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MOTIVATION AND SEMANTICS OF ŠALČININKAI DISTRICT POTAMONYMS: A COGNITIVE APPROACH

Kognityvinis požiūris į Šalčininkų rajono
potamonimų motyvaciją ir semantiką

ANNOTATION

The aim of the research is the semantic analysis of potamonyms (river and stream names) in Šalčininkai District within the framework of cognitive semantics, focusing on identifying their motivation. The study examines a total of 55 potamonyms currently officially functioning within the area of investigation. The linguistic analysis reveals that potamonyms fall into two distinct categories: those with transparent motivation and semantics (32 cases) and those with opaque motivation and semantics (23 cases). The names in both categories convey the nominator's impressions of the named object through etymons that reflect the most salient features of the location and attribute meaning to them.

KEYWORDS: toponym motivation, toponym semantics, potamonyms, Šalčininkai District, Cognitive Onomastics.

ANOTACIJA

Tyrimo tikslas – kognityvinės semantikos rėmuose atliki Šalčininkų rajono potamonimų (upių ir upelių vardų) semantinę analizę, daugiausia dėmesio skiriant jų motyvacijos nustatymui. Straipsnyje nagrinėjami 55 potamonimai, šiuo metu oficialiai funkcionuojantys tiriamame plote. Kalbinė analizė atskleidžia, kad potamonimus galima suskirstyti į dvi skirtingas grupes: skaidrios motyvacijos ir semantikos (32 atvejai) bei neskaidrios

motyvacijos ir semantikos (23 atvejai). Abiejų grupių vardai perteikia įvardytojo įspūdžius įvardijamų objektų atžvilgiu per pamatinius žodžius (etimonus), atspindinčius ryškiausius vietų bruožus ir suteikiančius jiems reikšmę.

ESMINIAI ŽODŽIAI: toponimų motyvacija, toponimų semantika, potamonimai, Šalčininkų rajonas, kognityvinė onomastika.

INTRODUCTION

Proper names are an important part of any language and the studies of their functions have been ongoing since ancient times. However, no unified theory of proper names exists as different onomastic schools pursue varying research paths, especially in Cognitive Onomastics. Based on the postulates of Cognitive Onomastics, Thomas Hobbes' treatise *Of Names* (1655) may be regarded as the first work presenting insights about the meaning of names. According to Hobbes (2002 [1655]: 13), a name is “a word taken at pleasure to serve for a mark, which may arise in our mind a thought like to some thought we had before, and which being pronounced to others, may be to them a sign of what thought the speaker had, or had not before in his mind.” Thus, names evoke both the speaker and addressee’s thoughts, reflecting the essence of the proper name. This differs from John Stuart Mill’s (1906 [1872]) widely used definition of the proper name, which asserts that proper names are devoid of semantic features (cf. works of Kripke 1972; Ullmann 1969; and others).

The cognitive perspective towards the analysis of names suggests that in addition to lexical features, names also convey semantic and conceptual content. Willy Van Langendonck (2007, 2013, 2016, 2017) argues that proper names have inherent assumptions, including grammatical meaning, basic level assumptions, and connotative pragmatic meanings. However, they “do not have asserted lexical meaning” and only “display presuppositional meanings of several kinds: categorical (basic level), associative senses (introduced either via the name bearer or via the name form), emotive senses and grammatical meanings” (Van Langendonck 2007: 7). Therefore, proper names refer to an entity without conveying lexical meaning and are considered the most prototypical nouns. Similarly, Joana Szerszunowicz (2010) observes the connotational meanings of proper names and toponyms, which form onymic groups that evoke cultural connotations in the speaker’s consciousness. Szerszunowicz (2010: 548–549) claims that onyms perform both denotative and connotative functions, with anthroponyms forming the largest group with connotative potential, followed by toponyms. More than that, the cognitive approach to proper names suggests that they hold abundant information beyond their literal interpretation,

encompassing diverse layers that demonstrate various connections with the surrounding environment, including cultural customs, familial relations, and ownership (cf. works by Berezovič 1991; Rut 2001; and others).

