

# Balto-Finnic Personal Name Systems

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## Abstract

Balto-Finnic peoples have two main personal name systems: official and unofficial. For the small Balto-Finnic peoples in Russia – Karelians, Vepsians, Votes and Izhorians – the official personal name system is in the Russian language, but their own personal names belong to the unofficial personal name system. Nowadays Finns and Estonians have personal names of their own, earlier Finns also used Swedish personal names, but Estonians used German ones. The last Livonians used Lettish names, earlier German ones were used. The traditional first names of Lutheran (until the 16th century Roman Catholic) Finns, Estonians and Livonians are of Latin origin, but they have got them via Swedes and Germans. The first names of the orthodox Balto-Finnic peoples in Russia are of Greek origin, but they have got them via Russians. Orthodox Estonians in the south-east and on the islands of western Estonia have first name systems that are different both from each other and from the Lutheran Estonians. The personal name system of Ingermanland Finns differs a little from the personal name systems in Finland. The unofficial anthroponymic systems of the Balto-Finnic peoples have their similarities being rich in personal name suffixes.

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European peoples speak mainly Indo-European languages. The only other larger language family group in Europe is the Finno-Ugrian language group, one part of which, are the Balto-Finnic languages.

The peoples everywhere have their informal names too. The special characteristic of the Balto-Finnic anthroponymy is that their official name system is or in the beginning was in foreign languages. Their own names existed as an unofficial name system. The contemporary traditional first names of Lutheran (until the 16th century Roman Catholic) Finns, Estonians and Livonians are of Latin origin, but they have got them via Swedes and Germans. The first names of the orthodox Balto-Finnic peoples in Russia are of Greek origin, but they have got them via Russians. Orthodox Estonians in the southeast and on the islands of western Estonia have first name systems different from each other, as well as from the Lutheran Estonians. The personal name system of Ingrian Finns differs a little from the personal name systems in Finland.

Votes, Izhorians (or Ingrians), Karelians and Vepsians, who live in Russia, have official names in Russian (Joalaid 2007a: 856-857, Joalaid 2007b: 285-286, Karlova 2007: 363-364, Mullonen 2007: 847). The Northern-Karelia has Finnish cultural influence too (Karlova 2007: 365-366). As a part of Ingria belonged to Estonia between the two World Wars, the Balto-Finnic peoples of Estonian Ingria, first of all Izhorians, had also official names in Estonian (Järvinen 1990: 44).

The Livonians are almost extinct; they inhabited the territory which now belongs to the Latvian Republic. Therefore, their name system has most recently been influenced by the Lettish (or Latvian) one. There are two registers of Lettish which have influenced Livonian names: Lettish Standard and Tamian dialects of Lettish. The latter has no grammatical gender

(naturally, the substratum of Livonian) (Halling and Joalaid 2007: 485). Earlier the Germans were landlords in Latvia and in Estonia too, so German language and name system has influenced the Estonian and Livonian ones. The Russian orthodox culture is also an influence.

The Finnish territory was, until the beginning of 19th century, a part of the Swedish Kingdom and has been influenced by the Swedish culture even later on. There are also local differences, for example between the anthropological systems of Western and Eastern Finland. The latter has also been influenced by the Russian orthodox culture (Paikkala 2007: 206).

Nowadays, Estonians and Finns have their independent countries. Their official name systems are in their standard languages and have taken examples from the German and Swedish name systems. Their own name systems remained on the level of dialects or spoken languages. This also means that with the small Balto-Finnic peoples it is easier to differentiate between the unofficial name systems and their official name systems than it is with the Finnish and Estonian ones, where both systems are in their own languages. Actually, there is rather an opposition between the oral tradition and the literary tradition.

