

УДК 811

## Pluralia tantum place-names of the 14-17<sup>th</sup> centuries mentioned in old Russian chronicles

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Received 16.05.2016, received in revised form 20.07.2016, accepted 07.08.2016

*This article deals with some place-names in the form of pluralia tantum, mentioned in the Old Russian chronicles of the middle and late periods of Russian language history (the 14-17th centuries), provides their etymological, nominational, word-formative and stratigraphic analysis. These toponyms are derived mostly from geographical terms, or, less often, from hydronyms and names of man-made objects. Such naming tendency had been persistently growing from the 14th till the 16th centuries, but reduced in the 17th century. The main area where plural oikonyms are found is the land of Novgorod and Pskov.*

*Keywords:* Old Russian language, Russian chronicles, plural place-names, etymology, common noun, hydronym.

*DOI:* 10.17516/1997-1370-2016-9-10-2436-2441.

*Research area:* Russian and Slavic studies.

In the *pluralia tantum* toponyms, the etymological singular form of its motivating common noun or proprium is replaced by a plural form, functioning as a new topographical formant.

According to some scholars, the origin of this toponym type is determined to some language mentality features: for example, A. V. Superanskaya [1973: 121-122] interprets it as “destruction of common subject-verbal associations and transition of a word to another lexical field, changing its connotative correlation and creating a discrepancy between the name’s linguistic form and its actual contents”. However,

most researchers believe the plural form of such names to be based on extralinguistic phenomena: thus, A. M. Selishchev [1968: 70] points out that “the plural form is determined by the populated area’s significance a collective”. V. Shperber [1962: 467] connects the form of *pluralia tantum* with a stronger marking of the topographical meaning in such names. *Pluralia tantum* toponyms are known to exist in all Slavonic languages, e.g. Polish *Góry*, *Odry*, Czech *Hory*, *Vrchy*, etc.

This article deals with *pluralia tantum* place-names mentioned in the Old Russian chronicles of the middle and late periods of Russian language

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history (the 14-17<sup>th</sup> centuries). The etymological analysis of some examples is shown below.

**BOLKI:** “i sedě v Bolkakh [and settled in Bolki]”, Pskov Third chronicle [PSRL: IV 191] 1472, the land of Pskov. From the toponymical stem **bolk-** < 1) cf. Prussian {\*balk-}: *Balkombrastum*, 1326; Lithuanian *Bálkis*; *Balkaičių km.*, *Balkūnų km.*; Lettish *Bakas*, *Baki*, *Bak-pļavas*, *Balkupe*, *Balke*; *Bakūnas*, *Bàlkāni*, and others (the extension of the root meaning ‘white’) [Toporov 1975: 186]; 2) Proto Slavonic \**bulk-*, cf. Polish *belk*, *belch* ‘slime, silt, dirt; a deep place in a reservoir, whirlpool’ (A. Brückner, F. Sławski) [Nitsche 1964: 72, 165]. It is also possible to explain it as a tribal toponym originated from a personal name \**Bolkū*, cf. Old Russian *Andrey Bolkovū*, Astrakhan, 1654 [Tupikov 2004: 483] < cf. Russian dial. *bolkat'* ‘chatter, say something stupid’ [Dal' 1994: I 110].

**DREGLI:** “vǔ Dreglekhǔ pogostǔ [a pogost in Dregli]”, Ioasafian, Nikonian, and other chronicles [IoL 1957: 111, PSRL: XII 183, and others] 1478, the land of Novgorod, the pyatina of Obonezhye [AIS-ZP XVII 1974: 136]. From the river name *Dreglya*, the left tributary of the Syas’: Proto Slavonic \**dreg-* (cf. Russian dial. (Smolensk, Kaluga) *dregva* ‘swamp’, Byelorussian *dregva* ‘swampy place’, also Old Russian *dregovichī*, the ethnical name [Fasmer 1996: I 536, 545]) + the suffix \*-*ь(ъ)?l'a*.

**KEKTY:** “byashe ot predel Dvinskiya oblasti, vesi glagolemaya Kekty [was from the region of the Dvina, from the village named Kekty]”, Mazurin chronicle [PSRL: XXXI 135] 1557, the region of the (North) Dvina. From the river name *Kęgta* (*Velikaya*), approximately 1471-76 [ASVR 1964: III 16] (with the voicelessness assimilation), coming from Lappish (Kildin) *kīGk*, (Yokanga) *kīGk*, (Kotozero) *kiekk*, (Norwegian) *giekkâ* ‘cuckoo’ [Matveyev 2001: I 94] + the Finno-Ugric noun and adjective suffix *-t-*.