Toponyms, like other proper names, are integral to language as they reveal information about a location's landscape, history, and culture. In Karpenko and Golubenko's (2015: 286) view, toponyms, like other proper names, have a grammatical structure and meaning that exists in human consciousness. Toponyms and locations "resonate with meanings. Besides the place names' function as indicators of specific localities, they also carry implications that people sense and decipher proceeding from their duties, background, and inspirations" (Alasli 2019: 6). This implies that toponyms serve a dual function of denoting a specific location while also communicating associated characteristics and meanings relevant to certain individuals or social groups. Consequently, the meaning of a toponym can be conceptualized as its lexical meaning, which derives from the most salient features of the designated referent that motivated the name. The original semantic content of the name is referred to as the etymological meaning or identifiable meaning (Ainiala, Saarelma, Sjöblom 2016: 32).

The article examines the potamonyms of Šalčininkai District from a Cognitive Onomastics perspective, considering their cultural, historical, and social context and the connotations of the language used. The study acknowledges the multifaceted meanings of toponyms, reflecting factors such as geography, history, language, and culture. The article analyzes Šalčininkai District potamonyms through a Cognitive Onomastics perspective, exploring their cultural, historical, and social context, and the language connotations they embody and recognizing the complex meanings of toponyms shaped by these factors. Šalčininkai District Municipality is in the southern part of Vilnius County and borders Vilnius, Trakai, and Varėna districts. To the south and east, the district shares a border with Belarus. Although, from a historical perspective, the territory of Lithuania, including the lands of Šalčininkai District Municipality and territories well to the east and south-east of present-day Lithuania, were originally inhabited by ethnic Baltic tribes,¹ currently, many of Šalčininkai District inhabitants identify themselves as Polish, comprising 79.5% of the population while Lithuanians, Russians, Belarusians, and other nationalities make up 10.4%, 5.0%, 2.9%, and

¹ This is evidenced in the works of Kazimieras Būga (1961: 493–550), Zigmantas Zinkevičius (2011) as well as other onomasticians and linguists, and is verified by the archaeological research, cf. works of Eugenijus Jovaiša (2012, 2014, 2016, 2020, 2020a, etc.) and other scholars.

1.2%, respectively.² Therefore, the district is an interesting area for linguistic investigation, since language contacts are constantly taking place here and affect all areas of life, including culture.

The aim is to analyze the semantics of Šalčininkai District potamonyms under the framework of cognitive semantics and to identify their motivation.

Research Material and Sources. The main body of the research comprises 55 potamonyms in Šalčininkai District selected from the corpus³ of 362 potamonyms currently officially functioning in Vilnius County. The investigation is based on potamonyms and the actual data collected from various sources: 1) Šalčininkai District Municipality website; 2) electronic catalogues; 3) modern and historical interactive maps; 4) scientific research on onomastics, etymology, history, etc.; 5) lexicographic sources; 6) archival materials.⁴ These materials form the basis of the research, complement each other, and help to derive sound etymological and motivational versions of potamonyms.

Research Methodology. The etymological, derivational, motivation⁵ and semantic analyses of the selected potamonyms are based on the integration of traditional⁶ and Cognitive Onomastics theoretical principles and methodologies developed by Lithuanian and foreign scholars. The etymological analysis of potamonyms is based on the works of Kazimieras Büga (1958, 1959, 1961), Aleksandras Vanagas (1970, 1981, 1981a, 1988, 1996), Jonas Jurkštas (1985), and others; vols. I–IV of the *Dictionary of Lithuanian Place Names* (hereinafter, LVŽ I, LVŽ II, LVŽ III, and LVŽ IV); Lithuanian, Russian, Polish, etc. (e-)dictionaries.⁷ The composition analysis and semantic classification of potamonyms are based on, but not limited to the hydronyms' structural-grammatical classification and the hydronyms' semantic classification proposed by Vanagas (1970, 1981a, 1988). The latter classification was adopted in Lithuanian regional toponymy studies and developed into the local toponymy of transparent and obscure

² According to the Department of Statistics of the Republic of Lithuania 2021 data posted on ŠDMW at <https://www.salchininkai.lt/apie-rajona/teritorija-gyventojai/562>.

