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Calling people gods: Theonyms as bynames in medieval Finland and Karelia

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Calling people gods: Theonyms as bynames in medieval Finland and Karelia

Abstract: This paper explores the use of theonyms as personal names in medieval and post-medieval Finland and Karelia. The long-term continuity of the naming practice is discussed in terms local ideologies competing with the Church-authorized stance toward vernacular gods as "pagan".

Keywords: Theonyms, bynames, supernatural agency, ontologies.

Lorsqu'une personne est adressée par le nom d'un dieu : Théonymes en fonction de surnoms dans la Finlande et la Carélie médiévales

Résumé : Cet article examine l'utilisation des théonymes en tant que noms personnels en Finlande et en Carélie médiévales et postmédiévales. La continuité à long terme de cette pratique de dénomination est discutée à partir d'idéologies locales

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qui entrent en concurrence avec l'attitude autorisée de l'Église envers les dieux communs comme « païens ».

Mots-clés : Théonymes, surnoms, agence surnaturelle, ontologies.

Menschen als Götter anzusprechen: Theonyme als Beinamen im mittelalterlichen Finnland und Karelien

Zusammenfassung: In diesem Beitrag wird die Verwendung von Theonymen als Beinamen im mittelalterlichen und nachmittelalterlichen Finnland und Karelien untersucht. Die langfristige Kontinuität der Benennungspraxis wird im Hinblick auf lokale Ideologien diskutiert, die mit der von der Kirche autorisierten Haltung gegenüber den landläufigen Göttern als „heidnisch" konkurrieren.

Schlüsselbegriffe: Theonyme, Beinamen, übernatürliche Kraft, Ontologien.

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Calling people gods: Theonyms as bynames in medieval Finland and Karelia

Frog

1. Introduction

In Finland today, the widespread use of mythological names as personal names is a recent development, reflecting the reception of Elias Lönnrot's *Kalevala* (1835; 1849) as a national epic conjoined with a movement to develop a repertoire of distinctively Finnish names (Vilkuna 2005; Ainiala et al. 2016: 163–166). However, theonyms of kalevalaic mythology are also used to refer to people in the Middle Ages and following centuries. This article explores evidence of this naming practice in Christianized milieux in relation to vernacular ideologies linked both to identities and to the vernacular category commonly translated 'god'.

Mythologies are often conceived through an *a priori* identification with a religion or ethno-cultural heritage, distinguishing them as static, ideal, and exclusive. Here, mythology is approached through *mythic discourse* – i.e. the engagement, use, communication, and manipulation of mythology by people in society (Urban 1991; Siikala 2002). This brings into focus mythologies' synchronic interaction and variation as well as historical change, breaking down intuitions of exclusivity. Mythology becomes reconceived in terms of systems of mythic signs – i.e. signs that are emotionally invested by groups in society as models for understanding the world and how things work in it. Rather than isolating these signs by culture or religion, the full range of mythic signs available in a particular milieu (of whatever scope) can be described as a *symbolic matrix*; people then engage with the signs constituting the matrix from different social and religious alignments, which affect their evaluations and interpretations of the respective mythic signs and how people engage with them (in detail, see Frog 2015). An approach that accommodates signs linked to both Christian and vernacular religions and potentially complex ways people may interact with them is crucial when approaching names of non-Christian gods used for people considered Christians.

Just as *language ideology* describes understandings of language varieties, their differentiation, relationships to social categories, and associated evaluations (Kroskrity 2001), *symbolic matrix ideology* (SMI) describes the corresponding understandings and evaluations linked to mythic signs in a

matrix. For example, the Church-authorized Christian SMI polarizes contrasts between mythic signs identified as Christian and those associated with other religious identities as "pagan" (cf. Gal & Irvine 2019). Similarly, several Uralic-speaking cultures call the sky-god's antithesis by a name borrowed from another culture's central god (Ajkhenvald et al. 1989: 157), which points to an inherited SMI that structured ethnic or cultural contrasts into the use of theonyms. Particularly in contexts of religious contacts or change, it is important to distinguish the theonym from the image of the god as a mythic sign. For instance, Christians could identify a vernacular theonym with the Christian image DEVIL (using small capitals for mythic signs as distinct from names in italic), while Uralic speakers presumably did not borrow another groups' image of a god when adopting a foreign theonym for their sky-god's antithesis. Conversely, an SMI may also assimilate gods and so on in cultural encounters, as was common during the spread of Christianity. The Church struggled to impose its ideology of exclusion on competing local SMIs that might simply extend the local mythology to include Christian gods or otherwise maintain local gods alongside Christian practices. This struggle could be won because the Church's sophisticated administrative apparatus was oriented to regulating and, ideally, eradicating local variation, providing an instrument for maintaining a unified religion. The processes are nevertheless not about the gods themselves; sets and systems of mythic signs are linked to a social identity or identities within an SMI, and people's stance-taking, positioning themselves relative to these identities, becomes reflected in the engagements with mythic signs. Theonyms can provide evidence of such stance-taking through indicators of whether certain gods are seen as aligned with or opposed to a community and social order.

The present study examines two groups of theonyms in uses for living people in pre-modern Finland and Karelia: *Ilmarinen*, *Väinämöinen*, and *Joukahainen*, and *Lemminkäinen*, *Kaukomieli/Kaukomoinen*, and *Ahti*. That such gods were polarized in the Church-authorized SMI is reflected in the versified lists of pagan gods presented in Bishop Mikael Agricola's translation of the *Psalter* (1551),[1] where gods from both groups are named. Non-Christian theonyms are found as settlement names, so usage as bynames could refer to a settlement and only incidentally to a "pagan" god. Whereas the Church-authorized SMI presents these gods as opposed to the Christian community, individuals shown to have non-Christian theonyms as names or epithets would reflect a positive alignment with the gods, indicating competing SMIs.