The first records of the Balto-Finnic personal names belong to the end of the 12th and the beginning of the 13th century. The twenty Livonians, eight Estonians and one Finn mentioned by name in the Chronicle of Henry of Livonia have mostly one name. So do a couple of men, who have Estonian personal names in another source from the beginning of the 13th century – in the lists of Estland of the Liber Census Daniae. The general opinion is that originally people had only one name (Kiviniemi 1982: 29). The reason can be, of course, that there were fewer people at that time and there was no need to call people by more than one name. However, the first Balto-Finnic persons mentioned by name in the year 1184, two Livonians in the Chronicle of Henry of Livonia, are identified by their sons: *Ylo, pater Kulewene, et Viezo, pater Alonis* ‘Ylo, father of Kulewene and Viezo, father of Alo’ (*Ylo*, cf. Fin *ilo* ‘joy, fun, pleasure’; *Kulewene* – \**Kuulevainen*, cf. Fin *kuulla* ‘hear’; *Viezo* – \**Vihatso* < *viha* ‘anger’ + suffix *-tso*; *Alo* < *ala* ‘under’) (HChL (I, 4) 1982: 24, Alvre 1984: 539-541, Mägiste 1962: 314).

Two main types of anthroponyms are used in the early sources: compound names and suffixial names. Eduard Roos, who has investigated Estonian names in the documents from the 13th-15th century, lays down as a fact that in the tax registers of the Northern Estonia between the years 1350-1500 only some of the simple names are recorded, but there are about 25 compounds and suffixial names. The picture is the same in the Ruhja and Helme landbook from 1420-1480 (Roos 1976: 120). Ruhja is located in the territory historically populated by Estonian, but situated in the present day Latvian territory and called Rūijena in Lettish.

A famous Finnish name researcher Viljo Nissilä considered compound names to be names of the members of the upper class, created under the influence of Germanic names (Nissilä 1969: 91-94). However, this type of personal names existed for centuries and, at least in Estonia, it is difficult to consider all of them to be the names of famous men. It also seems that such names were not spread among Balto-Finnic peoples eastward, Vepsians and Karelians.

Some examples of the compound names from the 13th century are: Estonian *Hildælēpæ* (LCD 47r) (< *Hilde* + *lempe* < *lempi* ‘love’), *Unnepewe* (HChL (XXI, 5) 1982:

180) (< *Unne* + *päivä* ‘day’), Livonian *Lembewalde* (HChL (X, 8) 1982: 58) (cf. Fin *lempi* ‘love’ + *valta* ‘power’), Finnish *Petrus Kakuwalde* ~ *Kakewalde* ~ *Kaikewalde* ~ *Kakinwalde* (HChL (XIX, 4, 7; XXIV, 1; XXIX, 7) 1982: 162, 168, 210, 262) (< *kaike* ‘every’ or *kauko* ‘far’ + *valta* ‘power’) (Alvre 1984: 539, Mägiste 1962: 305).

The compound names have disappeared from Balto-Finnic unofficial anthroponymic systems, but the model still exists in the Estonian and Finnish family names, which are of later origin.

As their first names the Balto-Finnic peoples today use Christian names, which are borrowed. The unofficial name system modifies the borrowed Christian names mainly by the use of suffixes.

The most popular of the suffixes is *-oi*. Its variant was *-ēi* (today it is turned into *-e*). The suffix is originally a diminutive suffix, although it has lost its diminutive character in names (Mägiste 1928: 56). Nowadays the suffix may appear both in the first and the family names. In the different Balto-Finnic languages it has either kept its primary phonetic form or developed phonetically from diphthong to monophthong. It seems that in Livonian and Estonian the suffix *-oi* / *-ēi* had already started changing to be a monophthong (*-oi* > *o*, *-ēi* > *-e*, *-e*) at the time of Henry of Livonia: Livonian *Alo*, Estonian *Meme* in the Chronicle. The first recordings of names in Izhorian (*\*Pelgui* – *Pelguši* in the year 1240), Votian (*\*Toššui* – *Fedko Toshshujev* in the year 1500) and Vepsian language (*\*Ihkui* – *Mikiforik Ikhkujev* in the years 1495-1496) are with that suffix (Joalaid 2008: 534). The developing of *-oi* to *-ui* has obviously happened on a Russian basis. The suffix is very productive even today, mostly in the unofficial systems, but some names with this suffix have reached the official use of Estonian (*Liisu*, former *Liiso* < *Elisabeth*) and Finnish (*Eero* < *Eerik*) (Vilkuna 2003: 54). Concerning the anthroponymy of Estonian today, there are some difficulties in identifying the suffix in concrete names, because it is turned to *-u* and so mixed up with the other quite old suffix *-u*. Besides also the palatalization is incorporated into the suffixial personal names in Estonian: *Joh̄nu* (< *Joonatan*), *Kat's* (< *Katrin*). The *-u* can also disappear, but the palatalization remains, e.g. almost all women with the official names with *Ma-* in the beginning (*Mariliis*, *Mariko*, *Manda*) are called *Mañnu* or *Maññ*.

