordvinian has been considered an Iranian borrowing (SSA I: 220; Koivulehto 2001).¹¹ The numerous old Finnish anthroponyms formed from this anthroponymic base include, among others, *Ihas*, *Ihana*, *Ihama*, *Ihari*, *Ihalempi* (< *lempi* ‘love’), *Ihamieli* (< *mieli* < **meeli* ‘mind; intellect’), etc. Names of this kind are attested several times both in western and eastern

lost its labiality. A prothetic *v* occurring before a labial vowel is a common phenomenon in the northern Russian dialects (cf. Saarikivi 2006, article 2: 4).

¹¹ Note that the Komi verbs *yšmyny* and *yšödnny*, ‘feeling lust or desire’, which are wrongly considered cognates of the Finnic and Mordvinian words in earlier research, can be analysed as borrowings from the Finnic word (for details see Saarikivi 2006: 37).

historical sources (for references, see SKN: 148; Stoebke 1964: 84–85; Rintala forthcoming).

The three names under consideration in the birch bark documents each have their own characteristics. *Igala*, most likely, derives from **Ihala*, a name form reconstructed even earlier by Popov (1958: 98), Stoebke (1964: 121; cf. also Xelimskij 1986: 257) and newly by Rintala (forthcoming). A similar name must also have functioned as a base for the Finnish surname *Ihalainen* (SKN 148) which has been attested many times in the 16th century documents related to the Karelian Isthmus, North Karelia and Savo. It is possible that *Ihala* was used as a short form for those personal names consisting of both a specific and a generic. As for the origin of the suffix *-la*, compare the name 12 above.

The name *Igalin* is attested in a birch bark document (278) that is a list of debts or taxes and includes also a number of other Finnic personal names (numbers 20, 21, 24). This name can be considered, most probably, a Russian patronymic derivation formed from **Ihala*.

One of the most interesting Finnic personal names in the birch bark letters is *Igolaidovaja*, which also occurs in the same document. This is quite clearly a woman's name formed from another name **Igolaida* (as correctly verified by Zaliznjak 2004: 597). A person with this name lived, according to the document, in a settlement called *Laidokola* (“u Igolaidovëi v Laidikolë polo rublë i dve kunicë.”). It can be posited, albeit with caution, that the first component of this oikonym is derived from the same word stem as the second component of the personal name **Igolaida*. The second component of the name, *-kola*, could, again with caution, be interpreted as the generic **-külä*, ‘village; settlement’.

As for the second component of the name, we are most likely dealing with the same name element as that occurring in the Finnish surnames *Laiti*, *Laitanen* and *Laitanen*. Furthermore, these names, which have been considered Germanic borrowings, occur frequently in historical sources related to the Karelian Isthmus and North Karelia (SKN 287). In this case, the name **Igolaida* could therefore be interpreted as the Finnic **Ihalaita*, that is, a particular person whose name has begun with a specific *Iha-*, from the village **Laitikülä*, or something that resembles it (cf. numerous Finnish toponyms *Laitila*, *Laitikkala*, etc., from the same anthroponymic stem).

As noted earlier by the author of this article (see Saarikivi 2003: 144–145), some place names in the Archangel region point to the existence of personal names derived from **iha* among those Finnic people who once

inhabited what is today an entirely Russified region, cf. *Ihala* village in the Xolmogory district, *Ihal'nemь*, a promontory in the Pinega district, etc. (for more material, see Matveev 2004: 37–38). Altogether there are approximately 15 place names of this kind in the Archangel and Vologda regions and this shows that the specific *Iha-*, and probably even more notably, the anthroponym **Ihala* based on it, were popular among the Russianised Finnic-speaking people who once inhabited the Northern Dvina basin.

21. Ikagalъ m. 278

A similar name can be found in the sources used by Stoebke (1964: 163, cf. also Forsman 1894: 155): *Ikähalo*. This name consists of a generic and a specific both attested in a number of Old Finnic anthroponyms: **ikä*, ‘(high) age’ and **halu*, ‘wish; (strong) desire’, a possible Germanic borrowing (SSA I: 135 – regarding the name in question, cf. Xelimskiĭ 1986: 257). This name can thus likely be interpreted as ‘one who is desired to live to a high age’. The specific *ikä-* is to be found in other two-part anthroponyms as well, cf. *Ikäheimo* (< *heimo*, ‘tribe; people’), *Ikävalko* (< *valko-*, ‘white’, SKN 150).

The second part of the name is likely of the same origin as the base of the Finnish surnames *Halonen*, *Halinen*. It remains an open question as to whether this element can be related to the Finnish *halu* ‘desire’ with cognates in other Finnic languages or is a Germanic onymic borrowing as those, historically attested personal names *Hali*, *Halo*, *Halikko*, etc.

22. Kavkagala 249

This name has been explained as **Kauko(i)halu*, from the derivation *kauko(i)-* based on *kauka* (in old language) ‘long’. Similar two-part names have been attested even earlier in those documents related to the Finnic-speaking area. These are typically names consisting of a specific and a generic. The element *kauko(i)* occurs in the position of a generic as a rule: *Kaukomieli* (< **kaukoi* + **meeli*, ‘mind; intellect’), *Kaukovalta* (< *valta*, ‘power; force’), *Kaukolempi* (< ‘love; favorite’), *Kaukopäivä* (< *päivä*, ‘day’). The present surnames *Kauko* and *Kaukonen* have also been coined on the basis of this name stem.

The same anthroponymic stem has also been preserved in several toponyms. Some northern Russian toponyms (cf. the *Kavkola* village in the

Primorsk district, on the delta of the Severnaja Dvina) demonstrate that the specific **kauko(i)-* was indeed used in the names of those Finnic-speaking people who lived inside the Novgorod realm. In Finland, similar names are commonplace.

23. Кърга St. R. 20

Birch bark document 20 from Staraja Russa is a list of debts related to the salt trade. According to Zaliznjak (2004: 332), all the Slavic names in this document are pre-Christian.

The name *Кърга* occurring in this letter is interpreted as being pronounced *Korga* by Zaliznjak, who refers to colloquial literacy standards (ibid.). A.L. Šilov (2002) has argued that this personal name is a Finnic anthroponym related to the frequently attested personal name *Kurki* (from appellative *kurki* ‘crane’). As both *Кърга* and *Korga* seem to lack Slavic parallels, this explanation can, most likely, be considered correct. It is even further corroborated by the fact that the name *Kurki* is also attested numerous times on the Karelian Isthmus and in Southern Karelia, the regions with the most parallels for the anthroponyms occurring in the birch bark letters (SKN 266).

