

## **The relationship between proper names and toponyms in Russian nomenclature in Mordvinland**

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The majority of settlement names in Mordvinland take their origin in proper names. This way of nomenclature is typical of all the three major languages – Mordvin, Russian and Tartar – in the Mordvinian Republic. My paper addresses toponyms originating from Russian proper names. Prior to an onomastic analysis it appears to be expedient to review the main phases of Russian settlement.

### **1. A concise history of Russian settlement in Mordvinland**

Slavic tribes made their appearance in the ancestral residential area, i.e. the Oka–Sura–Volga region as early as the 7<sup>th</sup> century, AD, but a remarkable impact can only be dated back to the 12<sup>th</sup>–13<sup>th</sup> centuries and the strengthening of the Vladimir–Suzdal. In the early 12<sup>th</sup> and Ryazan principalities century the Mordvins more or less resisted Russian influx, but by the 13<sup>th</sup> century a remarkable Russian population had moved into this region. At about this time, Russian impact manifested itself mainly along the lower course of the Oka river although it has hardly any linguistic evidence. The centre of Russian commercial activity at that time was Niznij Novgorod (1221). In migration was intensified by the fact that Masses of serfs fled beyond the borders from feudal services, and the land of the Mordvins proved to be an attractive settlement area owing to its position, its waterways and arable lands.

Russian expansion was temporarily halted by Tartar invasion and Russian population reappeared only in the 14<sup>th</sup> century. The Ryazan and Moscow princes split sovereignty over the land of Mordvins in the latter half of the 14<sup>th</sup> century until Prince of Moscow, Vasilij Dmitrievič, forever joined the Mordvins of the Oka–Sura–Pyana region to the Moscow Grand Duchy in 1389. The primary objective of the dynamic Russian expansion was to gain control over the routes leading to river Volga. The town of Kurmiš was founded in 1372 and the boundary of the Russian Empire ran along the Kurmiš–Temnikov–Upper-Cna line in the mid-15<sup>th</sup> century. Simultaneously the

Mordvin population around Nižnij Novgorod began to resettle in the vicinity of Arzamas in the south. By the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century the number of ethnically pure Mordvinian settlements had remarkably decreased: Russians in the North and West, Tartars in the South and in the Central areas mingled with Mordvins.

The early half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century saw the intensification of Russian expansion. Narovčat was rebuilt and a number of new fortified settlements were established: Vasilsursk (1523), Mokšansk (1536), Alatyr (1535), and Temnikov (1536) marked the main stages of conquest. The local Tartar princes surrendered one after the other thus in the middle of the century it was time for the military campaigns against the Khanate of Kazan, the great enemy. The military campaigns were led across Mordvinian areas on the one hand, while Mordvins (and other Volga peoples) also participated in them on the other. The town of Sviažsk, a very important fortification of strategic significance, was founded at the time of the second campaign (1549–50) (CIRKIN 1965, 211–218; FILATOV 1965, 90–97; ISTORIA 1979, 23–25, 45–46; KOZLOV 1960, 11–12; MERKUŠKIN 1965, 77–82; NIKONOV 1960, 172–173; SUBAEVA 1961, 194–195).

After 1552, Russian settlement grew much more rapid and intensive. By the late 16<sup>th</sup> century there remained hardly any Mordvin settlement in the vicinity of Arzamas, the once Erzya centre. The previously homogeneous Mordvin population got rapidly mixed with Russians. One reason for the rapid mingling was that Mordvins fleeing from the Tartar menace abandoned many settlements and lands and the Russians easily occupied them. The other reason was that Mordvinian settlements were scarcely populated. On average a village consisted of 10–15 households and the houses were located far from each other, thus Russian in-migrants could easily settle. In this way several villages of mixed Russian–Mordvin (later purely Russian) population came into existence. In the Western part of the once Erzya centre, the Arzamas district, there were 33 villages of mixed population out of the 41 villages in 1588. The intensity of Russian colonization is shown by the example of Ardatov only 36 percent of whose population were Russian in 1628 but by 1721 this rate had risen to 80 per cent. It was quite common, that Mordvins fled south escaping from the increasing taxburden as Russian administration was extended, but the South had not yet been reached by the Russian Empire. The forceful conversion to Christianity also contributed to the Mordvins' flight. Church centers also proved to be very eager to help expansion: several villages were put under the supervision of a monastery. At the turn of the 17<sup>th</sup>–18<sup>th</sup> centuries there were about twenty monasteries in Mordvinland and the adjacent areas.