The other suffix used in the early Balto-Finnic names and preserved until now is *-nen* (with its phonetic modifications), which points to belonging to a group or family. It is popular in the north language groups of the Balto-Finnic – Finnish, Karelian and Vepsian. In Finnish, in the first place in the Eastern Finland, it is now used as a family name suffix (*Nissinen*). In Karelian and Vepsian it has the same function, but it belongs to the unofficial system of names (Karelian *Kuikkani* (Karlova 2007: 368), Vepsian *Habukahñe*). In the Chronicle of Henry of Livonia the suffix was used by Estonians and Livonians too, e.g. Livonian *Kyrianus* and *Layanus* (HChL (X, 5) 1982: 56). The names have a Latin suffix *-us* at the end of the name, and these must be read as *\*Kirjane* and *\*Laajane*, cf. Finn. *kirja* ‘figure, pattern, writ’ and *laaja* ‘wide’ + suffix *-ne* (Alvre 1984: 541). Obviously, the king of the pagan Curonians in the year 1230 also had this type of name: *Lammekinus* ~ *Lammechinus* (Bielenstein 1892: 419-420; Bunge 1853: 134), which must be read as *\*Lemmekine* (< *\*Lempi* ‘love’, but using weak stem with assimilation as in Finnish *lemmikki* ‘favourite, darling’). Vowel *a* instead of *e* appears also once among the name variants of famous Estonian head chief *Lembitu* in the Chronicle of Henry of Livonian: *Lambito* (HChL (XIV, 12) 1982: 116).

As a rudiment the suffix appears in the Estonian unofficial name system: *Ruudine poig*, where the meaning is vague. Though, in the Estonian folk poetry we can find *Kalevine poisikene*, and it is clear that the boy (*poisikene* in diminutive) belongs to the clan of *Kalev*.

Some suffixes used in the 12th-15th centuries (e.g. *-tu*, *-tso*, *-ndi*, *-ko*, *-das*, *-mas*, *-va*) are not productive any more. Instead of them other suffixes such as *-u*, explosive (*p*, *t*, *k*) + *s* and others are used in the Balto-Finnic unofficial name stock.

Suffix *-u* seems to be quite old, because it appears in every Balto-Finnic peoples name stock, sometimes, as already said, mixed up with suffix *-oi*, which may have been developed *-oi > -o > -u* (Estonian *Anu*, Izhorian, Vote *Añu*) (Joalaid 2008: 536).

Very popular in Estonian anthroponymy, and also popular in Finnish and Livonian ones, is the suffix: explosive (*p*, *t*, *k*) + *s*: Estonian *Pet's* (< *Peeter*), Livonian *Pēt š*, Finnish *Kaitsu* (< *Kai*).

During the centuries some Finns and Estonians got a family name. However, in their entirety the Balto-Finnic peoples of the Russian Empire got their family names after the abolition of serfdom. It happened in the beginning of the 19th century in the Baltic Governments and in the year 1861 in the rest of Russia (Votes, Izhorians, Ingrian Finns, Vepsians, Karelians). The year 1835, when the giving of family names ended in the Government of Estland (Northern Estonia), is considered to be the end of giving family names to Estonians. A hundred years later the Estonianizing of German names was in its peak. Mostly family names were changed, less so with first names (Hussar and Päll 2007: 171, 178-179). The same process, making names Finnish has also taken place in Finland. The way how people got their family names is different in Eastern and Western Finland. The family name system of Finnish today was established towards the end of the 19th century. The first Finnish Family Name Law was accepted in 1920 (Paikkala 2007: 206, 204). The Balto-Finnic peoples in Russia got their official family names only in the first half of the 20th century.