In connection with this common old Finnic name, one also needs to also bear in mind that there is large group of words related to an unholy spirit which seem to represent derivations from the same word stem: *kurko*, *kurkko*, *kurkkio*, ‘devil; evil spirit, etc.’ (these words have been considered as baltisms, SSA I: 448). This appellative is, most likely, also attested in Finnish surnames (cf. *Kurko*, SKN 266–267). Thus, one could propose that the anthroponym *Kurki* would ultimately be a derivation of the same stem (and only folk-etymologically been mixed up with the word meaning the ‘crane’), since these words are related to pre-Christian mythology. A similar motivation, likely related to pre-Christian beliefs, would also to be found behind the names derived from *lempi-*, ‘power; love; favorite’, *lempo-*, ‘devil’ (these words are derivations from the same stem; → surnames *Lempinen*, *Lemponen*, *Lempiäinen*, etc., Saarikivi 2003: 139–141; SKN 305; SSA II: 62).

24. Lěiniu *m.* 278

25. Lěnovixť (oder Lěnvixť) *m.* 44

This name 21 is based on the Finnic derivation *LeiniO(i)* which is based on the adjective *leina*, ‘feeble; weak’. This word, in turn, is traditionally considered to be a Baltic borrowing (cf. Lith. *klėnas*, ‘feeble’, SSA II: 60). Names of this kind have also been attested by Stoebke (1964: 42). They form a whole nest of anthroponyms derived from the same stem (*Leinikkä*, *Leinakka*, *Leinäkkä*, *Leini*, etc.) and these survive in Finnish surnames (*Leino*, *Leinonen*, etc.) as well as in Finnish toponyms (cf. the *Leinola*, village in Halikko, Finland Proper, the *Leinelä*, village in Southern Tavastia, etc., KKP). Moreover, the existence of substrate toponyms derived from the same stem in the Archangel district (the *Lejnema* village in the Pleseck district, the *Lejnručej* brook in the district of Vytegra) further corroborates that this anthroponymic specific was used in the Finnic language(s) that were spoken in the Dvina basin and to the south of Lake Onega.

Name 25 consists of a generic and a specific, both also occurring in other Finnic personal names which have been attested in the birch bark letters. The specific *Lěno-* is comparable to that of the personal name 24, the generic *-vixť*, and then, to that of the personal name 13. Thus, we are dealing with a canonical old Finnic anthroponym consisting of two parts.

26. Mělitъ 130

27. Měličъ 534

These names are based on a past passive participle **meelittü* from the Finnic **meelitä*, ‘like; desire; wish’ (→ Finnish dialectal *mieliä*), literally meaning ‘desired’. They belong to a large group of names that are attested in the historical sources derived from the appellative *mieli*, ‘mind; desire; will’ (cf. *Mieli*, *Mielikko*, *Mielitoivo*, *Mielivalta*, *Mielitty*, etc., Stoebke 1964: 139; SKN 358). Furthermore, names fully analogous to *Mělitъ* have been attested both in Finnish and Estonian literary sources (ibid.).

The name *Měličъ* has been interpreted as a patronymic derived from **Měľ* (corresponding to the Finnish *Mieli*) by Xelimskiĭ (1986: 258). This anthroponym occurs as the name of the receiver of a letter after the dative form *Vanu*, that may have stood alone or formed the ending of a longer name (the birch bark under consideration is only a fragment, Zaliznjak

2004: 630). If *Van* had been a personal name, it could have been compared to those Karelian variants of Russian *Ivan*, for instance, *Vanni*, *Vana*, *Vanoi* (SKN 726).

One has to take into account, however, that *Mēličь* may not necessarily reflect the Slavic derived patronym (as proposed by Zaliznjak, *ibid.*) but probably a Karelian diminutive *mieliččü*, ‘my love’ that directly corresponds to the Finnish literary attested anthroponym, *Mielitty*. Would this name indeed prove to be Karelian, it would mean that the Karelian affricates had already emerged by the mid-14th century.

28. Mundanaxтъ *m.* 403

29. Mundui *m.* 249

30. Munoměлъ *m.* 278

Xelimskij (1986: 258) has compared these three personal names from the birch bark documents with the Finnic anthroponyms *Montaja*, *Montaneuvo* (< *neuvo* ‘advise’) *Montopäivä* (< *päivä* ‘day’), etc., occurring in historical sources. Names similar to those had earlier been attested by Forsman (1894: 127, 159) and Stoebeke (1964: 61, 155). These names have been interpreted both as Germanic borrowings (cf. Stoebeke *ibid.*, with reference to the Germanic names *Munt*, *Mundo*, etc.) as well as genuine Finnic derivations from **moni* (: *monta-*), ‘many; large amount’.

The comparison by Xelimskij seems to point to the right direction. One further point of clarification, however, is that an even phonemically closer anthroponymic word stem is *Munne* (: *Munte-*) (< **muntek*) that also figures in the 16th century documents related to the Karelian Isthmus and Southern Karelia (SKN 368). In addition, the Finnish surnames *Munnukka* and *Munukka* belong here as diminutive derivations, as well as the compound surnames *Pienmunne* and *Suurmunne* (< *pieni*, ‘small’; *suuri*, ‘big’, SKN *ibid.*). In Karelian *munčoi*, a derivation that would straightforwardly compare to **muntoi*, from which the name 29 could directly have been derived, has been used as an invective (Denis Kuzmin, personal communication). The appellative meaning of this anthroponymic stem has not yet been clarified. It has been proposed that this name would originate in the Germanic auslaut-component of the personal names *-mund* (cf. *Sigismund*, *Vermund*, *Gudmund*, etc.), or be related to the words meaning ‘monach’ (the latter version seems highly unlikely, however).

As for name 30, it seems relatively clear, that this is a canonical

compound name that is based on the same stem as the name 29. This name should, with all probability, be interpreted as **Munnemeeli*, derived from the specific **munte-* and generic *-meeli* ‘mind; desire’.

As for the name 28, *Mundanahť*, it is possible to suggest that this name is a compound. In this case, the strong grade *-nd-* attested between the first and second syllable would likely mean that the specific of the name is in nominative and the generic is *-nahť* (?? < from **nahka*, ‘skin; leather’ – surprisingly enough, this type of an anthroponym also seems to have existed by the Finnic-speaking people, cf. SKN 393 s.v. *Nahkala*). One could also propose that we are dealing with a name of Germanic origin (cf. personal name *Mondnacht*, literally ‘night with moonlight’ mentioned by Stoebe, *ibidem.*). All things considered, the origin of the name *Mundanahť* is far from clear.

Another factor that is unclear is the relationship of those personal names mentioned by Xelimskij (1986 *ibid.*) to this connection. For example, there is an attested anthroponymic **-j-*derivation *Montoi* that also lies behind the Finnish surnames *Monto* and *Montonen*, substantially resembling the name 28. Again, there are numerous attestations of this kind of names in the historical sources related to the Karelian Isthmus and to southern Karelia (SKN 363). The question of whether **muntoi* and **montoi* are ultimately the same name should receive special treatment. Also, the question whether **montoi* could be behind the name forms of the birch bark documents should be answered in such a connection.