Although the newly converted were granted some concessions (tax-breaks, cash payments, clothing) but it was all in vain, and finally it was only forceful conversion that proved successful by the mid 18<sup>th</sup> century (ISTORIA 1979, 92–94; KOZLOV 1960, 13–16; NIKONOV 1960, 174–175; SUBAEVA 1961, 195–196).

An important stage in the process of Russian conquest was the creation of the system of fortifications (*засечная черта*). The scattered forts of the late 15<sup>th</sup> century and early 16<sup>th</sup> century were made part of a unified system. The *засечная черта*, the defensive system along the southern and south-eastern borders of the Russian Empire that served as the foundations of defense against Tartar incursions and attacks (cf. *засека* ‘barrier in the forest, made of logs put on each other, with accessory elements offered by the location, varied with a stockade of stout posts, earthworks, traps etc’.) The system of forts was built in three stages: first, the Temnikov–Alatyr line (1552–56), followed by the Atemar–Saransk–Šiškeevo string of forts (1638) and finally the Insar line was built (1647–53). The construction of this system is related to the establishment of a few settlements and to the birth of new names: Aksyonovo, Ardatov, Atemar, Insar, Posad, Posop, Šiškeevo, Saransk, Temnikov, Vоротniki came into existence at this time (CYGANKIN–ISLAMOVA 1986, 77–82; ISTORIA 1979, 48–50, 65–71).

The creation of the system of forts rendered the south-eastern borders of the Russian Empire more defensible against the invasions of the peoples of the steppes, while, at the same time, these forts also served as bases of further expansion. The ethnic map of the region was redrawn in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries at the expense of Mordvins, with the confirmation of colonization the Mordvins were forced to move further south and started to settle Penza–Saratov area. Naturally, Russian expansion did not halt at the border of the original land of the Mordvins, but similar processes took place in the neighbouring regions as well, which resulted in the Simbirsk and Tambov areas getting under Russian influence, and the population moving away from there actively participated in populating some southern parts, the mentioned Penza–Saratov area among them.

A part of the Mordvinian population began to move over to the trans-Volga areas from the latter half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century on primarily from the Nižnij Novgorod, Arzamas, Alatyr and Kazan districts, mostly from Erzyan areas. Ten villages of mixed population came into being in this area: owing to the simultaneity of settlement, generally ethnically homogeneous, Russian, Tartar, Chuvash and Mordvinian settlements came into being. In this way the third major settlement area of Mordvins also came into existence besides the

original areas and the area surrounding Penza–Saratov (ISTORIA 1979, 63–65; KOZLOV 1960, 17–27; MOKŠIN 1989, 46–48).

Thus by the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the original Mordvin population had moved south and east from the Oka–Sura–Mokša–Cna basis in response to the rapid and efficient Russian in-migration and settlement and in this way the second major area of Mordvinian population, that of the area surrounding Penza–Saratov. A second and third area of Mordvin population took shape in the Penza–Saratov area and in the trans-Volga region. Although there remained homogeneous Mordvinian villages, Mordvinian population were outnumbered everywhere and this situation has survived to this day.