Two centuries have passed since Estonians and Livonians got their family names. So it is now difficult to decide, if and which clan names they had before. The question is not investigated either. We also do not know very much about unofficial Finnish clan names. However, the small Balto-Finnic peoples in Russia have abundant clan name stocks, though they are not very often used practically. Especially bird and animal terms are used among the Balto-Finnic clan names: Izhorian: *Suzi* 'wolf' (*Suen Peto*), *ReBoi* 'fox' (*Revo*in *Sīteri*), *Härkä* 'ox' (*Härän Mītoi*), *Kajava* 'gull', *Harakka* 'magpie', *Čirkkulain* 'sparrow'; Vote: *Tedri* 'grouse', *Metso* 'capercaillie', *Sakkali* 'hawk', *Kronni* 'raven, crow' *Jänes* 'hare' (Nissilä 1943: 201, Krjukov 2005a: 14); Karelian: *Repo* 'fox', *Kurki* 'crane' (Karlova 2007: 367); Vepsian: *Habuk* 'hawk', *Vaza* 'calf', *Kaži* 'cat', *Tik* 'woodpecker', *Kärbhāine* 'fly'.

Sometimes such names have become official family names, but with a Russian modification: Izhorian *Härän Mītoi* – Dmitrij Gergin, *hārg* 'ox'; Vepsian *Habuk* (*habuk* 'hawk' – Gabukova), or translation: Izhorian *Rejkahan Īlja* – Ilja Kol'cov (Izhorian *rengaz*, Russian кольцо (kol'co) 'ring'), Vote *Jānezē Troša* – Trofim Zaicev (Vote *jānes*, Russian заяц (zajac) 'hare') (Nissilä 1943: 201, Krjukov 2005a: 14), Vepsian *Koñd'ij Stjopu* – Stepan Medvedjev (Vepsian *koñd'ij*, Russian медведь (*medved*) 'bear').

In the Finnish family name stock such names occur less often, but among the Lutheran Finns in Ingria these are widespread (*Karhu* 'bear', *Susi* 'wolf', *Tikka*

‘woodpecker’). The old Izhorian clan names that the Izhorians took with them when they changed their Orthodox faith to Lutheranism can also be found among those (Krjukov 2005b: 160-168).

The official name systems of Estonians, Finns and Livonians are similar to the systems common in Europe. The order of the person’s names is: first name + family name, for example Estonian *Marje Joalaid*, Finnish *Viljo Nissilä*. The Livonians do not have names in their own language as Estonians and Finns do, but in Lettish: *Kārlis Dambergs*. The small Balto-Finnic peoples in Russia have their official names in Russian. They use the modern Russian name system structure: first name + father’s name (patronym) + family name: Vepsian *Maria Ivanovna Zaiceva*.

The main difference in comparison with the official name systems is that the order of the person’s names of the Balto-Finnic own name systems is opposite: family name + first name. The family name is in the genitive case: Estonian *Joalaiu Marje*. Until the Balto-Finnic people were given their family names, they used surnames, for the most part patronyms, but also farmstead names. After getting a family name, it also started to appear in the first place of people’s names, e.g. Estonian: (unofficial, from newspaper) *Rebase Pet’s* – official Peeter Rebane, *Rõõmuse Rihs* – official Riho Rõõmus.

In Russia the farmstead names are not used, but Finns, Estonians and Livonians have farmstead names and often also use them (Livonian *Kielk Kõrli*, official *Kārlis Dambergs*) (Halling and Joalaid 2007: 485-486). The order of names with first name in the second place seems to be general not only in the Balto-Finnic anthroponymy, but in the anthroponymy of the whole Finno-Ugrian language group, cf. Hungarian (e.g. *Pacsolay Gyula*).

Some examples of the Balto-Finnic names, one part of which are patronyms, are: Vote: *Platonā Trofima* – in Russian Trofim Platonov, *Levō Il’ja* – Ilja Leontjevič; Izhorian: *Porissan Vaña* – Ivan Borisov, *Maksimān Okoi* – Agafja Maksimovna (female name); (Krjukov 2005a: 12); Vepsian: *Vaškan Marfa* (Kettunen 1920: 48); Karelian: *Ohvon Homa*, *Ol’okan Iivana* (Karlova 2007: 364), *Arhipan Miihkail*; Finnish: *Matin Olli* (Paikkala 2007: 209).