31. Novžě m. 249

This name is used with the attribute *Lopin*, ‘Saami’ (cf. Section 3.1., names 1 and 2 above). It is of Finnic origin, however, and it most likely corresponds to the historically attested name *Nousia*. This, in turn, is an active participle (**nouse-ija*) based on the verb *nouse-*, ‘stand’ (< **novse-*). This name is attested even earlier in both Swedish and Slavic literary sources (Stoebe 1964: 168), and it has also served as a basis for both of the Finnic surnames *Nousia* (37 instances) and *Nousiainen* (several thousands instances, mainly in Karelia and Savo, SKN 408), as well as for various settlement names (cf. the *Nousiainen* municipality in Finland Proper, the *Nousiala* estate name in Iisalmi, Joensuu, Kangasniemi, Kitee, Kiuruvesi, Savonlinna, etc. [i.e. mostly in eastern Finland], KKP). Moreover, a similar anthroponym is also attested in the historical material

related to the eastern Finland. Among the Slavic sources, the census and inventory book of Vodskaja pjatina from the year 1500 mention similar names (SKN *ibid.*; Xelimskij 1986: 258 with reference to Trusman). Furthermore, the comparison regarding the name in birch bark document 249 is already been presented by Xelimskij (*ibid.*)

Forsman (1894) has suggested that this name may originally have been based on the habit of sorcerers to raise a child that had been chosen to be left alive (in such an eventuality that babies were killed at birth in order to limit the population growth).

32. Pjuxtinъ 403

The personal name Pjuxtinъ also occurs in a birch bark letter containing several Finnic anthroponyms that has been mentioned even earlier. This name has been mentioned by Meščerskij (1964) and Xelimskij (1986: 256) among the Finnic names, although they do not provide any etymological explanations. Eliseev (1966), in turn, compares it with Finnish *pyhä*, ‘sacred; holy’ (< **pühä* < **püşä*) and the verbal derivation from this *pyhittää* ‘to sacre’ (as for the background of this word, see Saarikivi 2007 with references).

From a structural point of view, one can regard the word-final *-in* as a Russian patronymic derivational suffix. The base of this name can thus be compared to the Finnic surnames *Pyyhitiä* (approximately 300 instances, mainly from South Karelia) and *Pyhtilä* (approximately 150 instances, mainly in northern Ostrobothnia, SKN 499, 503). In juridical documents from the 17th century connected with northern Finland, the personal names *Pichtoi* and *Pytti* are attested (SKN 499) and these names could represent the underived base of the patronymic *Pjuxtinъ*. Moreover, in 16th century Karelian Isthmus documents the surname *Pyhtieim* is mentioned (SKN 503) that directly corresponds to the name found in the birch bark documents or a Finnic derivation that corresponds to surname *Pyhtinen*. That there were even other anthroponymic derivations from the same stem seems inevitable in the light of the toponymic evidence. For instance, there is a parish *Pyhtää* (← ? **pühtä-jä*) in southeastern Finland and some similar toponyms in Central Finland (KKP).

If one indeed wishes to connect the anthroponymic stem **püht-*, attested in Finnish historical sources, surnames and toponyms with the adjective **pühä*, ‘sacred’, one has to propose that this name is based on some kind of

unattested derivation. It is indeed possible to speculate that the names referred to above are derivations from the personal name **püh(it)täjä*, which is based on the active participle form of a consonantal stem-based derivation (**pühä* → **pühtää* ‘to sacre’ [this would correspond to the modern Finnish *pyhittää* → *pyhittäjä*]), but this will remain an unverified speculation as long as no other evidence emerges such as attested instances of the aforementioned (theoretically quite possible) consonant stem derivation.

33. Rьmьša 725

Šilov (2002) has treated *Rьmьša*, a personal name occurring in the birch bark document 725. In his opinion, it is a Finnic personal name and comparable to the Northern Karelian surname *Remsu*. In the light of the vowel alternation *ь ~ e* widely attested in the birch barks (cf. Zaliznjak 2004: 23–25), this would be phonemically well possible. Moreover, Zaliznjak himself admits that no satisfactory Slavic etymology for this name is to be found (ibid. 413, with a comparison to Lithuanian *rimša*, ‘calm person’ and some Lithuanian personal names). Zaliznjak also states that an anthroponym occurring in the document St. R. 36, *Rьmьq*, inevitably belongs to this connection, although such an assumption might, in the opinion of the author, also prove to be false since there are several possibilities to compare the anthroponym *Rьmьša* with occurrences of Finnic personal names. Thus, in addition to Northern Karelia, there are similar surnames in Finland as well (*Remsu*, *Remsunen*) and they have been considered to be of Karelian origin.

It is nonetheless, worth noticing that the occurrences of these names in Finnish sources deviate, from the point of view of distribution, from those characteristic to the most of the Karelian names in the birch bark letters and are substantially more northern (Southern Lapland, Kainuu). There is also no obvious etymology for the Finnish and Karelian surname *Remsu(nen)*. Nevertheless, it seems likely that the Karelian and Finnish surnames are of the same origin as the above-treated occurrence in the birch bark documents.

34. Uda 124

The personal name *Uda* is attested in letter 124. This letter is, on the basis of very colloquial tone and a lack of the formal opening phrase, most likely

written by one family member to another. Zaliznjak (2004: 658 with reference to Veselovskij and Tupikov) notes that the anthroponym *Uda* has been attested even in other onomastic sources connected with the Northern Russia. Apparently, *Uda* has not been interpreted as being a Slavic name, however.

This name can be compared with numerous occurrences of personal names derived from the anthroponymic base **Uta* in the Finnic surnames (*Utunen, Utula, Utukka*, etc.). The same base is also attestable in toponyms (the *Utula* village in Ruokolahti, Southern Karelia, the *Utti* municipality in South-Eastern Finland, etc. < likely personal name **Uttei*, ultimately a derivation **uta-ida*) and, most interestingly, in literary attested old personal names (for instance, *Utupää* [Wtupe] in Turku in 1557, *Udukais* farm in Parainen, Finland Proper, 1439, etc., SKN 712 – these and other instances attested by Stoebe [1964]).

On these grounds, the one-time existence of this kind of an old anthroponymic base among the Finnic-speaking people seems to be demonstrated. It also seems to be noteworthy that those regions in which the base is mainly attested in surnames and toponyms are those closest to Karelia and the Ingria where Karelian was once spoken. However, the appellative meaning of the names related to base **Uta* has not been possible to decipher. One could, with caution, suggest a connection with *ude-lla* ‘keep asking; be inquisitive’, likely from an unattested stem **ute-* (< **učē*) ‘seek’ that is also preserved in Saami (cf. Northern Saami *ohccat*, SSA III: 367).