This study is prefaced by information on historical contexts of naming practices and on the Christianisation of Finland and Karelia. It then surveys evidence for each name to assess whether usage in the medieval and post-

[1] Agricola was consecrated Bishop of Turku in 1554.

medieval environment can be directly connected with non-Christian gods. The evidence's implications for contemporary ideologies are then discussed. These naming practices are then considered in relation to evidence from the nineteenth and early twentieth century showing that a person could be referred to as a *jumala* 'god' and could have a byname meaning 'god of a certain place'.

The primary sources for early personal names in Finland and Karelia are diverse and scattered. The majority of the data for the current study has been gathered from research literature on onomastics, history, and folklore, tracing examples to original sources where relevant and possible, with additional data from published medieval and later sources. Individual sources have been approached through techniques of close reading, philology, folklore studies, and mythic-discourse analysis.

2. Christianisation processes and naming practices

Christianity spread through territories that are today Finland and Karelia centrally in connection with the extension of the political and economic authority of emerging states. Finnic speakers' first encounters with Christianity were around the beginning of the Viking Age (ca. 800–1050 AD). The Swedish kingdom's expansion to coastal Finland began in the eleventh century. This was accompanied by the immigration of Swedish-speaking Christians to coastal areas, requiring the imposition of religious authority in political expansion (i.e. to be inhabitable by Swedish Christians). In the east, Karelians became aligned with Novgorod, which seems initially to have mainly concerned political and economic rather than religious interests. In the rapid movement toward state formation, a political border was cut through these territories, which divided them not only between two emerging states but also between the western and eastern Churches (see Ahola & Frog 2014 and works there cited).

These developments had transformative impacts on the naming systems on both sides of the border. In western areas, the transition to Swedish Christian personal names appears to have been rapid and names based on the earlier naming system seem to fall out of use. Inherited family names gradually spread among the elite, but people were generally identified by a personal name that would be followed in records by a patronymic (formed with the diminutive *-nen* or genitive + *poika* 'lad, son') or a settlement name (i.e. of a house, farm or village), or sometimes with an occupation (e.g. *seppä* 'smith') (Ainiala et al. 2016: 159–161). Russian Christian names took over the naming system from the east, although not as pervasively (see also Kepsu 2018: 32). Second names are common in the sources for administrative reasons. The establishment of inherited names began during the medieval period in the more

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southerly and central regions of Finland and Karelia whereas among much of the peasantry in the western areas it began on a widespread basis mainly in the nineteenth century (e.g. Ainiala et al. 2016: 167; Mikkonen 2013).

The broad east–west divide in naming practices roughly correlates with other patterns of difference in dialect, material culture, and folklore. Aspects of this divide appear rooted already in the spread of what became the Finnish and Karelian languages, although it seems to have been centrally structured by natural geography, which affected where different types of agriculture and ways of life were practiced (Sarmela 2009: 33–34; see also Mikkonen & Paikkala 2000: 17). Consequently, naming practices in regions of Finland such as Savo, addressed below, belong to the eastern side of the divide while belonging politically and religiously to the western side; diversity is apparent on both sides and should not be underestimated, especially in more remote regions (Kepsu 2018: 31–33).

Several of the examples of mythological names may appear quite "late" relative to the initial spread of Christianity through Europe. Finns and Karelians were linguistic and cultural minorities within Sweden and Novgorod (and later Russia), and both political and religious administration were initially in non-Finnic languages. Vernacular writing in Finnish was only established in the west through the Reformation (which reached Finland in 1521–1523). That Finnish and Karelian were outside the languages and cultures of political and religious authority impeded significant religious change, especially where populations were more remote from centres of administration. In this regard, two factors warrant note. First, medieval conversion processes focused on public social behaviour and self-identification as Christian. The apparent rapidity of changes in the Finnish and Karelian naming systems may thus have had more to do with administration in non-Finnic languages than a rapid exchange of one religion for another. Second, Christian authorities never denied the *existence* of non-Christian gods; they focused instead on their inferiority to the power of Christianity and sought to redefine them as "pagan" and opposed to the (Christian) community. Agricola's versified lists name *Ilmarinen*, *Väinämöinen*, and *Ahti* as gods of the western region of Häme as opposed to "Karelia" (likely Savo). This publicized address in 1551 attests to a much slower displacement of vernacular religion by Christianity than in places where political authority and the populous shared a common language and culture.

Kalevalaic mythology began to be documented during the Enlightenment, in the second half of the eighteenth century, although these sources are relatively slight when compared to the massive corpora resulting from the collection efforts of nineteenth-century National Romanticism. Eighteenth-century collection was mainly linked to western regions and sources often have little or no contextual information, such as the poetic texts

Christfrid Ganander used in his *Mythologia fennica* [Finnish mythology] (1789). Court records present complementary information, as from a 1728 case in Ostrobothnia that describes the accused's ritual uses of mythology and his explanation "att Illmarinen war en gudomlighet […] men Wänämöinen war något som haft sitt tillhåld i berg" 'that *Ilmarinen* was a divinity […] but *Väinämöinen* was something which situated itself in a mountain' (SKVR XII,1: #4514, my translation). Such traditions had probably already broken down in the southwestern-most regions around political and religious centres of authority. Local traditions from other western areas were already collapsing in the eighteenth century, since mythology linked to VÄINÄMÖINEN and ILMARINEN had largely disappeared by the nineteenth-century boom in collection efforts. This boom led to the "discovery" of mythology as living traditions in Orthodox areas and the so-called "song lands" of Russian Karelia.