Sometimes both the grandfather’s name and father’s name are used as a surname, e.g. Karelian: *Jürgizen Pešan Vaša* (Nissilä 1943: 200). The same person can sometimes be called by their father’s name, sometimes by their grandfather’s name. An Izhorian man, whose official name is Mikhail Stepanovich Lukin is after his father *Stjopan Mihalka*, after his grandfather *Lukan Mihalka*. A Vote man Konstantin Tikhonovich Leontjev can be both *Tihkanā Kostja* and *Levō Kostja* (Krjukov 2005a: 12).

A metronym can also be used. An Izhorian man Aleksander Ivanov is *Houran Oleksander*. Sometimes the name of an ancestress is used in place of the mother’s name: Izhorian Sergei Petrov – *Annun Sergei*, Ivan Andrejev – *Iriškan Vaña*, Petr Ivanovich Petrov – *Varvanan Pet’a* (Nissilä 1943: 201).

Also wives’ names have been used. A Vote woman Marja Boranova said that her grandfather’s name was *Īvana*, and he was called after his wife’s name: *Pol’u Īvana* (Saar 2000: 9).

In Hungarian it is very usual not to name the wife by her own first name, but to use the husband’s name: *Jánosné*. The suffix *-né* here comes from the word denoting a woman. Such andronym suffix appears also in Ingria. The andronym before the suffix is in the

genitive case and the ending of this case *-n* constitutes a kind of compound suffix: Vote: *-n + -nā*: *Fokannā* ‘Foka’s wife’, *Jefreimannā* ‘Jefreim’s wife’ (Joalaid 2007a: 860); Izhorian: *-nnā ~ -nnain* *Tihhonannā* ‘Tihkhon’s wife’, *Ser’onnain* ‘Sergei’s wife’, *Ivanannain* ‘Ivan’s wife’ (Joalaid 2007b: 289). The Vepsians generally do not use such a suffix, except for Southern Vepsians, who had borrowed their andronym suffix *-ihh* < Russian *-иха* (*-ikha*): *ondreihh* ‘Andrei’s wife’.

The question is whether the appellative suffix *-na* (later *-nna*) that marks a woman, imported into Standard Estonian in the 19th century (*kuningaana* > *kuninganna* ‘queen’, cf. *kuningas* ‘king’), originated from such an andronym suffix or not.

The other appellative suffix that marks a woman *-tar*, borrowed from Finnish, was imported into standard Estonian a little later, in the beginning of the 20th century. In Eastern Finland it was a name suffix until the 19th century, but is now out of use. A woman’s name *Kovotar* corresponds to the man’s name *Koponen*, in the gradational names in the weak stem (Närhi 1996: 25, Paikkala 1997: 6).

In the unofficial name system a person can be called in many different ways. A Vote man Gavriil Agafonov from Luuditsa is usually called *Agafonā Gaurila*. His clan name is *Metso* ‘capercaillie’, but by nickname he is called *Tšikkarpää* ‘curly-headed’ (Joalaid 2007a: 860).

The unofficial anthroponymic systems of the Balto-Finnic peoples have many similarities compared to each other, being rich in personal name suffixes, but there are also features that we can find only in one or some of the languages.

To sum up, there are two different name systems in the Balto-Finnic anthroponymy: official and unofficial. The unofficial name system is much richer than the official one. It has more possibilities to name people. It is also very old. From the forming types of the ancient names the suffixial name type has been preserved. Some of the suffixes have persisted at least from the 12th century up to the present. The forming names with the suffixes is most productive in the unofficial anthroponymy of the people, whose official name system is in their own language: Estonians and Finns. The official family name systems of Estonians and Finns have been traced back to the name system of the other main model of ancient Balto-Finnic names, the compound names. In addition, the two systems are mixed up a little. We can even say that the own system is not so much changed but rather that its components have shifted.

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