3.3. Possible Finnic personal names

The Finnic origin of the following names will be, in the opinion of the author, much less obvious than that of the names 1–34. The names treated thus far have all been based on anthroponymic stems that have been frequently attested in the historical sources, surnames and toponyms. The hypothesised names hereafter are different. They are much less directly supported by such evidence. Based on phonemic grounds and semantic analysis it can be suggested, nevertheless, that even they are ultimately derived from Finnic anthroponyms.

35. *Aljuj 138

On the basis of patronymic derivative *Aljuev* occurring in letter 138, Xelimskij (1986: 256) reconstructed the hypothetical personal name **Aljuj*. He further compared this name to a Finnic anthroponym occurring in the census and inventory book of Vodskaja pjatina¹² from the year 1500 and those occurrences of the personal name *Alo* mentioned by Stoebke (1964: 15, 151), who had attested a similar name by the Livonians as early as in 12th century. Stoebke considered those names related to this connection as borrowings from the Germanic languages.

Few occurrences of these personal names are related to those areas close to Novgorod, however. For instance, the Finnish surname *Allonen*, interpreted by the authors of the SKN as a Germanic loan name based on an old German name group *Ali*, *Allia*, *Allo*, or the two-part names *Alolach*, *Alarich*, *Alliber*, etc., are, from the point of view of distribution, predominantly western (Finland Proper). One notes also that those toponyms which could have originated from a personal name such as the one preserved in birch bark document 138 have a western distribution (*Alola*, farm, Lieto, Finland Proper, etc, KKP). As a consequence the comparison by Xelimskij should be considered to be somewhat dubious. More evidence is needed to corroborate the connection of those Finnic and Germanic names referred to above with the name occurring in birch bark document 138.

36. Varmin 249

The personal name *Varmin* is attested in one of those letters with the most Finnic fragments. On the basis of the final *-in* this name can be considered to be a patronymic derivation. The base of that name has probably been related to the Finnic appellative *varma*, ‘sure; true; certain; reliable’ (cf. comparison by Xelimskij 1986: 256 with reference to Holthoer).

Although phonemically acceptable and semantically possible, the comparison by Holthoer and Xelimskij can be questioned on the grounds that no substantial evidence points to adjective *varma* in Old Finnic personal names. Further support needs to be established before this etymology is to be verified in a satisfactory manner.

¹² This was one of the five basic administrative units of the Novgorod principality, which is referred to as the so called ‘Vote fifth’ (< ethnonym *Vote*). Novgorod was divided into five regions and Zavoločye, which was a region in the Dvina basin that did not belong to the fifths.

37. Ėkuj 2

This single attestation of a name that morphologically resembles the Finnic personal names (final *-j!*) has been interpreted by Xelimskij (1986: 258) as a Karelian hypochorism, *Jekku(i)* that is ultimately derived from Russian *Efim*. Such an anthroponym is indeed attested (SKN 162) and the highly Finnic context of the birch bark letter 2 (cf. the names 13, 14 and 15) makes the reading proposed by Xelimskij possible.

One needs to note, nonetheless, that no old attestations of *Jekku(i)* have been reported in toponyms, literary documents or surnames. Thus, all the other attestations of a personal name of this kind are several centuries younger than the birch bark document under consideration and this makes the comparison by Xelimskij rather unconvincing.

38. Куръ 690

39. Kuorila 373

Although the name of the sender of the debt-related letter 690, *Kurъ*, has quite satisfactorily been interpreted as a variant of the Slavic *Kirъ* (Zaliznjak 2004: 575; cf. also Vasil'ev 2005: 360), the possible Finnic origin of this anthroponym also has to be taken into consideration. The author of this letter has been involved in trade relations with a person named *Ivan-Vyjanin*, interpreted by Zaliznjak (ibid.) as someone from the basin of the River Vyja, in the north-eastern Dvina basin, an area that at the time when the document was written (the second half of the 14th century) must have been overwhelmingly Finnic-speaking. Recently also another localisation of the *Vyja* closer to Novgorod has been suggested by Vasil'ev (2005: 309).

The name *Kurъ* phonetically resembles one of the frequently attested old Finnic anthroponymic bases, *Kuro(i)-* (→ Finnish surnames *Kuronen*, *Kurola*), which are most likely derived from **kura* 'left (handed)', cf. the Estonian compound *kurakäsi* 'left hand'. The personal name **Kuroi* is attested several times in the sources related to the Karelian Isthmus in the 16th century (SKN 267). There is also a strikingly similar surname, *Kurronen* from the same region. This has been compared with the dialectal appellative *kurri*, 'beggar' by Nissilä but the authors of SKN are inclined to believe that this name is ultimately of the same origin as *Kuronen*.

A similar name, although with slightly different graphemics, is also

attested in fragment 373. This name includes a suffix *-la*, which can be interpreted as a Slavic anthroponymic suffix.¹³

40. Кјurикъ *m.* 138, Psk. 6

The name *Kjurik*, occurring in a letter found in Pskov, has been interpreted on the basis of the Estonian *küürik*, ‘bent; crooked’ (< **küürü*, ‘crouched’) by Xelimskij (1986: 257). This comparison is substantiated by the fact that in its context, this name has been used as an invective for a person also called *Tjulpin* (cf. 53 below) from Finnic **tülppä*, ‘blunt; dull; obtuse’.

Nevertheless, the etymology proposed by Xelimskij is far from certain. One needs to note, first, that another Finnic anthroponymic word stem *Kyyrö* occurs (likely a borrowing from *Kira*, cf. Russian *Kirill* ← ultimately Greek *Kyrillos*), and it is frequently attested in the sources related to Karelia (SKN 275). Moreover, an invective *kurikka* (originally from the appellative meaning ‘club’) is also used especially in Karelian to refer to a big-headed person (Denis Kuzmin, personal communication). In literary sources, this anthroponymic stem also occurs frequently in the sources related both to the Karelian Isthmus and to western Finland alike, and it has been preserved in a Finnish surname (SKN 266). Furthermore, the spellings such as *čjudь* pro *čudь*, *Kjurь* pro *Kurь* and *Rjurikъ* pro **Rurik*, which are relatively frequent in the birch bark documents, lend support to the idea that Finnic **kurikka* could have been reflected as *Kjurikъ* in these literary documents.

Based on the aforementioned observations, the comparison with **kurikka* ‘club’ and the anthroponyms derived from this word, seems more sound than the argument proposed by Xelimskij. The latter is based only on a phonemic resemblance of a Finnic word and historically attested Slavic word form, whereas the former includes evidence regarding personal names derived from the base under consideration and is also phonematically quite plausible.

It is also worth noting that the letter is found in Pskov and related to a person living in what is currently an entirely Russian-speaking town.

¹³ In the early layer of birch bark documents, the grapheme *ou* has been used to refer to the same phoneme for which, in the next phase, the grapheme *u* was used (cf. Vermeer 1991).