Today, Finland is commonly seen as part of Western Europe, while the emerging Finnish nation treated Karelia and Karelians as part of its cultural heritage (Tarkka et al. 2018). It may therefore seem anachronistic for non-Christian religion and practices to be richly documented in the nineteenth century. From the perspective of the Russian Empire, however, Karelia was a wilderness periphery comparable to Siberia (Pentikäinen 1978: 100–101; see also Tarkka 2013: 38); continuity of vernacular religion there can be compared to continuity in forms of Siberian shamanism.

Whereas medieval Christianisation processes in western Europe commonly left only traces of otherwise displaced religions, kalevalaic traditions present a rich body of influences from medieval Christianity that were assimilated into the framework of vernacular mythology (Siikala 2002; Frog 2019). The mythology survived most richly in connection with the supernaturally-empowered ritual specialist called a *tietäjä* 'knower, one who knows'. The mythology was bound up with the *tietäjä*'s rituals, incantations, and understanding of the world. The vernacular demiurge VÄINÄMÖINEN was the cultural model for the institution, called in eastern traditions the *tietäjä iän ikuinen* '*tietäjä* of age eternal'. Not long before Agricola named VÄINÄMÖINEN as a god of Häme (1551), Archbishop Makarij of Novgorod complained in 1534 about the prominence and pagan practices of local specialists in Karelia (Korpela 2008: 48–49). The Karelian word for 'person, human being' is *ristikansa*, literally 'Christian-folk'; the people about whom Makarij complained were most likely Christian in their own eyes, although VÄINÄMÖINEN would presumably have been the mythic model for these specialists. The local SMIs should therefore not be assumed to consider VÄINÄMÖINEN as opposed to Christian identity (see also Frog 2013). The potential for local SMIs to differ from and perhaps overtly compete with the Church-authorized SMI must be considered when reviewing the evidence below.

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3. Usage of Finno-Karelian theonyms for living people

3.1. Theonyms in Kalevalaic mythology

Prominent vernacular theonyms often have multiple forms in kalevalaic poetry. Kalevala-meter is composed in eight-position verses; the first two positions are flexible while the final six can have only one syllable each, have rules governing the placement of stressed syllables by their quantity, and there is a convention of placing longer words at the end of a verse. The number of syllables in a name restricts where in a verse it can be used. Vernacular story-worthy heroes commonly have a four-syllable name form that fills the last four positions of a verse and/or an epithet used with the name to complete the last six positions – e.g. *vanha Väinämöinen* 'old Väinämöinen', *seppo Ilmarinen* 'smith Ilmarinen', *Ahti Saarelainen* 'Ahti the islander'. These forms are fitted to the formulaic system of epic narration and are usually the most frequent in the poetic corpus. Nevertheless, the four-syllable name forms are commonly derivatives of a basic name form with a diminutive *-(i)nen* or *-moinen/-möinen*, like *Ilmarinen* from *Ilmari*.

Kalevalaic theonyms are historically derived from common nouns but disambiguated from the lexeme – i.e. the name and noun are not the same. *Ilmari* is formed from the noun *ilma* 'sky, air, weather' with an agentive affix *-ri* but the god is never simply referred to as **Ilma* (Frog 2019: 268). *Väinämöinen*, is formed from the old noun *väinä* 'wide, deep, calm, slow-moving water' and a diminutive *-mö-inen* (Setälä 1914: 4–5), yet the basic form of the name is *Väinö*, a derivative of *väinä* rather than identical to the noun, even if *Väinö* reverts to *Väinä-* when extended with diminutives (though *Väinö-* remains the stem in grammatical inflections). This pattern of theonym disambiguation is a historical development in the mythology (Frog 2019: 267–268).

3.2. *Ilmarinen*

Ilmari is attested in Swedish-language documents already in ca. 1401 in the name *Matz Jlmarj* (DF 1146), where *Ilmari* may be a place name in Southwest Finland, perhaps that recorded in 1418 (*Illmaraby*, DF 1518). Similar occurrences with personal names across the fifteenth and sixteenth century are commonly considered to refer to medieval villages and farms: *Ilmari*, *Ilmarinen*, or the Swedish adaptation *Ilmaris* (Jaakkola 1935: 396–398; Mikkonen & Paikkala 2000: 151, s.v. "Ilmarinen"; cf. also Paikkala 2004: 251–252). In the 1550s in Loimaa, then in Satakunta, *Ilmarinen* is used in the genitive plural *Ilmaristen* 'of the *Ilmarinen*s' for a *La[sz]* (SVTK II: 178; Figure 1) and a *Jons/Johana* (SVTK II: 69, 205). Rather than the four-syllable poetic form, *Ilmarinen* could potentially be a patronymic 'son of *Ilmari*' formed from a personal name *Ilmari* with the diminutive suffix *-nen*, yet there

is a lack of contemporary evidence for *Ilmari* as a Christian name. In principle, *Ilmarinen* could also be produced from a Swedish adaptation of *Ilmari*, inflected as customary for settlement names: *Ilmaris* '*Ilmari*-GEN.SG'. The Swedish *-s* would then be subsequently reinterpreted with Finnish *-nen*, producing *Ilmarinen* (cf. Ainiala et al. 2016: 97),[2] although the same pattern might equally produce Swedish *Ilmaris* from *Ilmarinen* (Jaakkola 1935: 397). In any case, pluralization of *Ilmarinen* suggests that people associated with a place began to be thought of as each individually identified by the name – the *Ilmarinen*s.