## 2. The Onomastic Consequences of Settlement

The Russian language has a central position among the languages of the region not only because of the historical circumstances discussed above, but also because its position is special, since it is the only language that is not a substrate in the mid-course Volga area. It is the “youngest” language in the area, for it appeared here latest. Two features follow from this: on the one hand, it made its appearance in the historical period when Russian population had a chance to conquer this area rapidly and intensively and this language has ever since had a lasting influence on the language environment. The other feature is the onomastic consequence of this influence. At the time of settlement the Oka–Sura–Mokša area had already been inhabited, therefore an already existing toponymic system had to be transformed and adopted, so original Russian name-giving could only take place in settlements created by them (that is in “empty, unnamed locations”). Thus a peculiar dual system came into being: the symbiosis of official-unofficial, Russian-Mordvinian names.

The most typical name-giving method in the Russian toponymic system is affixation. The vast majority of toponyms contain some kind of suffix, but prefixes often occur, too. Russian toponyms are mainly distinguished from the Finno-Ugric name-giving method by the use of toponymic suffixes in the former. It follows that elliptic construction is very common. In the two-part, Berezovo selo, derevnja Lobanovskaja-type names the determiner (selo derevnja, reka etc.) disappears, and only the topoforment refers to the topographical name. The grammatical gender of toponymes were originally determined by the determiners (selo can be neutral, derevnja can be feminine, poselok can be masculine, etc.), later analogy and what Nikonov called “the rule of paradigm” (*zakon rjada*) systemic compulsion became the basis of classification. The *zakon rjada* describes the tendency that each name is at the

same time different from other names and is also connected to all names that are by from similar to it. e.g. Irkutsk, Brjansk, Tomsk, have *-sk* in the toponym to refer to the “urban character”. In the case of names it is rather the differentiating function that is directly manifested, but toponyms never exist in isolation but rather in relation to others (NIKONOV 1965, 33–34).

### 3. Development of Russian and Mordvin Proper Names

Four stages in the development of Russian proper names can be distinguished. The first is the pre-Christian period that lasted up to the end of the 10<sup>th</sup> century. It was followed by several centuries of contention in which canonized Christian, names contended with heathen ones. The contention came to an end by the early 18<sup>th</sup> century with the total victory of canonized names. The golden age of Christian names lasted up to 1917, the beginning of stage 4. (BONDALETOV 1983, 96–97).

There is common ground in the history of Russian and Mordvinian names: the contention of heathen and Christian names and the victory of the latter. Falling into the background of the names of the local population and eventual disappearance coincided with the general expansion of Russian canonized names. In other words: Russian (Christian) names forced out not only the Mordvinian (as well as Tartar, Chuwash, etc) names in the mid-course Volga area but also their own un-canonized names. At the time of immigration into Mordvinland some of the heathen Russian names were still alive. Their memory was preserved in names like *Zivaj*, *Malis*, *Nekljud*, *Petaj*, *Radaj*, *Cudaj* etc. These names can be classified into the same semantic categories as the similar Mordvinian names. e.g. physical, spiritual qualities: ru. *Bezzubov*, *Bespalov*, *Dolgaj*, *Nesmejan*; cf. md. *ašo/akš* ‘white’ > *Akšajev*; *ine* E ‘big’ > *Iñevatkin*, *Iñemas*; *kaštan* ‘proud’ > *Kaštanov*; *mazij/mazi* ‘nice, beautiful’ > *Mazajkin*; *paro/par* ‘good’ > *Paroškin*, *Parovat*, *Paranza*; *taza* ‘healthy, clean’ > *Tazin* etc; parents’ relationship to their children: ru. *Nadezda*, *Radaj*, cf. md. *eravi/erävi* ‘must, need to’ > *Erevat*; *inže/inži* ‘guest’ > *Inževat*; *učo/uč* - ‘wait’ > *Učevat*; *večke*- E ‘love’ > *Večkomas*, *Večkan*; order of birth: ru. *Devjatka*, *Pervus*, cf. md. *kavto/kaft* ‘two’ > *Kaftajev*, *Kavtod’ej*; *kolmo/kolm* ‘three’ > *Kolomasov*, *Kolman* (MOKŠIN, 1961 111; 1969, 63; 1990, 59; NAĐKIN 1971, 76, 111; 1973, 11; NIKONOV 1988, 128; VEČKANOVA 1985, 132–133).