³ The term *corpus* is used in the sense of a gazetteer (list) compiled by the author of the current paper (cf. MW definition).

⁴ See Potamonym Sources, Lexicographic Sources and References.

⁵ Here, the term *motivation* (*motif of nomination*) is understood as an extralinguistic reason for choosing or creating a given proper name for a given entity (cf. Podol'skaya 1978: 87).

⁶ Under the term *traditional onomastics* we understand the etymological, typological and structural studies of proper names, which sometimes also include the analysis of the semantic aspect of onyms. According to Terhi Ainiala and Jan-Ola Östman (2017: 3): "[...] onomastics traditionally has largely focused on the etymology and typology of names".

⁷ Cf. Lexicographic Sources.

motivation classification model by Dalia Sviderskienė (2016, 2017, 2019, 2022). As the research also follows the theories of Cognitive Onomastics (cf. Willy Van Langendonck 2007; 2013; 2016; 2017; Antii Leino 2004; 2005; 2007; 2011; Paula Sjöblom 2011; Katalina Reszegi 2012; Tehri Ainiala, Minna Saarelma, Paula Sjöblom 2016; and others), we adhere to the view that all onyms have meaning and will elaborate on the idea that toponyms, being the result of human linguistic activities, were once explicit in meaning and easy to associate with the generic lexical units they were derived from. We will attempt to reconstruct the faded meaning of toponyms by applying the model of conceptual content realization through language adopted by Nicola Dobrić (2010) to proper names studies from the cognitive metaphor theory developed by George Lakoff, Mark Johnson (1980) and Zoltan Kövecses (2002). This model reflects the transfer of cognitive traits (concepts) from one domain to another (from appellatives to onyms) and explains how the conceptual structure of words has been motivating the creation of proper names: source domain (appellative) → conceptual structure (cognitive trait) → target domain (onym) (Dobrić 2010: 139–141).

To maintain consistency with the previous Lithuanian (regional) toponymic research, this paper presents potamonyms following the established criteria for the presentation of toponymic material within Lithuanian onomastics. Each potamonym is accompanied by a reference to the location of the named object (i.e., the larger waterbody into which the river/stream drains), followed by an explanation of its origin in terms of a hypothetical etymon and its associated meaning. Current forms are visually emphasized using italics, boldface, and, where possible, stressed. To avoid redundancy, references to lexicographic sources of etymons are omitted from the text. Given the uniformity of potamonyms in terms of transparency of motivation and semantics, they are classified into two categories: potamonyms with transparent motivation and semantics and those with opaque motivation and semantics.

1. POTAMONYMS OF TRANSPARENT MOTIVATION AND SEMANTICS

The potamonyms comprising this group exhibit a distinct lack of ambiguity in the identification and interpretation of the concepts that motivated their creation. These names were motivated by a variety of factors that highlight the unique characteristics of the named water bodies, including their physiographic features, the flora and fauna in the vicinity, their relationship with other objects, the physical state of water in them, their intended purpose, and water created sound as perceived by the nominator.