41. Mika 2

In letter 2 which includes several Finnic personal names, the name *Mika* is also mentioned (*U Miki 2 kunicy*). Xelimskij (1986: 258) has interpreted this name as a Finnic variant of *Mihail*. It is indeed the case that the name *Mika* is still in use even in the Finnish literary language, but many other variants of the same name have also been attested in the historical sources related to Finland and Karelia.

For instance, both *Miikki* and *Miikku* (> Finnish surname *Miikkulainen*) have been attested in the literary documents dating back to the 16th century which have been connected to those territories closest to the Finnic tribes who lived in the vicinity of Novgorod, that is, the Karelian Isthmus and Lake Ladoga areas. In addition, the unvoiced *k* on the syllable border suggests rather that it is rather a voiceless geminate than a single voiceless stop in the source language of the borrowing.

Although in the light of the numerous Slavic hypochorisms of such frequent Christian names as *Mihail*, the Finnic character of the name cannot be ascertained with certainty. The Finnic origin of the name could, in this particular case, be defended in light of the context it occurs in, however. There are altogether 15 personal names in birch bark document 2, six of which are to be considered as being non-Slavic with relatively great certainty (1, 13, 14, 15, 37, 42).

42. *Měkuj 2

In the beginning of birch bark letter 2, the toponym *Měkuev* is mentioned. This would seem to be a derivation from the personal name **Měkuj* that could be regarded as a Finnic name from a structural point of view. If one proceeds from the fact that *ě*, in the period of when birch bark documents were written, resembled Finnic diphthong */ie/* in pronunciation, one could cautiously compare that name with the Finnic derivation **miekk(i)(nen)* (→ Finnish *miekkonen*) ‘man; stranger’ (< **mees*, ‘man’ → Finnish *mies*).

There is not much evidence for the anthroponymic use of the aforementioned derivation, however, and this makes the comparison uncertain. One should also note, that in the earlier period of Finnic–Slavic contacts, **ě* could have been rendered by the Finnic *ää* (cf. *měra* > *määrä*).

43. Vinilь St. R. 30

The personal name *Vinilь* only occurs once in the birch bark documents, as a name of the recipient of a letter from a man called *Matvej*, asking him to buy cord for the preparing of the nets and enquiring about a third man concerning the fish delivered to town.

The name *Vinilь* resembles those Finnic personal names derived from the bases *Viina-*. Most notably, the surname *Viinanen*, which is of Karelian heritage, seems to have emerged from such a personal name. Names belonging to this connection have been attested on the Karelian Isthmus and in Southern Karelia in 16th century.

The names of this group likely do not have any connection with the appellative *viina*, ‘spirit; vodka’, but are borrowings from Germanic, probably from Low German (SKN 745). There is also another Germanic loan name, *Viinikka*, ultimately from the same base (as already noted by Nissilä 1962). This name is attested widely, but predominantly in western Finland.

If all the arguments mentioned above are accepted and the Finnic etymology for the name *Vinilь* would seem to be thrustworthy, one would have to assume that the *l*-auslaut of the name to be a Slavic anthroponymic suffix, written in a peculiar manner.

44. Gjulop(a) 729, 926

There are two occurrences of the personal name base *Gjulop-* in the birch bark letters. The one with the underived anthroponym *Gjulopa* is merely a fragment with few words and has no real content; the latter is a list of debts or expenses, where among the list of people and sums, the patronymic derivation *Gjulopiničь* is also mentioned. This letter testifies to its writer’s connections with Pskov.

According to Zaliznjak (2004: 411), these are the only occurrences of this name base in the Slavic literature. Their phonemic structure strongly suggests a Finnic origin, although the etymological explanation for the name base is somewhat problematic.

One could propose that the name *Gjulop(a)* is connected with numerous occurrences of the base *holappa-* in Finnic anthroponyms, attested both in historical documents as well as in surnames (cf. the surname *Holopainen* with over 5000 instances in Finland and numerous occurrences on the

Karelian Isthmus and South Karelia in 16th and 17th centuries).

In this case, the phonematic structure of the name could be understandable, in that the initial syllable Finnic *o* would have been rendered by a closer vowel in Russian, a substitution that has also been attested in the Finnic borrowings of the northern Russian dialects (cf. Kalima 1919: 48–49). One has to also bear in mind that, according to an explanation presented by Viljo Nissilä (as referred to in SKN 123), the surnames *Holappa* and *Holopainen* themselves are derivations formed on the basis of a Slavic borrowing *holappa*, ‘soldier; servant’ (< Ru. *holop*)

45. *Kokoi *m.* 494

In birch bark document 494 which is only a fragment (actually put together from two fragments), the author writes about two plots of land that have been taken away from him as a punishment. Another of them is *selo Kokov*, a toponym based on the genitive case, likely pointing to a personal name **kokkoi* (*selo*, ‘plot of land; settlement’ → modern Russian *selo*, ‘(large) village, typically a village with a church’)

This kind of a personal name meaning ‘eagle’ (< **kokkoi* → Finnish and Karelian dialectal *kokko*) is among the most frequently attested old Finnic names that is fixed several times in the documents related to the Karelian Isthmus and the neighbouring regions (SKN 236: *Kokko*, *Kockoi*, *Käckoi*, etc.). This personal name is also preserved in surnames (cf. Finnish *Kokko*, *Kokkonen*) and in several toponyms.

Taking into account the high frequency of this anthroponymic base in Finnic languages, one is inclined to think that the Russian invective *Kokova* (mentioned by Zaliznjak 2004: 665 with reference to Veselovskij) could also ultimately derive from a Finnic personal name. Yet there seem to be even possibilities to explain this name as being based on Slavic (cf. Zaliznjak *ibid.*).

46. Laduga 50

47. Ladopga 141

The personal name *Ladog(a)* occurring in a list of debts has also been attested, besides the birch bark letters, in other early documents connected with Northern Russia (Zaliznjak 2004: 616 with reference to Veselovskij). The name *Ladopga*, occurring in letter 141 with several archaic Slavic and

at least one probable Finnic name (50), probably belongs to this connection as a misspelling. If correctly spelled, however, the name cannot be Finnic, as it does not follow the phonotactics of the Finnic languages (the cluster *-pt-* is nonexistent in Finnic).

Zaliznjak (ibid.) compares the anthroponym *Ladoga* to the dialectal denomination of the whitefish, *lodog*. In the light of the literary sources related to Karelia, it seems more likely, however, that this name is somehow linked to the Finnish surnames *Laatikainen* and *Laatu* which also have an eastern distribution (SKN 284). Especially the surname *Laatikainen* points to an anthroponym **Laatikka* that could well serve as the base of the anthroponym *Laduga*. One may also note that in the sources related to Finland, old personal names *Latukka* and *Latikka* are also attested, and both are still used as a surname. It is probable that in these cases the variation of the short and long vowels is secondary. However, in this case the Russian word final *-ga* (pro *-ka*), would be somewhat unexpected.