### KOLOMTSY

(**KOLMOVO**, **KOLMITSA**): “na Kolomtsakh(ü) [in Kolomtsy]”, Novgorod chronicles [PSRL: III 93, 130, 223, 47] 1310 and later; «vshelǔ... na Kolmovo [came... to Kolmovo]», Sofian First chronicle (later edition) [Ibid: VI 342, 398] 1324; “vǔ monastyr’ na Kolmitsyu [to the monastery in Kolmitsa]” [Ibid: 347, 404] 1330, and others, the land of Novgorod, near Veliky Novgorod. From the unattested Old Russian \**kolomitsi*, cf. *kolomishche* ‘a place of graves’, 1534 (Sreznevsky) < Finnish *kalma* ‘grave’. The connection of this name with *kalma* is noted by A.I. Popov [1948: 108-109], who considers **Kolmovo** and **Kolomtsy** to be the names of two different places located approximately 2-3 km away from each other, but the fact that both were simultaneously meant in different chronicles and the quotation below prove that they referred to the same object. Both **Kolmovo** and **Kolomtsy** are secondary forms, which is testified by the chronology of their mentionings; cf. also (concerning **Kolmovo**) the direct indication in the Third Novgorod chronicle (1310): “druguyu tserkov’ kamennu postavi na Kolomtsakh arkhimandritū Kirilū Georgieva monastyr’... poslēdi zhe Kolmovo imenovasya [the archimandrite of St.-George’s monastery Cyril built the second stone church in Kolomtsy... later named Kolmovo]”.

### KRUTITSY (KRUTITSA)

“s Krutits(ü, ī) [from Krutitsy]”, Printing-house and other chronicles [PSRL: XXIV 211 and others] 1493; «na Krutitsu [to Krutitsa]”, The Code of chronicles of 1518 [Ibid: XXVIII 324] 1493 and later, the land of Novgorod. From the unattested Old Russian \**krutitsa*, the feminine form of *krutets* ‘steep bank’ [SIRYa XI-XVII vv. 1975-: 8, 88], cf. Russian place-names **Krutitsa** in the former provinces of Kaluga, Kostroma and Smolensk [SNMRI Kal. 1863: 194, SNMRI Kostr. 1877: 431, SNMRI Smol. 1868: 465].

**KYUNI:** “da derevnyu Kyuni [and the village of Kyuni (Acc.)]”, First and Third Pskov chronicles [PSRL: IV 247, 316] 1564-65, the land of Pskov. From the hydronymical stem of the Baltic Finnish origin, represented in the hydronyms of *Kyuna-ruchey*, *Kyuno* [Resursy... 1965: 2 119, 128, 396] < cf. Estonian *küuna* ‘trough’ [Tamm 1949: 208] (as a topographical term, cf. Russian dial. *korytina* ‘hollow; valley or gulf with gently sloping banks’ [Dal’ 1994: II 438]).

**MAZARY:** “v Mazarekh [in Mazary]”, Lvov and Lebedev chronicles [PSRL: XX 553, XXIX 232] 1554, the left bank of the Volga (later a village in the district of Kazan [SNMRI Kaz. 1866: 216]). From the Tatar *mazar* ‘grave, tomb; cemetery’ [T-RS 1966: 357].

**MOLODI:** “O prichode tsareve na Molodi... na Molodyakh [About the tsar’s arrival to Molodi... in Molodi (Loc.)]”, Piskarev chronicle [PSRL: XXXIV 192] / “vǔ Moloděkhǔ [in Molodi (Loc.)]”, Second Novgorod chronicle [Ibid: III 173] 1572 (to the South of Podolsk, on the Rozhayka river; later, A village in the province of Moscow, Podolsk District [SNMRI Mosk. 1862: 247]). From the hydronymical stem *molod-*, cf. more than 20 river names in the Oka basin (the *Molodenka*, *Molodka*, *Molodnya*, *Molodil’nya*, and others [see Smolitskaya 1976: 351-352], Polish *Młodnica*, *Młodzawy*, *Młodyniew*, Serbian *Mladine*, *Младошов* in Greece < Proto Slavonic \**mold-* ‘something fluid, humid’ [Rospond 1969: 185] or with the etymological meaning ‘young river’, cf. *Una*, the river in the North Dvina basin (Old Russian *uniy* ‘young’), and related hydronyms.