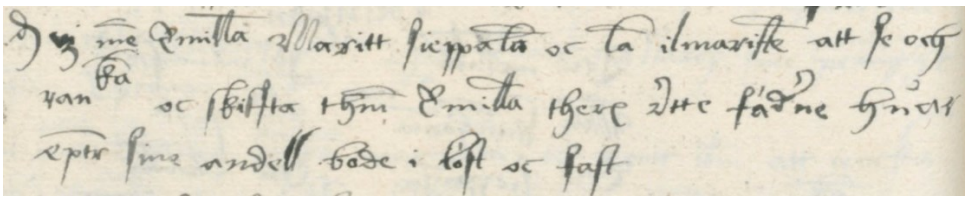


Figure 1: The name *La[sz] ilmariste[n]* appears toward the end of the first line in this record of a court's judgement (Ala-Satakunnan kihlakunnan tuomiokirja 1550–1552, VA 216[a], 131v; reproduced with permission of Finland's National Archive).

Not all uses of *Ilmarinen* as a second name necessarily reference a place. *Pietari Pietarinpoika* ('*Pietari*'s son') *Narinen*, of Juva in the Savo region, was a cavalryman at the end of the sixteenth century; he took or received the name *Ilmari(nen)*[3] as his second name when he was a soldier and continued to use it thereafter (Pirinen 1982: 207, 225, 604, cf. 668, 703). *Ilmari(nen)* is here a so-called "soldier's name" (Mikkonen 2013: ch. 6; Ainiala et al. 2016: 167), used in the place of a family name (*Narinen*). A soldier's name could be based on a settlement name, but the name of the homestead associated with Pietari is *Narila* (Pirinen 1982: 207), connected to his patronymic (i.e. *Nari-la* '*Nari*-PLACE', *Narinen* '*Nari*-DIM'). Theonyms as settlement names also appear centrally in the western naming region while Savo belongs to the eastern region, making an unattested toponym there less likely.

Kalevalaic epics and incantations connected with ILMARINEN were collected in Savo across the nineteenth century, where his name appears in parallelism with *jumala/Jumala* 'god/God', he is the creator of fire in heaven, and so on (SKVR VI; Siikala 2012: 320–321). In the late sixteenth century, still in the wake of the Reformation, the name *Ilmari(nen)* was almost certainly saliently familiar as referring to ILMARINEN. Even if a place name were behind this soldier's name, it would reflect a choice to make a transparent theonym into a byname, rather than, as was typical for soldiers' names, a common noun

2 I am thankful to an anonymous peer-reviewer for pointing out this possibility.

3 Pirinen gives the name as *Ilmarinen* (1982: 207, 225, 668, 703) and *Ilmari(nen)* (1982: 604), but the primary sources I have found give only *Ilmari* in Swedish-language texts (e.g. Grönblad 1843–1856 I,2: 37, 43).

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of something linked to battle like ‘Bullet’ or a desired quality like ‘Strength’, or something from nature like ‘Woodpecker’. Most likely Pietari received a theonym referencing *Ilmarinen* as his byname. Other examples of *Ilmari(nen)* as a byname or epithet, where connection to a settlement name is unclear, might therefore also reflect the theonym (Ainiala et al. 2016: 158).

3.3. *Väinämöinen*

Väinä and its derivatives like *Väinä(i)nen*, are found as a second name in several places in western Finland (Forsman 1896 [1891]: 127; Jaakkola 1935: 394–396; Mikkonen & Paikkala 2000: 768, s.v. ‘Väinämö’). In both the Hämeenkyrö and Karkku districts of Satakunta, *Väinä* appears to have been an inherited family name already in the sixteenth century (Jaakkola 1935: 395). The name *Väinä* corresponds directly to the noun *väinä*, which generally dropped out of Finnish and Karelian, although it was preserved in kalevalaic poetry (Lönnrot 1874–1880 II: 1030, s.v. “wäinä”; cf. SSA). Disambiguation from *väinä* is characteristic of the theonym *Väinö / Väinämöinen* in sources for mythology. For *Väinä* to be a theonym requires one of three possibilities: (*a*) in this region, disambiguation of the theonym never occurred; (*b*) disambiguation occurred and later underwent correlation, leading *Väinö* to revert to *Väinä*; (*c*) *Väinä* became used as a shortened form of *Väinämöinen* after the common noun *väinä* went out of use. The general absence of *väinä* as a common noun from North Finnic languages suggests it was already an archaism before the Middle Ages. In this case, the theonym would become a primary contemporary point of reference for interpreting *Väinä*, informing its significance, even if it were not itself used as a theonym (cf. also SSA III: 478, s.v. “väineä”).[4] The continued use of *Väinä* in place names could also potentially have led to their reinterpretation through the name *Väinämöinen*. A very few verse examples from Savo present phrases with *väinän* ‘current.GEN.SG’ that may have been reinterpreted as a name *Väinän* ‘*Väinä*.GEN.SG’ (SKVR VI,2: #3544.8, #6393.15, #6394.28), and one eighteenth-century kalevalaic poem from Ostrobothnia uses *Väinä* as a name, if this is not a mistake (SKVR XII,1: #75.41). Regional use of *Väinä* as a form of *Väinämöinen* is therefore possible.