The authors of SKN consider all the aforementioned anthroponyms to be Germanic borrowings in Finnic. Nevertheless, their distribution in the historical sources is eastern and if they indeed are Germanic, they most likely have been borrowed from those Germanic-speaking people living around the eastern end of the Gulf of Finland, as well as around the lakes Ladoga and Onega.

Most likely, the anthroponyms treated above are not related to the lake name *Ladoga* in any way.

48. Nustui *m.* 336

The personal name Nustui which is attested in the personal correspondence of *Pětr*, is the only personal name of unclear origin in a letter that otherwise contains Slavic personal names. It has been proposed by Xelimskij (1986: 258) that this name could be connected to the Finnic verbal stem *nosta-* ‘rise (active)’ that is an early derivation of the verbal stem *nouse-* to which the name *Novzě* (31) is related. Although semantically a quite plausible naming motivation, the credibility of this the proposal by Xelimskij is in question as there are very few occurrences of this verbal stem in the Finnic anthroponymic nomenclature. If however, this suggestion by Xelimskij proves to be valid an active present participle **Nostaja* would be the most likely loan original for the name under consideration.

49. Mostok(a) 776

In the letter under consideration *Ilja* and *D̄mitr̄v* write to *Mostok*, a Livonian merchant residing in Pskov. A.A. Zaliznjak (2004: 308–309) proposes that this name could be related to the Finnic **musta*, ‘black’, an anthroponymic stem repeatedly attested in old documents, Finnish surnames and settlement names. Zaliznjak also refers to those place names in the Novgorod region where the Russian *o* seems to correspond to the Finnic *u*, and in which a similar base seems to be attestable. This explanation of Zaliznjak may well be correct in principle, but probably needs more substantiation from the point of view of the derivational suffix *-k* (is this added in Slavic or Finnic?).

50. Siduj 278, 476

The name *Siduj* occurs in a document 278 with several other Finnic anthroponyms. This name also belongs to the group of names ending in *-uj*, an auslaut characteristic of those old personal names of the eastern Finnic languages (letter 476 has the patronymic derivativion *Sidov*). As a result, one is inclined to think that even this name could derive from a Finnic source, most likely one that would be related to the Finnish surnames *Siitoin* and *Siitonen*. These are traditionally considered to be derived from a hypocoristic variant of the orthodox personal name *Isidor*. Numerous 16th-century attestations occur of this kind of name in southern Karelia and on the Karelian Isthmus (SKN 601). A similar name in the genitive case also occurs in fragment 476 although without an intelligible context.

51. Tadj 141

As noted in section 1.2., Xelimskij (1986: 258) has interpreted the personal name *Tadj*, occurring in letter 141 on the basis of Finnish and Karelian personal name *Tatu*. This personal name is ultimately derived from *David* and belongs to the numerous hypochorisms of the Christian names used by the Finnic people. This interpretation by Xelimskij should be considered quite uncertain, however, as there seems to be few instances of this type of old Finnic personal name in surnames or toponyms. Still, this interpretation should not be rejected at once because it is quite likely that the name *Tadj* is indeed of Finnic origin. Another obscure personal name in the same

document is *Ladopga*, and this may even refer to the same person as *Taduj*.

52. *Simuj* 496

A somewhat similar case to the two aforementioned (50 and 51) is the personal name **Simuj* (< *Simuev*) which occurs in document 496 that contains several archaic personal names, most of which are Slavic (Zaliznjak 2004: 682–683). It is especially the auslaut *-uj* which points to a Finnic origin of the name that is, with all likelihood, of Christian origin, namely the name **Simoi* (→ Finnish *Simo*) that ultimately derives from *Simeon*. There are numerous Slavic hypochorisms of this same name, among others *Sim*, *Sima*, *Simana*, etc. However, the settlement name *Cimola* in the Pinega district of the Arkhangelsk region, derived with the Finnic settlement name suffix *-la*, points to the conclusion that this name has been used, besides the Slavs, also by the Finnic-speaking people of the Novgorod principality.¹⁴

53. **Tataj* 496

The name **Tataj* which is a second name of a person called *Martyn* occurs in the same letter with name 45 (*Simuj*) as well as with several archaic Slavic names. The text of this letter is fragmentary and the name itself is a reconstruction by Zaliznjak. If this name is Finnic, it could be compared with the surnames *Tatti* and (the much more rare) *Tattinen*, which are also characteristic of the Karelian Isthmus and of Finnish Southern Karelia (SKN 653). These names are of unknown origin, but the name *Tatti* occurs as early as in the 16th century. One could, with some reservations, propose that these names be in some connection with the Karelian *tatoi*, ‘father; uncle’. The connection with *tatti* ‘boletus (swamp)’ is likely only one of resemblance.

¹⁴ The affricate in the word beginning in the toponym *Cimola* can be explained as a secondary phonemic development which is characteristic to the eastern Finnic. Note that only one affricate appears in the northern Russian dialects (the *cokanje*). Therefore, the question of whether one should write the toponym as *Cimola* or *Čimola* is a purely academic.

54. Тјулрпінъ 138

This anthroponymic derivative has been interpreted by Xelimskij as a Finnic invective or nickname based on the adjective *tylppä* ‘blunt; dull’. While the explanation is appealing on a semantic basis since the same person is also referred to by the nickname *Kjurik* (33), which is used to refer to a person with a big head, the explanation by Xelimskij lacks credibility in that there is no evidence of such a personal name among the Finnic people. As a result, a connection with the attested Finnic personal names *Tulppo* and *Tolppi* seems more likely (SKN 677, 689). Both of these names occur predominantly in the province of Ostrobothnia, in the area of the former Karelian settlement. As for the substitution of *u* by *ju*, see name 40.

55. Ваивасъ 130

The personal names and toponyms in letter 130 are all Finnic. The name *Vaivasъ*, also called *Vajakšin*, lives in a settlement called *Kjulolakši* (likely < **külä/lakši* ‘village/bay’), which is a clearly Karelian toponym (as it is only Karelian, of all the Finnic languages in which the Pre-Finnic **lakti* has yielded *lakši*, while in the other Finnic languages, the form *laht(i)* is used). In view of the context, there is no doubt concerning the Finnic nature of this anthroponym.

The personal name *Vaivas* has been compared to the Finnic appellative *vaiva*, ‘bother; hardship; pain; trouble’ by Xelimskij (1986: 256). This comparison, although phonologically acceptable, suffers from a lack of parallels to such a name as among those old Finnic anthroponyms known up to the present.

One plausible explanation is that the name under consideration was an invective. Although there seems to be no Finnish surname comparable to the hypothesised anthroponym *Vaivas*, some Finnish toponyms lend support to the idea that this lexeme could have been used as the denomination of a person, for instance, the *Vaivalankylä* village in Artjärvi, Uusimaa, *Vaivio* village in Liperi, North Karelia (as for the latter, cf. SP 487), etc.

