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²⁰See Note 2, Holmberg (Harva).

²¹See Note 19, Yelabuzhsky.

²²See Note 1, Holmberg (Harva).

²³See Note 12, Bekhterev; Note 2, Potanin; Note 5, Vereshchagin; Note 18, Gavrilov; Note 2, Holmberg (Harva).

²⁴See Note 1, Holmberg (Harva).

²⁵See Note 2, Potanin.

THE HISTORY AND SEMANTICS OF SOME TYPOLOGICALLY CONNECTED FINNO-UGRIC THEONYMS

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Paganism and world religions (Christainity, Islam, Buddhism, etc.) did not appear in the world in their complete form like Minerva from Jupiter's head – they are the result of a long development, whereas 'the of religious ideas did not develop by replacing each other completely, but new features were added to the remaining old ones'.¹ The roots of paganism reach back beyond millenia, and yet it managed somehow to survive until late 19th century.

A monotheistic pantheon is an unknown phenomenon to heathen peoples. The heathen pantheon essentially represents the whole mosaic of tribal pantheons. Even in one ethno-linguistic family, e.g. the Finno-Ugric one, each ethnic group has its own set of gods. Let us name the higher deities: the Komi God of light and kindness is *Yen*, and the God of darkness and evil *Omel*; for Mordvinians, accordingly, *Vardya-Shkai* (or *Cham-Pas*) and *Shaitan*, for Mari *Yumo* and *Keremet*, for Khanty and Mansi *Numi-Torum* and *Kul*.² As a matter of fact, the Mari cosmogony is the most complete of them. Rychkov wrote in 1770 that among the Gods worshipped by the Maris the first place is occupied by Yumo, a god living in heavens; and he was the one who created heaven and

earth and everything that their eyes can see.³

What is the reason for every tribe having its local gods? The tribal seclusion was considerable under these circumstances, and therefore the orally transmitted ideology and tribal mythology were carefully preserved. This seclusion of primitive societies was the main obstacle to cultural borrowings.⁴

Probably R. Barton was right when he stated that folklore and its migratory plots were borrowed only together with 'blood streams'.⁵ The religious ideology of the primeval man was probably transmitted so that, when for whatever reasons groups of people from one tribe joined another tribe, they merged with it, adopted its customs, but at the same time brought along their own beliefs and ideas into the culture of the tribe accepting it.

One can observe similar mergers and confusions of different tribal religions in the visible historical past. But here is one important peculiarity. For example, there are no Scandinavian and Germanic deities in Slavonic mythology and folklore, but the influence of Iranian mythology as it was in the 1st millennium BC is present: it is known that *Dazhbog*, *Hors* and *Simargl* (and the word *bog* 'God') are of Iranian origin. Ancient Turks and Finno-Ugric peoples which are long-time neighbours in the Middle-Volga region, have common deities, but the eastern Slavs do not, – their ancestors settled long since at the Volga with a well-formed heathen pantheon. That is why old Russian heathens did not need any deities, either Finno-Ugric or Turkic.

And yet the old pagan views have certain similar traits: they know the dead cult, and accordingly, a peculiar way of associating some lower deities (or spirits) with the souls of the dead. The latter were considered to be members of the tribe even after their death.

The ancient heathen world teemed with spirits, and the oldest of them are the spirits of places where man lives – yard, house, grove, river, etc. A special place belongs to hearth guardian spirits. In the heathen theology of the ancient Finno-Ugrians and Slavonians the functions of these spirits have definite typological similarities. It should be noted that home spirits are much older than such personified deities as the Mari Yumo or Ob-Ugric Numi-Torum. The pagan ideas of deities developed gradually from the worship of natural phenomena to the anthropomorphic polytheism,⁶ whereas the germs of anthropomorphic ideas were present as early as in the first stage of pagan beliefs.