1.1. Potamonyms Reflecting Flora

The potamonyms **Berželis** (the Gauja trib.), **Béržė** (the Šalčia trib.), **Beržuonà** (or **Beržūnà**) (the Šalčia trib.) share a common base Lith *berž-* (cf. Vanagas 1970: 62, 202, 204; 1981: 62; 1981a: 13–14) and are related to Lith *béržas* ‘birch; the tree of the genus *Betula*’, but differ in their meaning. **Berželis** is Lith DIM Suf *-elis* derivative and names a stream (approx. 7 km length) in the vicinity of Dieveniškės. The name could be motivated by the tree species that are dominant in the vicinity and also conveys the meaning of the named stream’s smallness indicated by the DIM Suf: Lith *bérž-as* + *-elis* → a stream in an area covered with birch trees → *Berželis*. **Béržė** is related to Lith *béržė* ‘birch forest’ and is motivated by the name of the place meaning a set of objects and the transposition of the concept of a birch grove into the river name: Lith *béržė* → a river in the birch forest → *Béržė*. Meanwhile, **Beržūnà** (or **Beržuonà**)⁸ – a double name for the stream in Šalčininkai District – is Lith Suf *-ūn-* (*-uon-*)⁹ and *f* inflexion *-a* derivative: Lith *bérž-* + *-ūna* (or *-uon-a*) → a stream flowing across a terrain covered with birch grove(s) → *Beržūnà* / *Beržuonà*. Thus, the potamonym might reflect the quality characteristic of the terrain the stream flows across.

Klevà (the Gauja trib.) names the river the longest part of which is in present Belarus (Bel *Клява* / *Клевा*) and only a small section is in Lithuania. The name is derived from Lith *klēvas* ‘maple; the tree of the genus *Acer*’ (cf. Būga 1961: 527; Vanagas 1970: 59; 1981a: 159). The potamonym may be motivated by maple trees in the areas adjacent to the river conveying the concept of the territory overgrown with maple trees: Lith *klēv-as* + *f* inflexion *-a* → the river in the vicinity of which there is a big concentration of maple trees → the *Klevà*.

The significance of certain tree species in Lithuanian culture, specifically in the beliefs and worldview of the ancient Balts and Lithuanians, has motivated the creation of potamonyms in Šalčininkai District and many similar place names throughout Lithuania. The birch, oak, maple, and other leafy and coniferous trees have long been regarded as symbols of vitality, growth, fertility, and vegetative power, as well as tranquillity, and were believed to be inhabited

⁸ *Beržūnà* is the name of the stream from its source in the vicinity of the village Úta up to the Lithuania-Belarus border (the length of the stream section – 2.7 km); in Belarus, along the border with Lithuania, the stream is known by the name Bel *Березина* / *Бярэзіна* (3.8 km); and a small section of the stream (0.6 km) from the Lithuania-Belarus border until it drains its waters into the Šalčia near the town of Šalčininkai is known as *Beržuonà*. The length of the stream sections were measured manually using the distance measurement tools at UETK and GP web sites.

⁹ Lith Suf *-uon-* as well as *-ūn-a*, according to Saulius Ambrasas (1993: 149–150; 150–152), are used to derive names for agents that possess a certain quality.

by various deities and the spirits of the dead (Dundulienė 2008: 55–74). These potamonyms are semantically motivated by plant names derived from phytolexemes of Lithuanian origin, referring not only to individual tree species but also to their concentration in the territories near the rivers they signify.

1.2. Potamonyms Reflecting Fauna

Two potamonyms are motivated by animal species in the district. *Svinčelė* (the Beržė trib.) is the name of a small stream near Švenčius village (Gerviškės eld.). The locals call both the stream and the village *Svinėc* (or *Svine*). There are several entries on this area in VK: *Svinki* – the meadow in the vicinity of Pabarė (1973 expedition), *Swinka* – the stream (1924 expedition). According to Vanagas (1981: 323–324), the potamonym may be related to lake *Svinuka* (Vievis, El D), also called *Svinūcha* by the locals, cf. lake *Svinka* (Rudnia, Vrn D). However, due to Šalčininkai District's demographics, the version of the Slavic origin of the potamonym should not be ruled out. Thus, it may be related to Bel *свинаръя* 'mud pit where pigs roost' or Rus *свинъя* 'pig' and may convey this meaning: Bel *свин-аръя* / Rus *свин-ъя* + Lith Suf *-elė* (in the official name) / Lith inflection *-ė* → a mud pit where pigs roost → *Svinčelė* (*Svinė*).