3.5. Some possible Finnic anthroponyms

In addition to those cases handled above, several other anthroponyms of possible Finnic origin occur in the birch bark letters which have been mentioned in the previous research. Those cases referred to briefly here do not pretend to be comprehensive, but merely illustrate the numerous problems related to identifying the Finnic personal names in the birch bark documents.

As already mentioned in Section 2.1., Laakso (2005) has proposed a possible anthroponymic origin of the word *vytol(a)* in letter 600 (< Southern Finnic **voitleja* [→ Estonian *võitleja*], ‘fighter’ < **voi-tta-* (→ Finnish *voittaa*, ‘win’, Estonian, *võitelda* ‘fight (v)’, both traditionally considered derivations from **voj-*, ‘can’, SSA III: 468–469¹⁵). She has also referred to the personal name *Wottele* from the chronicle of Henry of Livonia in this connection. Previously, this *hapax legomena* had been categorised an appellative. Thus, Xelimskij (1986: 253) compared this word with Finnish *vetelys*, ‘slacker’¹⁶ and Zaliznjak (2004: 471–472) interprets it as a denomination of some animal hunted for its pelt. As the context of the letter under consideration is not clear and *vytol(a)* does not appear elsewhere in the Russian medieval documentary sources, it is always possible to come across new theories regarding this word. For this reason, the anthroponymic origin of the word can, at least thus far, be considered as being merely one more speculative version, although fairly well grounded. However, it needs to be verified, if possible, by future research.

The name *Vozemutъ* (letter 2) has been mentioned among the Finnic anthroponyms of the birch bark letters by several scholars (Meščerskij 1964; Xelimskij 1986, etc.). It is indeed likely that this name is a Finnic personal name, as there are many other Finnic personal names mentioned on the same occasion. So far, however, no reliable toponymic version of any kind regarding this name has been presented.¹⁷

¹⁵ Although this explanation is to be found in all of the etymological dictionaries, a connection of this word with Russian *бoйтъ* ‘fight (verb)’ seems more likely, especially in the view of Finnish dialectal meanings ‘struggle; wrestle’. This proposal will be handled in detail in another article.

¹⁶ This explanation by Xelimskij can be considered, from the point of view of the vocalism of first syllable, likely an erroneous version. Russian *y* should correspond to Finnish *y* or *ui* but only very rarely *e* (cf. Kalima 1919: 51–52).

¹⁷ Xelimskij (1986: 257) compares this name with Finnic *vasen* ‘left’, but this cannot be considered trustworthy. Typically *a* of the birch bark letters seem to correspond to *a*

The name *Něgolь*, occurring in letters 821 and 867 has been interpreted by Šilov (2002) as being Finnic (< Karelian **nekla*, ‘needle; pin’ [~ Finnish *neula*, a Germanic borrowing]). As there does not seem to be a corresponding anthroponymic model in Finnic languages, and because the name in question may also be interpreted on the basis of Slavic (cf. numerous other anthroponyms derived from base *Něgo-* occurring in the birch bark documents [Něgovitь, Něgožirь, Něgoradь, Něgosěmь, etc.], Zaliznjak 2004: 767), this proposal is likely to be rejected.

The person called *Vaivasь* in letter 130 (cf. 55) is also referred to as *Vajakšin*. This name could be an anthroponymic derivative from **vajas* (: *vajakse-*) or *vaajas* (: *vaajakse-*) which would be a morphologically Finnic, but no reasonable lexical motivation for such name can be presented. It is, nevertheless, likely that behind this nickname looms some kind of a Finnic anthroponym. However, it is worth noting that the surnames *Vaaja* and *Vaajanen* indeed exist (VRK) as well as an appellative *vaaja* ‘spear’

The name *Gavьko*, occurring in letter 502 would straightforwardly correspond to the frequently attested Finnic personal name *Ha(v)ukka*, which has been derived from an appellative meaning ‘falcon’ (**havukka* → Finnish *haukka* [a Germanic borrowing, SSA I: 147]). As the same name may also be considered as a Slavic hypochorism of Gabriel (cf. *Gavša* and other variants of the same name), the Finnic origin of this name will remain an alternative version that should somehow find more support in order to become truly credible.

The personal name *Нѣтить*, a *hapax legomena* in document 526, is interesting in that it is related to region around Lake Seliger, today an entirely Russianised area far away from all the present Finnic language boundaries. If one proceeds from the fact that the Finnic dialects of this region were dissimilar to those spoken in the vicinity of Novgorod one may, although with great caution, suggest that the name under consideration could be derived from **himo(i)*, ‘lust; desire’, a frequently occurring anthroponymic base (cf. 3.3. and 3.5. above). As that name is related to a territory with a probable extinct substrate languages and also belongs to an awkward structural type with no apparent suffixes it is hard to verify such a comparison, however.

The anthroponym *Kulotka* and the derivative *Kulotinič* in documents 105, 656 and St.R. 14 have a Finnic appearance, yet they are thought to be

of the Finnic languages. Moreover, the *auslaut* of the name under consideration seems to be impossible to explain as a Finnic derivational suffix or a Finnic generic.

old Slavic names by Vasil'ev (2005: 200) who proposes that they originate from the same word stem as *kulak*, 'fist'. If these names are Finnic, they could contain some participle of the verb *kuule-*, 'hear; sound; give a voice', cf. the Finnish surname *Kuuhuvainen*, also attested in Karelian Isthmus in 16th century. There is also Finnish surname *Kulonen* from *kulo*, 'burnt-down area' that is attested in the same period and area.

One would probably need to take into account the Finnic **ukko* 'old man' (cf. SSA III: 309) when etymologising the anthroponymic base *ukuj*, 'uncle' (114) that has been, in some period, used also as an appellative. Even though this word may have derived from Slavic (cf. old Russian *uj* 'mother's brother, Vasil'ev 2005: 284), the meaning and phonematics of the word come close to the Finnic **ukko* and one could propose a contamination.

These examples are sufficient to demonstrate that the corpus of the Finnic personal names presented above is, notwithstanding the efforts by the author, likely far from being comprehensive. This state of affairs is related to the multiple phonemic interpretations allowed by the onomastic material in the birch bark documents. It is, however, also partly due to severe methodological restrictions in the onomastic etymology which only allows indirect semantic argumentation and not a semantic 'checking' of the meaning in cognate words that is characteristic of etymologising appellatives (regarding toponyms, see a similar, more detailed argument in Saarikivi 2006: 15–21). It is for this reason that many of the onomastic etymologies will always remain somewhat less credible than the well-founded etymologies for the appellative vocabulary.

The birch bark documents contain many more unclear personal names some of which may be of Finnic origin, for instance, *Tyrinъ* (1), *Kulba* (161), **Ojavelga* (230), *Pervekъ* (326), *Gamizila* (454), etc. Moreover, it has been mentioned in the beginning (Section 1.3.) that some of those names thought to be Slavic or Scandinavian may also turn out to be Finnic, if more facts related to them will be discovered.