Väinö and *Väinämöinen* seem not to have been used themselves as settlement names, nor have I found *Väinä* itself as a medieval settlement name,

[4] A. V. Forsman (1896 [1891]: 248) mentions **Väinämö* as an early personal name, but it does not appear in the data he presents. Pirjo Mikkonen & Sirkka Paikkala (2000: 768, s.v. ‘Väinämö’) follow Forsman in foregrounding this form, but all their early examples are other formations from *Väinä-*, their earliest example of *Väinämö* being from 1845. *Väinämö* is found in the oral poetry, but it is a metrically-motivated and relatively uncommon three-syllable variation *Väinämöinen*.

although *Väinä/väinä* is an element in a number of place names; *Väinölä/Väinälä* '*Väinö-/Väinä*-PLACE', however, is found as a place name and also used as a person's byname already in the fifteenth century (DF 2282; Forsman 1896 [1891]: 127; Jaakkola 1935: 395; see also Mikkonen & Paikkala 2000: 768, s.v. 'Väinölä'). The difference between use of the theonym *Ilmari(nen)* as a settlement name and *Väinölä/Väinälä* but not *Väinä/Väinö/Väinämöinen* is paralleled in the mythological poetry, where *Väinölä/Väinälä* is a place name linked to *Väinö* whereas a place name is never formed from *Ilmari-* (*Ilmola/Ilmala*, formed from *Ilma-/ilma-*, is found but is less common). This paradigm could account for *Väinä* only generating place names with the affix *-lä* in the medieval period and earlier, although it does not account for use of *Väinä* as a byname and its establishment as a family name relatively early for the region.

In 1563 in Savo's Juva district, where Pietari is called *Ilmari(nen)* a few decades later, *Henrik Hasszon* (*Hassonen*) appears in a list of fines with the byname *Weynemöinen* (STK I: 84, cf. 80; also Pirinen 1982: 225, 604). On the western coast of Lake Ladoga, in today's Russian Karelia, a land register from 1618 lists a *Mihaila Moisief wanha wäinämöinen* 'Mihaila Moisief, old *Väinämöinen*' (Kirkinen 1970: 129; VA 6045[a] fol. 75r; see Figure 2), which includes the formulaic poetic epithet *vanha* 'old'. Both cases give *Väinämöinen* as a byname alongside a patronymic.

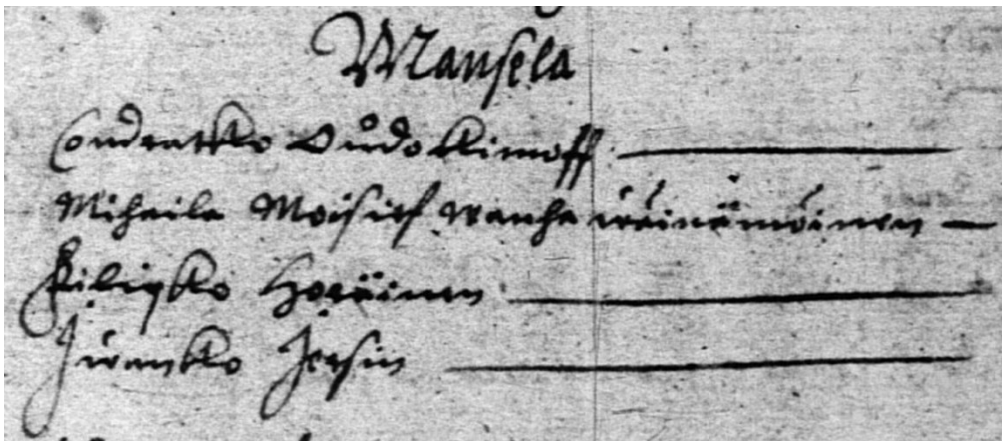


Figure 2: *Mihaila Moisief wanha wäinämöinen* appears as the second name in this list, and generally stands out because of the length of the designation; that the mythological name is not capitalized may relate to use as an epithet rather than as a proper name (Käkisalmen pohjoisen läänin maakirja 1618, VA 6045[a], 75r; reproduced with permission of Finland's National Archive).

3.4. *Joukahainen* / *Joukamoinen*

The third name commonly connected with *Väinämöinen* and *Ilmarinen* is *Joukahainen* or *Joukamoinen*. As a second name, *Jouk(k)anen* and its

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equivalents are found in Finland (Jaakkola 1935: 397; Mikkonen & Paikkala 2000: 166, s.v. "Joukainen"; see also Forsman 1896 [1891]: 126; on gemination of */k/ > /kk/*, see Stoebke 1964: 116–118). Jaakkola (1935: 397, 460n.44) identifies *Joukahainen* as a family name in the sixteenth century in Satakunta's Hämeenkyrö district, where *Väinä* also appeared as a family name.

In Orthodox areas of Karelia, Christian names borrowed from Russian produced *Jouko(i)* / *Joukko* as a personal name (cf. Forsman 1896 [1891]: 123; Vilkuna 2005: 120, s.v. "Jouko") from *Ефим* (Hirn 1976: 77; Kuzmin 2017: 156, 160, 177). Consequently, the second name in *M Iouckainen* (1559, Uusikirkko, Vpl.) might be a patronymic with "a" for "o" in the second syllable, making it ambiguous (Hirn 1976: 77). Similarly, the personal name *Jouhkima* is a borrowing of *Йоаким* that yielded Karelian patronymics as in *Nickåi Iouhkimainen* (1614, Sortavala: ibid.). The name *O ioukahain[en]* (1553, Säkkijärvi; ibid., my expansion) is, however, identical to the mythic name *Joukahainen* while not looking like a patronymic formed from *Jouko(i)*, which suggests use of the theonym as a byname in South Karelia on the Gulf of Finland.