Although according to Vanagas (1981a: 342, 350), the origins of the potamonym *Turė* (the Verseka trib.) are not very clear, it may be related to Lith *taūras* (Lith *tūras*, *turas* ← Pol *tur*) 'extinct species of the wild large cattle of the genus *Bos primigenius*', the animal which in ancient times could have lived in the vicinity. The potamonym could have been the characteristics of the strong current of the river: Lith. *tur-as* (*taūr-as*, *tūras*) + Lith inflection *-ė* → wild, strong, powerful → *Turė*. Alternatively, the etymology of this and similar potamonyms may have been influenced by the cultural significance of this animal. Rimantas Balsys (2016) maintains that many ancient cultures, including those of Indo-European origin, considered the bull, ox, or bison to be zoomorphic representations of the deity of the harvest associated with the Sun, Sky, thunderstorm, and rain. Lithuanians and Prussians also recognized horned deities by various names. The depiction of the bull, bison, or ox in the coats of arms of Lithuanian nobility, as well as in the seals and coats of arms of Lithuanian cities, is not coincidental. The bison represents nobility, strength, and the protection of the weak, while the ox embodies diligence, patience, agriculture, and wisdom. These symbolic meanings are consistent with persistent beliefs concerning the association of these animals with nobility, military prowess, and fertility (Balsys 2016: 5–12).

1.3. Potamonyms Reflecting Physiographic Features

The nomenclature within this group is primarily descriptive of the riverbed configuration, including elements such as the quality of the river bottom, flow direction, and other relevant features (Vanagas 1981a: 54–75).

Akliánka (the Verseka trib.), according to Vanagas (1970: 61; 1981: 37), may be related to the potamonym *Aklé*, which is derived from Lith *āklas* ‘overgrown swamp; closed, blind’. This name is derived with a Slavic suffix, cf. Pol Suf *-anka* / Rus Suf *-анка* (-я́нка) / Bel Suf *-янка*¹⁰, and is an example of “contaminated” toponyms.¹¹ The authentic form could have been **Aklenka* / **Aklé*. The name was probably motivated by the dense vegetation in the stream and/or on its banks being the conceptualization of this characteristic: Lith *ākl-as* + Slav Suf *-ianka* → a stream overgrown with vegetation → *Akliánka*.

Dirvonėlė (the Naujanka trib.; Bel *Наўянка*, BY) is Lith DIM Suf *-ėlė* derivative from Lith *dirvónas* ‘abandoned, uncultivated, overgrown land’. The Suf points to the smallness of the named stream, whereas the potamonym conveys the meaning of the abandoned, uncultivated lands around the hydro object: Lith *dirvón-as* + *-ėlė* → the stream flowing through the uncultivated land → *Dirvonėlė*.

Dumble (the Ditva trib.) is Lith *f* inflexion *-é* derivative from Lith *duñblas* ‘settled turbidity; wet, shaken mud; sludge’, cf. Vanagas (1970: 62; 1981: 96). The potamonym may be motivated by the murky, algae-filled water or an algal, sludgy riverbed: Lith *duñbl-as* + *-é* → the stream with sludgy, algal riverbed / algae-filled, murky water → *Dumble*.

Kamenà (the Visinčia trib.) names the river in Belarus and Lithuania, which is referred to as Pol *Kamionka*; Bel / Rus *Каменка* by the locals. Vanagas (1970: 131) claims the potamonym is the Lith Suf *-en-* derivative from Lith *kāmas* ‘hassock, hump’. However, the possibility that the name is of Slavic origin should not be ruled out. From our observations, there is plenty of stones both in the riverbed and on its banks. Therefore, the name can be associated with Slav *kamień* / *камень* ‘stone’ and the primary form might have been Bel / Rus

¹⁰ For Slavic affixes, see Saulius Ambrasas (2000: 111ff.); Mikalaj Biryla, Pavel Shuba (1985: 210ff.); Piotr Bąk (1984: 211ff.); Natalija Shvedova (1980: 183ff.).