The contention of pre-Christian and Christian names among the Mordvins lasted over several centuries. Christian names appeared among the Mordvins as

early as the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, but became fully emancipated only by the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. For example the 1671 book of census registration in the district of Alatur (Переписная книга мордовских селений Алатырского уезда 1671 года. Саранск, 1979), contains several heathen names, e.g. *Alenajko*, *Kaftajka*, *Kargaška*, *Lomanka*, *Pivcajka*, *Poldaška*, *Večkanka*, *Vešanka* etc (CYGANKIN 1989, 50).

Russian family names came into being at different times in the different social strata (just as among Mordvins): the change in the system of names can be observed among the boyars in the 14<sup>th</sup>–16<sup>th</sup> centuries, among the landed lords in the 16<sup>th</sup>–17<sup>th</sup> century whereas the clergy and the urban dwellers adopted this system only in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. The process was completed even later among the lower classes of society. Social stratification had existed before, even at the time of single names: princes and dukes, etc., had *Svjatoslav*, *Vsevolod*-type names, the middle classes had *Petr*, *Ivan*-type names while among the peasants *Petruska*, *Ivasko*-type names were most common. This type survived among the lowest strata of society over the centuries. With the disappearance of non-Christian names the system of two – then three – part names appeared simultaneously. An important event in the Christian-heathen contention was the 1701 decree of Peter I which forbade the use of the so-called “poluimja“ its enforcement was, however, not steadfast. (BONDALETOV 1983, 105–113; NIKONOV 1967, 159–160).

Family names appeared among Mordvins later. It first got consolidated among the landed lords (17<sup>th</sup>–18<sup>th</sup> centuries), then among the merchants and other urban dwellers and last among the common people and peasants in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. With the disappearance of single names and its passing on to descendents the relationship between the name and its bearer based on some kind of personal quality also disappeared and with the emergence two-part names they accommodated to the Russian model (MOKŠIN 1990, 73; NIKONOV 1973, 237).

Nikonov points out that the two-part family name was for a long time only a patrilineal name. The reason for the emergence of family names was primarily not the need for differentiation but it was brought to life by the legal function of naming. Such 17<sup>th</sup>–18<sup>th</sup> century data, as e.g. *Nal'evatka Arkajev*, *Lopaj Parušev* etc., were not yet of a Christian name + surname character, for the son of the latter was called *Vorgud'a Lopajev*, that is, here *Lopajev* is also only a patrilineal name (MOKŠIN 1973, 139–140; NIKONOV 1973, 236–237; 1988, 127).

Transition from the Mordvinian system to the Russian one could only take place slowly and gradually. Originally the new, Russian (Christian) name of the newly converted Mordvins was only the so-called second name following

the Mordvinian (non-Christian) one. This order was later changed: first both names were used the same way then the Russian one took the first place followed by the Mordvinian one in the second place eventually the Russian, Christian name ousted the Mordvinian one. Luckily these Mordvinian name did not disappear without a trace over the ages. Many of them were preserved in family names. Paradoxically, this is due exactly to the transition to Russian-type names: when Russians (conversion missionaries) gave Christian names to Mordvins, they had to be given Russian-type family names as well. This was often the father's proper name, which was Russified with the *-ov/-jev, -in, -kin* patronymic suffixes, e.g. *Mařeš's* son > *Mařešev, Mařeškin*. Following the introduction of three-part names these could easily become surnames: *Kірđasov, Kolomasov, Kudasov, Kulaskin, Piksajkin, Surođejev, Vedasov, Viřaskin* etc. (MOKŠIN 1969, 61–62; 1975 116).

#### 4. Proper Names in the Onomastic System

Toponyms of common name origin originally gave some information about the character, location and origin language and ethnic affiliation and environment of the settlement. Proper names as toponyms present us information of a quite different nature. Primarily they offer general information on the language affiliation of the toponym and offer us orientation in defining its time of birth: partly by means of data in historical sources and annals concerning the owner of the settlement and in part-by means of onomastic analysis – the “naming tradition” of a certain region can be determined. Beyond this, these proper names inform us about the ancient anthroponymic system (for the vast majority of them only occur in toponyms today) and often about the migration of the population, too (since the new settlement bears the name of the founder of the old village, with or without a distinctive epithet).