Variations of *Jouk(k)a-* or *Jouk(k)o-* are found in dialectal words for 'swan', which creates the possibility that the byname *Joukahainen* could be a common noun. However, evidence of these dialectal usages appears quite localized in northern Finland, remote from both Satakunta and South Karelia (SMS, s.v. 'joukahainen' and see also 'joukahaisperhonen'; KKS, s.v. 'joukoine'; SSA II: 224, s.v. 'joutsen'; see also Paikkala 2004: 258). In contrast, the name *Joukahainen*/*Joukamoinen* was recorded in kalevalaic poetry from Ostrobothnia to Ingria. In the light of uses of *Ilmarinen* and *Väinämöinen* in eastern naming areas, *Joukahainen* seems more probably than not to be an epithet or byname of O.

3.5. *Lemminkäinen*

The name *Lemminkäinen* belongs to a separate group of gods in the mythology. *Lemminkäinen* or *Lemmingäs* seems not to have been used as an anthroponym, although *lempi* is a common naming element and also used as a personal name (cf. Mikkonen & Paikkala 2000: 304–305, s.v. "Lemmetty"). The Latinized name of a fourteenth-century king of the Curonians, *Lemmekinus*, has been interpreted as related to *Lemminkäinen* (see Stoebke 1964: 96–97 nn. 124–125 and works there cited), but its stem *Lemmekin-* is well attested in a number of sources and is likely of Low German origin (cf. Dräger 2017: 343–345). In the mythology, LEMMINKÄINEN is characterized as a socially-disruptive outsider and a sort of antithesis of VÄINÄMÖINEN (Frog 2010: 191–196), so it is unsurprising that his name was not widely used as a byname.

3.6. *Kaukomieli*/*Kaukomoinen*

The name *Kaukomieli* or *Kaukomoinen* is associated with *Lemminkäinen*. *Kaukomieli* is widely attested as a personal name, in contrast to the form *Kaukomoinen*, which, like *Väinämöinen* or *Joukamoinen*, is specifically connected to mythological poetry. *Kaukomoinen*, like all of the other mythological names so far discussed in this section, is constructed of a main element with affixes; *Kaukomieli*, in contrast, is formed on the common anthroponymic paradigm as a compound of two lexemes – *kauko/kauka* 'tall, long; distant', and *mieli* 'mood, spirit, mind'[5] – both of which are common for the naming system, which also allows *Kauko* to be used separately (see Stoebke 1964: 26, 28–29, 33–37, 39, 48, 52, 54–55, 90, 127–129, 138–139, 142; Vilkuna 2005: 128–129, s.v. "Kauko"; Mikkonen & Paikkala 2000: 207–208, s.v. "Kaukainen", "Kaukiainen", "Kaukinen", "Kauko", "Kaukonen"). Although *Kaukomieli* is brought forward in scholarship as a mythological name commonly used for historical people, this seems to be an accidental outcome of the mythological name's exceptional link to the anthroponymic naming system.

3.7. *Ahti*

Ahti or *Ahto* (on *-a* ~ *-o* variation, see e.g. Forsman 1896 [1891]: 167–168) is another name connected with *Lemminkäinen*: in epic, he is characterized as a warrior, and, in incantation and ritual, he is addressed as a sea god or god of waters and fish. *Ahti* is fairly well attested as a second name in the western naming region, as in *Henricus Akthi* in 1454 (DF 2945; DF 4087; see also Forsman 1896 [1891]: 135, 179, 202, 248; Stoebke 1964: 15; Mikkonen & Paikkala 2000: 59–60, s.vv. "Ahti", "Ahtiainen", "Ahtila", "Ahtinen", "Ahtola"). The second name could be a contemporary place name (cf. *Achti* in DF 3001). In Orthodox Karelia, *Ahto* is found as a personal name borrowed from Russian *Автоном* (Hirn 1976: 49; Kuzmin 2017: 160, 175), which produces the associated patronymic *Ahtonen*.

Viljo Nissilä (1980: 156) considers *Ahti*-related toponyms to derive from a Low German personal name *Ahti*, of which the form *Ahtinen* would be a patronymic derivative (Mikkonen & Paikkala 2000: 60, s.v. "Ahtinen"). Low German contacts would be from the twelfth through the fourteenth centuries, tapering off thereafter (Bentlin 2008: ch. 2). The earliest example of *Ahtinen* is in a document from 1340 in the phrase *Hactissanpoyca*/*Hactissænpoyca* (DF 467) – *Ahtisen poika* 'son of *Ahtinen*' (Heikkilä 2013: 73). In this case, the diminutive *Ahtinen*, not *Ahti*, would be the personal name behind this patronymic, although there is a lack of early evidence for *Ahti* as a personal name in Finland. Alternately, *Ahtinen* in this construction may be a place name

[5] *Mieli* might also be interpreted as 'favourite' when used as the first element of a name.

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and mean ‘lad of/from *Ahtinen*’ (Ainiala et al. 2016: 161). A corresponding name *Atte*, *Ahte*, etc. is found in Sweden (SMP, s.v. “Atte”; Raunamaa 2017: 50), and the Swedish form *Atte* is also found as a personal name in Finland (DF 832, from 1374). The Low German name seems to have reached Finland and *Ahti*-derived place names also exhibit a broader geographical distribution than theonym-derived settlement names (Kepsu 2018: 81–82).[6]

Nissilä’s theory requires (*a*) the Low German name to establish place names without leaving traces of the name bearers on the historical record, which is possible, and also that (*b*) the foreign name neither continued in the family nor produced Swedish patronyms in *-son* as it did elsewhere in the Swedish kingdom. That the Low German name did not continue as a primary personal name in Finland could be explained by its transparent identification with the vernacular theonym *Ahti*. The image of AHTI appears rooted in a maritime environment and valorised as a warrior. The possibility of *Ahti* as a byname similar to *Ilmari(nen)*, *Väinämöinen*, and *Joukahainen* should not be underestimated. It seems likely that at least some of the *Ahti*-related settlement names originated in a manner comparable to those called *Ilmari(nen)* or *Väinölä*.