¹¹ For the term *contaminated toponym*, see Pavel Skorupa (2021: 223).

**Камен(н)а(я)* (*река*) ‘stony river’.¹² Therefore, it is possible to claim that the river’s name is motivated by the stony riverbed: Slav *kamień* / *камень* (stone) → a stony river (bed) → *Kamenà* (← Bel / Rus **Камена* / **Каменна* / **Каменная* (*река*)).

Keřnavé (the Visinčia trib.) names the stream that flows from lake *Keřnavas* through the Rūdninkai forest nearby *Keřnavé* marshes. The potamonym is derived from Lith *keřnavé* ‘sloughy place in meadows, forest’ and also may be related to Lith *kernà* ‘thicket’, cf. (Vanagas 1981: 153). Indeed, the territories around the lake and stream are rather sloughy and are covered with a thick forest, which makes these waterbodies practically inaccessible. Thus, the motivation of the potamonym is quite obvious, as the name conceptualizes physiographic characteristics of the areas: Lith *keřnavé* → the stream in the swampy area → *Keřnavé*.

Kuliné (the Juodé trib.) names the stream with a sinuous riverbed. Due to its sinuous/winding riverbed, the potamonym most probably was derived using Lith Suf *-iné*¹³ from Lith *kulýs* ‘twist, winding, turn’. Thus, the name may be the conceptualization of the configuration of the riverbed and the winding nature of the flow: Lith *kul-ýs* + *-iné* → the winding, turning stream → *Kuliné*.

Mažóji Kenà (Kině) (the Merkys trib.) is the potamonym made by analogy from the name *Kenà (Kině)* (the Neris trib.). Both potamonyms form the opposition, based on the augmentative-diminutive correlation of the differentiating adjective and a zero modifier.¹⁴ The topolexeme *Kenà* is related to Lith *kině* ‘elevated place in a meadow or water’ or ‘the roots of trees and bushes on the river bank (in water)’; also to Lith *kinìs* ‘crust on the water, marsh’ or ‘small island in a river or lake, a marsh’. Thus, the motivation may be explained in several ways: Lith *kin-ě* → the river surrounded by trees and shrubs → (*Mažóji*) *Kenà*; or: Lith *kin-ìs* + *-é* → the river full of vegetation → (*Mažóji*) *Kenà*. Both versions are plausible since most of the riverbed is in forested areas, and in the warm season, a lot of water plants grow in the river, which sometimes form “crusts” on the water’s surface.

¹² This assertion is supported by the continued usage of the name *Каменная* ‘stony’ by the locals when referring to the river. There are similar names in the Russian Federation (e.g. the Каменная река in Karelia, or lake Каменное), Belarus (the Каменная река – a 40 km segment of the Neris with multiple rapids). Also, the concept of the ‘stony river’ is “echoed” in the names of settlements located close to the river: the village Akmenýnė, Šlčn D (R1872 Rus Каменка), and R1872 Rus Околица Каменка (currently, the village Sangéliškės, Šlčn D).

¹³ The Suf is used to derive words indicating actions (cf. Ambrasas 1993: 58ff.).

¹⁴ More on this opposition type, see Skorupa (2019: 144ff.; 2023: 49ff.).

Visinčià (the Šalčia trib.), according to Vanagas (1981: 378, 388), may be derived from the stem *vis-* related to *vies-*, just as in the potamonym *Viesà*, from Lith *viesulas* ‘strong whirlwind’ and further from InE *yej-* ‘bend, twist’; and further may be related to the limnonym *Vystùtis* that is derived from Lith *vystyti* ‘to wrap, to twist’. Probably, this potamonym is derived using Lith Suf *-inč(ius)* (Ambrazas 1993: 112; 132). The etymological version is plausible, as the river’s course is very winding and the flow in many sections is very rapid, especially in spring or during the rainy seasons when the river gathers waters of melting snow or rain from fields on its course. Hence, the conceptualization of the potamonym is: Lith *vies-* / *vys-* + *-inč(ius)* + *-a* → a meandering, winding, bending river → *Visinčià*.