4. The Finnic nomenclature in the birch bark letters: some conclusions

4.1. Occurrences of Finnic personal names

Evidence reported here suggests that there are at least 40 and, quite probably, as many as 60 identifiable Finnic personal names in those approximately 1000 birch bark documents published up to the present day.

The onomastic material discussed in this article includes almost 50 different anthroponymic bases. From this number, at least two thirds and quite probably even more, can be considered as reasonably trustworthy and, from an etymological point of view and from the perspective of Finnic anthroponymicon, they are well established. This is a remarkable number, since the total number of anthroponymic bases in the birch bark letters is under 800 (cf. Sitzmann 2007b). This means, that approximately 4–5% or even more of the anthroponyms occurring in the birch bark documents are of Finnic origin. If one takes into account that many Finnic-speaking people likely possessed Slavic and Scandinavian names, one can conclude that a considerable number of those people who were acquainted with the birch bark documents were, in fact, representatives of the Finnic tribes.

As already noted, it is likely that the list of personal names presented above is not comprehensive and that the list could have been enhanced by a few names. It is, however, not likely that those instances of Finnic names not treated above would have led to any great increase in figures.

It is typical for the Finnic anthroponyms to occur all at once. Several cases occur in which all or almost all of the personal names in a particular letter are of Finnic origin. All the names treated above are attested in 29 birch bark documents only, and over half of them are attested in just a few letters (thus, for instance, documents 2 and 278 both have seven occurrences of Finnic personal names¹⁸) In these cases, the letters also typically include Finnic toponyms referring to those territories in which Finnic people lived.

The Finnic anthroponyms typically occur in similar literary contexts, too. These are mostly lists of debts or payments by rural people to those people related to fur trade, fishing or other kinds of activities in the peripheries of Novgorod principality. One clear exception is found in letter 124, which was most likely written by someone with close (family?) contacts with a Finnic-speaker.

It is interesting to note that not a single occurrence of those Finnic personal names treated above belongs to the oldest layer of birch bark documents (the so-called ‘layer A’, dated according to Zaliznjak approx. 1000–1125). All the other three layers (B, V and D) are well represented, however, and one is inclined to think that it is merely by chance that no Finnic names have been found in the oldest layer that also includes fewer

¹⁸ Had the name *Vozemut* been considered as Finnic, letter 2 would have had eight instances.

documents than the other layers. Layer V which also includes a relatively small number of birch bark documents, has only one occurrence of a Finnic personal name. In the layers B, G and D, there does not seem to be any major differences in the occurrences of the Finnic anthroponyms. One may note, nevertheless, that several birch bark documents with a large amount of Finnic anthroponyms have been found close to each other.

All in all, the even occurrence of the Finnic anthroponyms of the different periods testifies to the fact that Finnic-speaking people formed a substantial ethnic factor in the principality of Novgorod for centuries. One may also not notice such a substantial diminishing in those names, which may be regarded as non-Christian, as has been observed regarding the Slavic names (Zaliznjak 2004: 211–218).

4.2. Character and structure of Finnic personal names

Some of the personal names attested in the birch bark letters fit well into the general picture of old Finnic personal names. They consist of two parts, a specific and a generic, and therefore belong to the canonical type of old Finnic names. Many consist of one name-part only, however, and this, together with many other similar one-part names from other sources, makes it debatable as to how well the canonical view of the two-part personal names actually describes the occurrences of the old Finnic personal names. Many other kinds of names also existed or then the two-part names have often been shortened to become one-part names and, subsequently, significant variation has occurred in the use of a particular name.

Many Finnic names seem to be invectives or nickname-type names. There are also numerous instances of ‘double-reference’ to the same person using a ‘real’ name and a nickname (*Vaivas Vajakšin*, *Semenka Korėlin*, *Kjurik Tjulpin*, *Martyn Tataj*, etc.).

Several personal names attested in the birch bark documents do not have straightforward parallels in other sources, but they can, nonetheless be identified as Finnic on the basis of those lexical elements they include. Of those names more or less reliably identifiable, at least the following are attested only in the birch bark documents: **Kaukoihalu*, **Ihalaita*, **Veljüt*, **Leinoivihti* and **Munnemieli*. Not surprisingly, many more of those names which are less reliably identifiable are unique.

4.3. Ethnic interpretation of Finnic personal names

The birch bark letters testify to the contacts between the Novgorod Slavs and several groups of Finnic-speaking people. The ethnotoponyms bear witness to the contacts between the Novgorod Slavs, Karelian, Saami, Čuds and Livonians; of them only the Čuds are without a true counterpart among present-day Finnic people.

The birch bark letters in no way help to clarify the problem related to the ethnic interpretation of the ethnonym of the Čuds. They cannot verify or reject the idea of the Veps being identical with the *čudb* (as proposed by Haavio 1964, or Pimenov 1965). One observation, nevertheless, is, that the ethnonym *vesb*, which occurs in few early Russian sources connected with northern Europe, is absent in the birch bark documents as is the ethnonym *meř(ja)*, the denomination of the likely eastern neighbours of the Novgorodians.

As was noted when discussing the occurrences of the Finnic phoneme /h/ in writing, it also seems that linguistically quite different groups of the Finnic people were involved in contacts with the Novgorod Slavs. Those people who utilised personal names such as **Imavalta* likely belonged to the southern group of Finnish speakers, while the others – for instance, those using the numerous personal names ending in a sequence of labial vowel and *-j* – likely belonged to the eastern group of Finnic people, most notably, to the Karelians.

Some letters including Finnic personal names seem to be from the regions in which the Finnic or the related population no longer exists. Thus, letter 526 is related to Lake Seliger, letter 2 to Obonež'e and letters 776 and 138 to the town of Pskov. These regions have thus had some Finnic-speaking population in the Middle Ages. Most of the toponyms referred to in the documents are not easily identifiable, however, and their localisation would be a theme for another article.

What seems to be important is that certain personal names and toponyms appear to have a clearly Karelian phonematic character (*Kjulolakši*, *Meliči*, etc.). There are clearer instances of connections with the Karelians than connections to Estonians or other southern Finnic tribes living in the vicinity of Novgorod at present in the birch bark documents. This can probably be accounted for by assuming that the Karelians referred to were those tribes residing in the territory just north of Novgorod in Ingria and the Karelian Isthmus. It is not surprising that the overwhelming majority of

those personal names having parallels in Finnish surnames and toponyms have a southeastern distribution in Finnish, whereas in the historical sources, they mostly occur in the context of the Karelian Isthmus and South Karelia. It is those regions which have best preserved the onomastic models of the one-time Karelian-speaking Ingria.

It seems quite certain that much more information regarding the Slavic–Finnic contacts and the areas settled by the Finnic people could be obtained by studying those occurrences of personal names mentioned above more carefully, taking into account the context of the texts in a more profound way than was possible in this article.

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