3.8. Overview of the reviewed names

Non-Christian theonyms are used to refer to a surprising number of people within a medieval and post-medieval Christian milieu. In most cases, it is impossible to determine whether the theonym has been used as a person’s second name or established as a family name indirectly through a settlement name; in some cases, another independent background may also be possible. Although more may come to light, only four examples are here distinguished as having the god as a primary referent rather than a place name, three with confidence and one less so.

Of the six names reviewed here, three are included in Agricola’s lists of pagan gods: *Väinämöinen*, *Ilmarinen*, and *Ahti*, all identified with the closer region of Häme. This suggests that they were prominent in western regions although later evidence of them is mainly from eastern areas. The absence of *Joukahainen* from Agricola’s lists but presence in western family names would be consistent with later evidence of *Joukahainen* only as a narrative agent, not subject to ritual address or veneration. The establishment of *Joukahainen* as a family name in one of the same districts where *Väinä* was a contemporary family name is difficult to dismiss as accidental if *Väinä* is accepted as a regional name form that referred to VÄINÄMÖINEN.

[6] Names in this group take a variety of forms, some of which could derive from *ahde* ‘bank, slope’ (Kepsu 2018: 82).

4. Theonyms as bynames

Pietari Narinen, Mihaila Moisief, and Henrik Hassonen all appear to be identified with theonyms as adults. *Vanha Väinämöinen* 'old *Väinämöinen*' explicitly denotes age. In the historical context, it would almost certainly identify Mihaila as a *tietäjä*, a supernaturally-empowered ritual specialist, placing him on the level of VÄINÄMÖINEN. Henrik Hassonen is only referred to as *Väinämöinen* in one example of writing his name, and then as an epithet or byname alongside his family name, suggesting that it is linked to his adult identity rather than stems from his childhood as an alternative second name. It seems reasonable to infer that calling him *Väinämöinen* is equivalent to calling Mihaila by this name. Pietari became called *Ilmari(nen)* as an adult when becoming a soldier.

Why Pietari was called *Ilmari(nen)* is unclear. Metaphorical motivation because, for example, he was swift "like the wind" or a paragon of manliness seems unlikely. Although Pietari's direct identification with ILMARINEN indicates that the Church-authorized stance was not dominant in the local environment, the presumably competing SMIs likely made the name controversial and it was unlikely to be given or received lightly. Pietari retained his soldier's name rather than returning to his family name in later life, supporting the view that *Ilmari(nen)* was non-trivial. When reference to ILMARINEN was almost certainly salient, the name was most likely linked to some form of authority or directly with power comparable to calling Mihaila *Väinämöinen* in some sort of alignment of identity with the god. The ritual traditions associated with these gods prominently incorporated battle magic, both for conflicts with supernatural agents and also for living warfare, including, for instance, techniques to become impervious to bullets (e.g. Siikala 2002: 281–294; Stark 2006: 279–281). Receiving the name *Ilmari(nen)* in connection with this type of power would presumably confer the sort of authority and prestige that would also account for its continued use by Pietari.

O. *Joukahainen* seems likely to follow a similar pattern. The name seems unlikely to be a patronymic or inherited family name; it looks as though a byname became used in the place of a family name as in the case of Pietari. However, without evidence of a separate patronymic, *Joukahainen* cannot be identified as a byname with the same confidence as in the other three cases.

These four examples are found across less than a century from South Savo (Henrik, 1563; Pietari, named 1591(?)), on the Karelian Isthmus near Viborg (O., 1553), and on Lake Ladoga a few years after Sweden captured the region from Russia in 1611 (Mihaila, 1618). The evidence is thin, yet it points to a naming practice that had widespread currency in the mid- to late sixteenth century.

These four cases all come from the eastern naming regions whereas theonyms as settlement names are concentrated in the western regions. Use of

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theonyms as additional names is also predominantly found in western regions, where they are interpreted as based on settlement names. Referring to settlements simply with the name of a god is striking and is never found, for example, among the rich evidence of theophoric place names in Scandinavia.[7] There is nothing to indicate that places named *Ilmari(nen)*, *Ahti*, or *Väinölä* were central places of non-Christian religion. This has led to the inference that the theonym was first used as a personal name and thereby became a settlement name (Janne Saarikivi, p.c.; cf. Nissilä 1980: 156). When theonyms are not found as primary personal names, this interpretation has required that: (*a*) the place names must have continuity from the previous naming system (or have been transferred to new locations from place names with such continuity), which is possible (cf. Saarikivi 2017); and (*b*), in that naming system, theonyms were used as personal names without compounding or modification, which is also possible, but raises questions about the ideology underlying such a naming practice. However, usage of theonyms as bynames and epithets would equally account for the establishment of the place names, naming them after the person with whom the settlement was initially identified through the theonym.

Accepting that the settlement names are best explained as based on personal names or bynames, the settlement names provide evidence in the western regions for using theonyms to refer to people. The naming practices observed in eastern regions thus seem likely to have also been current at some time in western areas, collectively reflecting a shared naming tradition that antedates regional Christianisation. The western place names would then also point to some development of regional differences in naming practices. In the west, either (*a*) a theonym could be given to a child from birth; or (*b*) a later-given byname could be used directly for a settlement name. The eastern tradition seems to reflect an ideology that links the power and authority of an adult to the respective god, with the implication that receiving such a name is exceptional. This seems unlikely to have developed from a tradition that earlier let theonyms be used for any child, while the opposite development of use for naming any child would require a change in the ideology behind the naming practice, presumably secularizing theonyms. Most probably, the western tradition's innovation was to produce settlement names from later-given bynames without a significant change in ideology. The early establishment of these as family names potentially independent of a settlement name may further reflect a difference in how these bynames operated in society.