**NYACHARI:** “v Nyacharyakh [in Nyachari]”, Chronicle of the Dvina (The Concise edition) 1637, 1 km from Arkhangelsk, on the Arkhangelsk bank of the North Dvina. From the compound stem of Baltic Finnish origin: cf. Finnish *nätsä* ‘grass *Stellaria arvensis*’, from which Russian dial. *nyacha* ‘id.’ [Fasmer 1996:

III 95] (cf. *Nyacheva* (*Nyachevo*), the lake in the Pechora basin [Resursy... 1965: 3 455]); the second part of the stem may come both from Baltic Finnish *järvi*, *järv* ‘lake’ (cf. the stem *nyach-* in the lake name mentioned above) or from Karelian *aro* ‘lawn; meadow in a humid place; open grassy swamp; damp hollow in the middle of a pine forest; shallow river bay overgrown with grass’, Finnish *aro* ‘dry steppe; desert; plain’ and related words [see Mamontova, Mullonen 1991: 22; Murzayev 1984: 56].

**OPOKY**, Sofian First chronicle [PSRL: VI 442, 519] and others, 1398, the land of Tver’, near Rzhev, on the left bank of the Volga [Kuchkin 1984: 196]. From Old Russian *opoka* ‘chalk limestone, alabaster’ [SIRYa XI-XVII vv. 1975-: 13, 28].

**RUTKI (RUTNY):** “po Rutkamǔ [along Rutki]”, Nikonian, Lvov chronicles [PSRL: XIII 239, XX 552] / “otpushchali... v Rutny [used to let [them] go (pl)... to Rutny]”, Lebedev chronicle [Ibid: XXIX 234] 1554, the left bank of the Volga (cf. *Rutka*, the village in the former province of Kazan, Kosmodemyansk district [SNMRI Kaz. 1866: 223]). From the river name of *Rutka*, the left tributary of the Volga [Semenov 1863-1885: IV 352], etymologically connected with Ukrainian *rutka* ‘pit filled with water’ (cf. in the description of this river: “the bottom is sandy and pity” [Ibid: 353], dial. ‘lowland’, Russian dial. (Kursk) *rutka* ‘well’, and others [Zheleznyak 1981: 126-138].

In the nomina-tional aspect, the most numerous are the names derived from geographical terms (15: *Gorki*, *Yeliny*, *Kliny*, *Kolomtsy*, *Krutitsy*, *Kyuni*, *Luzhki*, *Novinki*, *Nyachari*, *Opoky*, *Ostrovtsy*, *Peski*, *Pechory*, *Pochinki*, *Prudki*); less frequently, they originate from hydronyms (10: *Besedy*, *Vishenki*, *Dregli*, *Kamenki*, *Kekty*, *Molodi*, *Rutki*, *Snovy*, *Terki*, *Yamny*) and common nouns denoting man-made objects (7: *Vezhishchi*, *Veshki*, *Kresttsy*, *Mazary*, *Mostishchi*, *Selishchi*,

*Sud'bishchi*). The motivation of three place names (*Bolki*, *Turny*, *Chirski*) is not quite clear.

As for the word-formative structure of their motivating stems, the prevailing suffixes are \*-*bk*-/\*-*bk*- (*Veshki*, *Vishenki*, *Gorki*, *Kamenki*, *Luzhki*, *Novinki*, *Peski*, *Pechki*, *Pochinki*, *Prudki*, *Rutki*), \*-*bc*- (*Kolomtsy*, *Kresttsy*, *Ostrovtsy*), \*-*išče* (*Vezhishchi*, *Mostishchi*, *Selishchi*, *Sud'bishchi*), and \*-*bn*- (*Turny*, *Yamny*).

Stratification of the place-names demonstrates that the naming tendency of this

type had been gradually growing from the 14<sup>th</sup> (5) till the 16<sup>th</sup> (9) century, but in the 17<sup>th</sup> century it reduced (6). The main area of the plural oikonyms is the land of Novgorod and Pskov: a half of all plural names (including all toponyms known since the 14<sup>th</sup> and the 15<sup>th</sup> centuries, besides *Opoky*) are concentrated there.

The share of the *pluralia tantum* toponyms in the total number of the chronicle place names of this period is about 5%.

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# Древнерусские летописные оïконимы XIV-XVII вв. в форме pluralia tantum

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*В статье рассматриваются оïконимы в форме pluralia tantum, упомянутые в русских летописях в период с XIV по XVII вв. включительно. Проводится их этимологический анализ, дается характеристика с точки зрения закономерностей номинации, словообразовательной структуры и стратиграфии. Оïконимы образуются преимущественно от географических терминов, а также от гидронимов и наименований рукотворных объектов. Активность этого типа неуклонно возрастала до XVII в., когда произошел ее резкий спад. Преобладающий ареал pluralных названий – Новгородско-Псковская земля.*

*Ключевые слова:* древнерусский язык, древнерусские летописи, оïконим pluralia tantum, этимология, апеллятив, гидроним.

*Научная специальность:* 24.00.00 – культурология.

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