1.4. Potamonyms Reflecting Possessivity or Relationship With Other Objects

These names are motivated by the notions of possessivity and location, in relation to other objects, such as the environmental characteristics of the hydro objects and their adjacent structures, etc. Vanagas (1981a: 45) posits that distinguishing the meaning of possessivity (belonging) from that of place is a challenging task, as these concepts share some commonalities, but are not synonymous. Nevertheless, in practical usage, the distinction between these two concepts can be challenging to discern.

Galinè (the Gauja trib.) and **Galinè** (the Rudamina trib.) may be related to and derived from Lith *gālas* ‘edge, border’ using Lith Suf *-iné* (cf. Vanagas 1981: 105; LVŽ III 53–56) and may have been motivated by their position/location on the edge, border of some land area (field): Lith *gālas* + Suf *-iné* → a river located at the end of a territory → *Galinè*.

Kubanka (the Maltupis trib.) is a “contaminated” potamonym derived using Pol Suf *-anka* / Rus Suf *-анка* (-яңка) from the oikonym *Kubónys* (Pabaré eld.) (cf. Vanagas 1970: 92; Skorupa 2021: 223). The stream flows at the outskirts of the village. Thus, the potamonym is motivated by the named stream’s proximity to the settlement and conveys the meaning of place/location near: *Kub-ónys* + Slav Suf *-anka* (-анка (-яңка)) → the stream near *Kubónys* → *Kubanka*.

Neprūdka (the Merkys trib.) is the Slav Pref *ne-* and Suf *-ka* (cf. Pol Pref *nie-* or Rus / Bel Pref *ne-* and Pol Suf *-ka* or Rus / Bel Suf *-ка*) derivative from Lith *prūdas* ‘pond; the dammed body of water’. Based on the derivation model, this is another “contaminated” toponym. Not far away from the stream’s mouth, there is Baltoji Vokè fishery pond. The motivation of the potamonym may be explained by the named stream’s location and convey the meaning of

undammed water body or the flowing water: Pref *ne-* + Lith *prūd-as* + Suf *-ka* → an undammed stream → *Neprūdka*.

Nezdilė (known as *Nezdilia*, *Nezdilka*) (the Verseka trib.) is most likely a name formed by non-Lithuanians from **Nedzilė* < **Nedilė* (or **Niedilė*), but possibly the authentic form is *Nezdilka*, which may be considered Slav Suf *-ka* derivative from the personal name, cf. Bel / Rus PN *Нездыло* (cf. Vanagas 1981: 230). Thus, the potamonym may be motivated by the concept of possessivity or belonging to a person in whose lands the named stream flows: Bel / Rus PN *Нездыл-o* + *-ka* (or *Нездыл-o* + Lith *f* inflexion *-e* → the stream in the lands belonging to *Нездыло* → *Nezdilka* (*Nezdilė*).

Prūdėlis (the Verseka trib.) names the stream that flows through Purvėnai pond near villages Vaizbūniškės (Aukštadvaris eld., Trak D) and Prūdelis (Kalesninkai eld., Šlčn D). The potamonym is probably Lith Suf *-elis* derivative from Lith *prūdas* ‘pond; the dammed body of water’ (cf. Vanagas 1970: 118) and probably is motivated by the stream’s relationship to the water body that lies in its course: Lith *prūd-as* + *-elis* → the stream that flows through the pond → *Prūdėlis*.