[7] I am thankful to Stefan Brink for consultation on this question.

5. Calling humans 'gods'

The use of vernacular theonyms as bynames ultimately did not endure in Christianized environments. It seems to have disappeared before the energetic folklore collection of the nineteenth century, which reflects changes in local evaluations and (public) alignments with vernacular gods – changes in local SMIs to eventually conform with that authorized by the Church. However, evidence from the nineteenth and twentieth century shows that *tietäjä*s could be referred to with the word *jumala* 'god' (Jauhiainen 1998: 134, type D1; SMS, *s.v.* "jumala 9"; KKS, s.v. "jumala 2"). Use of *jumala* for *tietäjä* has been rendered invisible in most dictionaries, outside of the compound *maajumala* 'earth-god' (e.g. SSA I: 247, s.v. "jumala"). The dominant modern SMI is inclined to presume the boundary between "human" and "god" as fundamental and absolute, as Modern Finnish *jumala* is used today. In addition to not being acknowledged in dictionaries, some sources indicate collectors "translated" informants' use of *jumala* to *tietäjä*, suggesting that the modern SMI has also reduced its presence in primary data (SKS KRA I. Fri 101. 1895. Vesanto (Central Finland); U. Holmberg b) 502. 1909. Polvijärvi (North Karelia)). This usage of *jumala* has recently been treated as dialectal (SMS, s.v. "jumala 9"), but it seems instead to be archaic, since it is attested widely, if thinly, and found in both Finnish and Karelian (also used for saints and icons, not exclusively for *tietäjä*s). It is part of a general pattern of earlier usage of *jumala* to refer to someone or something viewed as positively aligned with human society and characterized by a type of agency or associated active or passive potential to affect the world (Haavio 1959: 280–281; Anttonen 2012: 174). Calling a *tietäjä* a *jumala* thus identified him with a vernacular category characterized by an exceptional power or supernatural agency rather than as "divine" in a modern sense. The compound *maajumala* and some additional forms should be viewed as derivative of this usage of *jumala*.

A *tietäjä* with a widely recognized reputation could be known as the god of a certain settlement, like *Ruoveden jumala* 'god of Ruovesi' (Skogman 1904: 430 [Satakunta]), *Lammasperän jumala* 'god of Lammasperä' (SMS, s.v. 'jumala 9' [Kainuu]), or *Niämelän jumala* 'god of Niämelä' (SKS KRA Ekman, E. A. b) 385. 1891. Längelmäki [Häme]). A byname like "the god of Ruovesi" is directly comparable to the byname *Väinämöinen*. These naming practices are rooted in a vernacular ontology without a clear boundary between "humans" and "gods". The use of *jumala* as a word for a powerful *tietäjä* seems to underlie the ideology of people's direct identification with VÄINÄMÖINEN or ILMARINEN through bynames. If these naming practices are connected, use of *jumala* supports the theory that theonyms were only given as bynames to adults.

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6. Perspectives

Using theonyms as bynames continued in eastern regions into at least the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries on top of an otherwise thoroughly Christianised naming system. Where the byname identifies a person with VÄINÄMÖINEN, this can be linked with confidence to the *tietäjä* institution and supernatural power, while the significance of identification with ILMARINEN or JOUKAHAINEN is less clear. The centuries-long continuity of such practices was likely enabled by several factors, such as initial geographical remoteness from confrontations with the Church-authorized SMI and the linguistic and cultural "otherness" of that SMI's representatives. Although these naming practices were eventually eclipsed, presumably as the competition between local and Church-authorized SMIs gave way to the latter, a corresponding use of *jumala* to refer to a powerful *tietäjä* is found on a widespread basis through the nineteenth century. This usage produced bynames like "the god of Ruovesi", likely in a continuity of naming practices up into the era of modernization. *Jumala*, conceived as a category of agency rather than a modern category of divinity, makes the practice of using theonyms as bynames more understandable. At the same time, the evidence of later practices reinforces the likelihood that similar usage of theonyms was earlier current also in more westerly regions. The use of theonyms as bynames may have disappeared earlier to the west, but use of *jumala* for *tietäjä* was much more enduring. It is necessary to consider the possibility that some theonyms as second names in western regions could have referred directly to a vernacular god after the initial spread of Christianity, and some family names and place names may have been established with reference to them.

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Abbreviations

DF = *Diplomatarium Fennicum* [Finnish Diplomatarium]. (http://df.narc.fi/) (Accessed 2019-11-04.)

KKS = *Karjalan kielen sanakirja* [Dictionary of Karelian language]. (http://kaino.kotus.fi/cgi-bin/kks/karjala.cgi) (Accessed 2019-11-04.)

SKS KRA = Folklore archive of the Finnish Literature Society.

SKVR = *Suomen Kansan Vanhat Runot* [Old poems of the Finnish folk], I–XV. Helsinki: SKS 1908–1997.

SMS = *Suomen murteiden sanakirja* [Dictionary of Finnish Dialects]. (http://kaino.kotus.fi/sms/) (Accessed 2019-11-04.)

SSA = *Suomen sanojen alkuperä: Etymologinen sanakirja* [The origin of Finnish words: Etymological dictionary], I–III. Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura, 1992–2000.

SVTK = *Suomen vanhimmat tuomiokirjat* [Finland's oldest court records], I–II. Helsinki: Valtionarkisto, 1954–1964.

VA = Finland's National Archive, Helsinki.

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