

The terminology of agriculture in the Mordvin language III.

The subject matter of Finno-Ugric agriculture has only been analysed in one linguistic study until this point (Toivonen 1928). The lack of research within this field is especially prominent in the case of Mordvin language, because among the Finno-Ugric people living outside the Pannonian Basin, Mordvin agriculture is the most important and advanced. High level Mordvin agriculture left a deep imprint in the lexicology of the language.

The present paper is based on my doctoral thesis defended in 1970. The literature of lexicography and etymology has been enriched with a significant amount of material in the past 50 years, thus the large-volume Mordvin dictionaries and etymological papers (UEW, MdKons, the Vershinin dictionary) had to be taken into consideration during the compilation of the present glossary.

In the introduction of the paper, the terminology of agriculture is defined and described, methodological considerations are outlined and a 24-item list of Mordvin dictionaries and glossaries is presented.

The first and second parts (FUD 24: 309–346 and 25: 277–308) of this three-part study present a 300-entry alphabetical word list of agriculture, compiled from the listed sources, etymological details provided.

The third and concluding part – published in the current issue of the journal – contains a linguistic and ethnographical study of the ancient Mordvin and language-internally formed words (derivatives, compounds, onomatopoeic words) and loan words as well.

It is established in the paper that the Mordvin technical vocabulary of agriculture is made up of Uralic (mainly Finno-Permic and Finno-Volgaic) words, language-internally formed words, Iranian, Baltic, Turkish and Russian loans and also of elements of unknown origin. (Certain elements also suggest the presence of a few Volga German loans.) As far as the origin of the words is concerned – 310 words were taken into consideration because of the uncertain origin of the rest – the most frequent elements are Russian loans (133 words = 42,9%), ancient origin words (59 = 19%), language-internally formed words (49 = 15,8%), Turkish loans (41 = 13,2%), words of unknown origin (22 = 7,1%), and Iranian and Baltic loans (3–3 word = 0,9% respectively). The dialectal distribution is as follows: dictionary entry present both in Erzya and Moksha (226 items = 75,3%), in Erzya only (38 = 12,7%) and in Moksha

only (36 = 12%). According to their meaning, the words can refer to names of crops (88 words = 29,3%), other agricultural names (81 = 27%), tools (53 = 17,7%), processes (44 = 14,7%) and foods (34 = 11,3%). As far as parts of speech are concerned, most of the words are nouns (256 = 85,3%), but some verbs referring to processes also occur (44 = 14,7%).

In the concluding part, the method and interdependence of “Wörter und Sachen” (= words and objects) is discussed. “The linguistic research I am engaged in which is my point of departure, could never have satisfied me if I had not been able to constantly turn back to the things they denote” – Jacob Grimm wrote.

It can be stated in conclusion that the terminology of agriculture in Mordvin is a proof for how extended and advanced agriculture is among the Mordvins.

Keywords: Mordvin, terminology of agriculture, etymology.

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