It is interesting to note that the Tatar *butysh*, the Mari *vodyzh* (with its variants *vadz*, *vadash*, *vodosh*), and the Chuvash *vutăsh* (*votăsh*) are the designations of the lowest deity, a spirit, a guardian of natural objects.⁷ For example, the Mari *kudo vodyzh* is the house spirit and also the wisp of branches in the front corner of the house (*kudo*), *yakter vodyzh* is the spirit of a pine grove;⁸ *vūd vodyzh* means the water spirit, *mlande vodyzh* the guardian of earth,⁹ *korny*

vodyzh the guardian spirit of roads;¹⁰ *yer vodyzh* the spirit of lake.¹¹

The term *vadash* itself has caused contradictory opinions and different interpretations among investigators. The oldest etymology belongs to S. Nurminsky: in his understanding, Mari *vadysh* is the derivative from the verb *vadyshem*, which means 'I bark a birch'.¹² The author connects it with the ancient Mari birch worship, and *vadysh* is the personification of the birch.¹³ However, according to many modern investigators (especially specialists in Turkic philology), the Mari *vadyzh* (*vodyzh*) is not primordial formation and represents the ancient Chuvash (Bolgadic) penetration.¹⁴ R. Ahmetianov made an attempt to clarify the origin of meanings of the Chuvash *votăsh* and the Mari *vadyzh* (*vodazh*). Remaining on the position of their Turkish interpretation and originating from phonetic conformities of remounting of Turkic proto-basis in the Chuvash-Mari area, he supposes that the most ancient of all known variants is *Votash* (*vatash*) which represents the derivative from the Common Turkic *otash*, *utash* or *ötăsh*, *ütăsh*. So, restoring the archetype in this way, R. G. Ahmetianov brings it together with the Tatar (Mishar) anthroponym *Utash* (abb. from *Utagan*), derived from the ancient Turkish *Ötüken* – the deity personifying nature, nature spirit. *Ötüken* in its turn goes back to *Kängä* (*Kängäi*), which means *Hangai*.¹⁵ According to Ramstedt's explanation, *Hangai* is the Tatar *kangyi* – a fancy land, and the Kalmyk *altä xanga* – 'Altai and Hangai'.¹⁶ These toponyms in Turkish-Mongolian languages are used in the meaning of 'primordial fatherland'. But this etymology of considering the theonym is unconvincing and has no proof. In his opinion this mythological creature originates in the Mari mythology, the Chuvashian variant being a (secondary?) borrowing from the Mari language and the Tatar variant from the Chuvash language.¹⁷

Perhaps Gordeev's interpretation is the most justified one for the Mari *vadyzh*, though it is not brought to logical completion. Resting upon etymological and historical data of the Turkic languages and having considered critically etymological interpretations of his predecessors, he calls the supposition about the Chuvash (Bolgadic) origin of the Chuvash *vutăsh* and the Mari *vadash*. Most probably, both terms in the Mari language are Indo-Iranian or Iranian heritage in the Finno-Ugric lingual community, and it penetrated into the Chuvash language from the Mari source.¹⁸

As we see, in the Finno-Ugric studies, as earlier, the etymology of the ancient heathen term-theonym *vadash* is still open: all Turkic hypotheses of its interpretation turn out very doubtful, there are no convincing etymologies resting upon the primordial Finno-Ugric material. So one should not search the sources of the parent word *vadash* in the ancient Turkic toponym *kängä* or in the modern Mari verb *vadyshem*: perhaps, *vadash* as a lexeme was borrowed into the Finno-Ugric from the Indo-Iranians, and in the ancient Mari language

it appeared simultaneously with the ethnonym Mari (compare ancient Indian *marya* – ‘young man’, ‘young hero’), which became at first the name of the Volga-side Finno-Ugric tribe, then transferred to the whole ancient Mari ethnos.

The sources of the ancient Mari lexeme *vadash* go back to Indo-European parent root **uā* (*ue*) with the general meaning ‘inspiration, omnihelping’. The mentioned parent root, in its turn, is connected with the Indo-European **uāi* – ‘the condition of exhilaration, ecstasy, inspiration’, and **uer-* ‘to defend, to save’.¹⁹ So, Old Indian *apivat* ‘to inspire’ and Avestan *apivataite* ‘inspires’ go back to Indo-European **uāi*-. Compare the later English *wēdan* and German *wuoten* (*wūten*) in the meaning of ‘to behave violently, to be possessed by’. In its turn, this ancient Germanic verb is connected with heathen theonym – the name of the ancient Germanic god of poetic inspiration Odin-Wotan: the ancient-Icelandic *Odinn*, ancient English *Wōden*, ancient Germanic *Wuotan*.²⁰ The ancient Mari theonym *vadash*, which is in definite relationship with the ancient German theonym *Wōden*, stands side by side with all these derivatives from Indo-European **uāi*-.