Family names of Mordvinian origin became toponyms by adopting Russian attributes. This usually means the second (or perhaps the third) attribute, since the family name itself contains some suffix of Russian origin and a Mordvinian Christian name also contains a Mordvinian derivative affix: *Kočkur* (Mordvinian Christian name) > *Kočkurov* (patrilineal name, family name) > *Kočkurovo* (settlement name). Thus here the *-ov/-jev, -in, -kin* etc. derivatives are linked to *-o, -a, -i* suffixes. Sometimes *-ovo/-jevo, -ino* etc can be joined directly to the Mordvinian name in an analogical manner.

The historical background of transforming Russian proper names into toponyms was the occupation of lands, the establishment of villages, in the same way as with the Mordvins. From the beginning of Russian settlement it was quite common for over a long time that the Christian name and/or

surname of the owner of the village was given to the village. In the process of the transition of Russian proper names to toponyms they acquired the mentioned attributes: *Matvej* > *Matvejev* (patrilineal name, family name) > *Matvejevo*, *Matvejevka* (toponym). The essence of the phenomenon is the same as that of the transformation of Mordvinian proper names into toponyms, but here one phrase, – that of adaptation – is logically missing.

### 5. Main Features of Toponyms of Russian Proper Name Origin

On the basis of I. K. INŽEVATOV's toponymic dictionary (INŽEVATOV 1987)<sup>1</sup> there are more than 400 toponyms of Russian anthroponymic origin in the territory of the present-day Mordvinian Republic. The vast majority of these villages got their names after the founder of the village or after the land owner (or rarely his relative). On the basis of various land-registry books (e.g. *Kniga pisma i dorozu Ivana Usova da Ilji Dubrovskogo 1614 godu*; *Atemarskaja desjatna 1669–1670 goda*; *Perepisi podatnogo naselenija po Temnikovskomu uezdu za 1761–1767 godi*; *Список населенных мест Симбирской губернии 1863*; *Список населенных мест Пензенской губернии 1869* etc.) Inzevatov sometimes very precisely gives the name of the land-owner – i.e. the name-giver – e.g. *Aleksandrovka* < *Aleksandr Stepanovic Andreev* (1858), *Bogdanovka* < *Bogdan Iljic Ogarev* (1869), *Gavrilovka* < *Gavril Danilovic Fitkov* (1763), *Karsakovka* < *Artemij Ivanovic Korsakov* (1669–70), *Koskarovka* < *Stepan Grigorjevic Koskarov* (1725), *Maslovka* < *Ivan Borisovic Maslov* (1669–70), *Morevka* < *Ivan Iljic Morev* (1685), *Repjevka* < *Vasilij Prokofjevic Repjev* (1725), *Teplovka* < *Izosim Vasiljevic Teplov* (1864), etc. The starting point of toponyms can be both a Christian name (e. g. *Aleksandrovka*, *Bogdanovka*, *Gavrilovka* etc.) and family name (*Koskarovka*, *Maslovka*, *Morevka*, *Repjevka*, *Teplovka* etc) egyaránt.

Az esetek nagyobb százalékában azonban csak a névadó családjának a nevét adja meg a szótárszerkesztő, pl. *Baranovka* < *Baranov*, *Blohino* < *Blohin*, *Bobrovka* < *Bobrov*, *Boltino* < *Boltin*, *Varvarovka* < *Varvarov*, *Velmaevo* > *Velmaev*, *Vinogradovka* < *Vinogradov*, *Golubcovka* < *Golubcov*, *Gorbunovka* < *Gorbunov*, *Griboedovo* < *Griboedov*, *Danilovka* < *Danilov*, *Dmitrievka* <

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<sup>1</sup> This is the only dictionary of onomastic etymology in Mordvinland that presents the origins of more than 1500 settlement names – often with unreliable etymology – and contains information on the local history of the village or town.