One can notice the establishment of a stable genetic connection of this ancient Mari theonym with the Indo-European parent root **uer-* (with vowel alteration between *e* and *o* in the derivative lexemes). The Hittite *uarrai* ‘to save, to come to the aid’²¹ and Ancient Indian *vṛṇoti* ‘detains’, and *varūār* ‘defender’ and *varūtha* ‘defence’ are connected with Indo-European **uer-*. It is interesting to note that the theonym Varuṇa, as the name of the oldest deity of the Vedic pantheon, is in the etymological plan directly connected with the mentioned ancient Indian lexemes.²² In the Rigveda Varuṇa is in dualist opposition with Mitra, who is an embodiment of light (sun and sunlight). Varuṇa is the embodiment of darkness (moonlight and ocean or the element of water). Therefore, a vow on Varuṇa’s water symbolises the water of death, and wind in Vedic mythology is Varuṇa’s breath.²³ But Varuṇa means, above all, god-keeper and god-healer. There are functional connections between Varuṇa and the ancient German Wotan (*Wōden*). Is the community of the heathen pantheon of ancient people, which was formed long before Christianity emerged, reflected with the variety of deity names or not? But as far as the mosaic of tribal heathen pantheons (mentioned by modern investigators) is concerned, it was formed much later.

So, the modern Mari theonym *vadazh* (Finno-Ugric *vadash*) is genetically connected with the Indo-European parent root **uā* (*ue*)-, combining the qualities of a soothsayer (guard) and a power or strength.²⁴ In Rigveda both Varuna and Mitra are called *citrāvāja* ‘possessor of extraordinary strength’ and *mathivāja* ‘possessor of destructive strength’. In the Mari heathen mythology strength is possessed not only by Yumo, but also by the hearth guardian *kudo*

vadyzh.

A long-standing co-existence of the Turkic and Finno-Ugric tribes in the Volga region promoted the emergence of the house spirits *pört (surt) iya* and *pört (surt) oza* that are synonymous with the Mari *vadazh*, but who were never addressed in pagan prayers.²⁵ These names are derived from Tatar *eija* and Chuvash *huza* respectively.

It is characteristic of ancient deities that they are both good and evil at the same time. Here an exception is *kudo vadyzh* who is always a good spirit, but punishes severely those who do not revere him. The Mari *iya* and Udmurt *ieye* were demonised and developed into evil disease spirits, synonymous with the Arabic *Shaitan*.²⁶

The proto-Slavonic **ubog (ubag)* is typologically connected with the proto-Finno-Ugric theonym *vadash*: both carry out the same theological functions by the ancient heathens. For example, we can find evidence about it in the *Lithuanian Mythology* by Jan Lasicky (XVIII c.). There is a reference to 'kauksh or souls of the dead, whom the Russians called ubozhe' (*kauke sunt lemures, quod Russi uboze appellant*).²⁷ Heathen Slavs left food for this *ubog* as a member of family on Thursday nights and did not wash pans on Good Fridays in order to feed the souls of ancestors who were embodied in this home demon.²⁸ The ancient Mari also used to coax the spirits with the help of feeding; and here the worship of *vodysh* and ancestors are the similar, and therefore their cults are also very similar – the *vodysh*, like the deceased, were also said to need food and things that they are used to having.²⁹

In the Middle Volga region old beliefs and customs were persecuted by both Islam and Christianity. As a result, the heathen mythology was integrated into Christianity and Islam and the once gods transformed into frightful vampires and demons, whereas people who worshipped them were accused of witchcraft and the customs were labelled demonic. Christian accusations in the pagan *ubog* worship can be found, for example, in *Kazania*, an anonymous 15-century Polish manuscript, and in *Postepok prawa chartowskiego przeciw narodowi ludskiemu*, a treatise of a Polish author. The latter text says: *Brides leave some food (for the ubog) on Thursday nights and it is not known who eat of it*.³⁰ Pagan Maris also tried to appease their demonised hearth guardian spirit with food offerings.³¹

Ubog, the pagan Slavonic hearth guardian spirit, was for the Poles and Russians also the tutelary spirit of the ancestors of the family.³² Ancient Slavonians used to worship snakes as tribal ancestors. Those were said to live under the doorstep or behind the oven.³³ Snake came to be one of the principal personifications of the pagan Slavonians' guardian spirit and the souls of the ancestors, but primarily that of the hearth guardian spirit *ubog*.

The presence of the house snake cult is revealed by several archaeological and ethnographic finds from the Slavic area.³⁴ Some relics of this cult have survived in the folk tradition and art up to this day.³⁵ Naturally, the cult of the house snake is very common in other cultures as well.³⁶

The proto-Slavonic word *ubog* is formed with the help of a prefix. The element *u-* in this word does not have the meaning of negation, as does, for example *ne-* in the word *neboga*, and fulfils the functions of prefixes *ot-*, *pri-*, *bliz-*, *vozle-*, *okolo-*,³⁷ and the root *bog* is etymologically connected with the Ancient Indian *bhájati*, *bhájate* ('provides', 'devides'), with Avestan *bazhaiti* ('assigns a share') and with the Ancient Indian *bhagas* ('the bearer of blessings', 'God').³⁸ That is why the original meaning of the theonym *ubog* must be 'a person who is near the other person', 'providing with blessings' or 'a person who is near the bearer of blessings', (Indo-European) 'near the God'.

The proto-Slavonic *ubog* did not preserve in its original form in the Slavic folklore, but individual phraseological units, among which there is the proverb *Ná tebe, bozhe, chto nam ne gozhe*, inform us about its previous existence. It is recognised that *bozhe* is a late substitution which appeared as the result of the quibbling-rhythmical processing of the ancient Russian expression *Ná tebe, ubozhe, chto nam ne gozhe*, where *ubozhe* is the vocative case of *ubog* – 'beggar', 'poor man', 'cripple'.³⁹ The essence of the phrase becomes more clear from it: one gives the beggar things which the giver does not need. The lexemes *nebog* and *oubog* in the meaning of 'poor', 'pitiful', 'unhappy' are testified in the proto-Slavonic and ancient Bulgarian languages, too⁴⁰ and go back to proto-Slavonic *nebag* and *ubag* in the same meanings.⁴¹

But here, we collide with the proto-Slavonic *ubog* (*ubag*) already considered. The benevolent home-demon *ubog* as a keeper of home hearth (and a keeper of fire, in the first place) was an object of religious worship of all members of the ancient Slavonic family, the symbol of its honour and totem, and therefore also an object of constant attention and care. So, it may be assumed that proto-Slavs had an invocation, which in the late period of their history represented an expression of such kind: *Ná tobe, ubozhe, a to nam ne est gozhe*, where *ne est gozhe* means 'it is not good to behave in this way'. But having been thrown down with other heathen deities from the heathen Olympus, the ancient Slavonic *ubog*, at the time of Christianity, became the symbol of malicious and evil spirits. Only the name remained from his glory, which, sticking to tradition, people preserved in their memory for a long time.⁴² The inexorable time drove away from the people's memories the ancient invocation addressed *ubog*, it may be assumed that even in those bygone days it turned into the expression *Na tebe, ubozhe, chto nam ne gozhe*, where *ubozhe* began to designate a beggar; and then on the ground of the Russian language it was distorted

into *Na tebe, bozhe, chto nam (mne) ne gozhe*.⁴³

The analysis of the Old Mari *vadash* and the proto-Slavic *ubog* shows that regardless of some dissimilarities they have had similar functional characteristics. The common traits result from the development of pagan beliefs and pagan demonology, differences are due to ethnic peculiarities.

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THE SHEPHERD TURNS INTO A VANISHING HITCHHIKER

Recording Folk Beliefs Will Save The Changing World Views Into The Future

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Some ten years ago I was listening to the general discussion after a lecture at the Folklore club in Stockholm. A famous professor of anthropology told us that folk beliefs were dying and so were the memorates because no young people were having any supernatural experiences.

Now I know better. At the time I thought that perhaps there would be fairly few people in Stockholm and Uppsala with such experiences, but every semester a few of my students considered that they had been exposed to supernatural experiences. For ten years I used to teach folklore studies at the University of Umeå, on the Northwest coast of the Baltic. As I was living in Uppsala, and had to make the journey up to Umeå, I never had the opportunity to collect any interviews myself from this northern part of Sweden. Outside the towns there are still large forests with scattered farms and villages. Most people have cars and television sets and are very dependent upon them. However, there is still time and space for many things only talked about in private, and not explained rationally. I learned from the students that everything in the books could still be met with out there.

During the week before this discussion had been lecturing on Lauri Honko's 'Folk Beliefs and Memorates',¹ when the girls in the group started giggling for no obvious reason. So I waited until quite a composed girl explained: *I have had a supernatural experience and I feel so exposed by his analysis.*

She was twenty-two, I could not ask her to tell me in front of the whole