*Dmitriev, Dubasovo < Dubasov, Dudnikovo < Dudnikov, Ersovka < Ersov, Zdanovka < Zdanov, Zedrino > Zedrin, Ivanovka > Ivanov, Isaezka < Isaev, Kazeevka < Kazeev, Karpelovka < Karpelov, Kljucarevo < Kljucarev, Komarovka < Komarov, Lobanovka < Lobanov, Losevka < Losev, Makarovka < Makarov, Markino < Mrkin, Mironovka < Mironov, Nekljudovo < Nekljudov, Petrovka < Petrov, Popovka < Popov, Protasovo < Protasov, Romanovka < Romanovm Safonovka < Safonov, Smirnovka < Smirnov, Toporovo < Toporov, Fedorovka < Fedorov, Filippovka < Filippov, Curino < Curin, Subrino > Subrin* etc. In these cases the origin of the toponym is logically always the family name.

The number of toponyms of anthroponymic origin that take their origin in some other kind of starting point is very low. Such can be political name-giving (in Mordvinland: *Kalinina, Micurin, Uljanovka, Capaev, Capaev*), or paying homage to the memory of famous writers: *Puskino, Lev Tolstoj*. Toponyms rarely originate from female Christian names. Such names in present-day Mordvinland are *Ekaterinovka (< Ekaterina Ivanovna Serjagorodskaja), Elizavetinka (< Elizaveta Nejbuseva), Nadezdinka (< Nadezda Kolotilova), Sofjino (< Sofja Ivanovna Borh)*.

A Christian name can be the origin of the names of several villages – naturally independent of each other such is, e.g. the toponym *Semenovka* in Mordvinland (on the basis of *Semen Hitrovo, Semen Maksimovic Korsunova* and *Semen Zitjaev*). The most frequently occurring Christian name of Russian proper name origin is *Aleksandr*, altogether nine times. It is followed by *Nikolaj* (seven times) and *Andrej* (six times).

The Most widespread suffix of toponyms in Mordvinland are *-ka* and *-o*. These suffixes are linked to proper names in the manner described above whose derivatives can usually be *-ov/-jev* and *-in* were originally suffixes of possession and belonging and occurred primarily as suffixes of proper names. (This function survives today as suffixes of patrilineal names. The patrilineal name originally expressed possession: *Dmitriev sin* ‘son of Dimitri’. As toponymic suffixes they became very productive with the broadening of feudal ownership rights, in an age when a settlement or a part of it usually got its name from its owner. The difference between the two elements depended originally on the type of stem, nominals of a hard stem got *-ov* soft-stem nominals got *-jev* suffix while nominals ending in *-a/-ja* got suffix *-in* (irrespective of the basic word being masculine or feminine). In this way suffix clusters *-ovka/-evka, -ovo/-jevo, -inka, -ino* came into existence (NIKONOV 1962, 25–26; 1965, 69–70; Subaeva 1961, 208–210).

The most common suffix cluster in Russian toponyms is *-ovka/-evka* can be found in about 60% of the toponyms. The second most frequent one is *-ovo/-jevo* with 20% occurrence, the third is *-ino* (15%). It is interesting that the occurrence of the element *-inka* is rare, it occurs in two toponyms of female origin altogether. Other suffixes (*-iha, -ina, -ščina*) occur sporadically only.

It can be established about geographic position Russian toponyms of proper name origin that their larger number can be found in the central part of the Republic. In the district of Romodanovo (94%), Lyambirsk (76%), Ruzaevka (79%), Starošajgovo (79%), Kočkurovo (76%), Insar (76%) and in the district of Bolšebereznik (75%) their number is high compared with names of proper-name etymology of Mordvinian and Volga Turkish. In view of these facts of history this is not surprising at all, since there were the “empty territories” which were settled by the Russian-speaking population in the first stage of settlement.

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