1.5. Potamonyms Motivated by the Physical State of Water

1.5.1. Some hydronyms reflect the sensory perception of water qualities in named rivers through the opposition *warm–cold* associated with water temperature. This is a common phenomenon among Indo-Europeans, including the Balts. These hydronyms have transparent meanings. As noted by Vanagas (1981a: 116), the meanings conveyed by hydronyms related to water temperature are easily discernible. **Šalčià** (the Merkys trib.; Šlčn D, Vrn D, BY (Bel *Солчай*)) may be derived from and related to Lith *šáltas* ‘cold’, *šálti* ‘to become cold, cool, freeze’, *šaltis* ‘coldness, frost’, similarly to the Šaltója, the Šaltupė and other names (Vanagas 1970: 151; 1981: 325). Thus, the potamonym was motivated by the coldness of its water, which is freezingly cold even in summer, and may be considered a transposition of the concept of coldness: Lith *šalt-is*, *šalt-as* [*t* → *č*] + *f* inflexion *-ia* → the river with (freezing) cold water → *Šalčià*. The river forms the direct opposition with its tributary the **Šalčýkščia** (the Šalčia trib.; Šlčn D, BY (Bel *Солчица*)), which is Lith Suf *-ykšč-* derivative from *Šalčià* (Vanagas 1970: 151). Being the derivative from the superior potamonym, *Šalčýkščia* shares the same etymology with *Šalčià* and is motivated by the transposition of the same concept into its name and the evaluation aspect of smallness indicated by the DIM Suf, which most probably is coupled with

pejorative sense: Lith *šalt-is*, *šalt-as* [*t* → *č*] + *-ykšč-ia* → a smaller river with (freezing) cold water → *Šalčykščia*. The DIM Suf is motivated by the length of the river, cf. the *Šalčià* (73,8 km) vs. the *Šalčykščia* (19,1 km).

1.5.2. Another group of potamonyms conceptualizes and conveys the meaning of water (natural water body) or its flow. **Aptyà** (the Gauja trib.; Šlčn D, BY (Bel *Onuma* / *Anuma*)) may be related to *Prus ape* ‘river’ (Vanagas 1981: 44; 1988: 62), and, therefore, may be motivated by the concept of the river, i.e. ‘large, natural water flow; current flowing along the surface of the land in its eroded channel’: *Prus ape* / Lith *ùpē* → current/flow → *Aptyà*. Similarly, **Ródūnia** (the Gauja trib.) may be related to InE **rod-* / **red-*, i.e. Lith *tekéti*, *plaūkti* (Vanagas 1988: 279) ‘to move in a current, to run (about a river, spring, etc.)’, cf. Lith *tékmē* ‘water current in the river’. The potamonym may also be a derivative of the Slavicized Lith Suf *-ūnas(-ē)*¹⁵ or may be Slav DIM Suf *-un(-ia)* (cf. Rus Suf *-yн(-я)*) derivative from an appellative and convey the meaning of amiability. Hence, the following possible conceptualization of the potamonym: InE **rod-* / **red-* + Lith Suf *-ūnas(-ē)* / Slav DIM Suf *-un(-ia)* → a (small/weak) water current → *Ródūnia*. Two more potamonyms are **Upésé** and **Mažoji Upésé** that name two streams that drain their waters into the Merkys just a couple of kilometres away from each other. *Upésé* is Lith Suf *-ésé* derivative from Lith *ùpē* (river) ‘natural flow, current’ (Vanagas 1970: 138; 1981: 355), i.e. it may be motivated by and convey the meaning of a large, natural water flow: Lith *ùpē* + *-ésé* → a flow/current → (*Mažoji*) *Upésé*. The marker *Mažoji* in *Mažoji Upésé* could be motivated by the length of the stream, which is only 2.5 km, but also due to its position in relation to the mouth of the Merkys, i.e. the *Mažoji Upésé* is further from the mouth of the Merkys than the *Upésé*.¹⁶ And finally, the potamonym **Vérža** (the Merkys trib.) may be related to and derived from Lith *veřžtis* ‘to move with force; to gush’ (cf. Vanagas 1981: 375) or ‘to flow; to pour’ may convey this meaning: Lith *veřž-tis* + *-a* → surging, forcefully flowing water → *Vérža*. All the potamonyms in this group may have been motivated by the “primitive” concepts that convey the meaning of water flow or currents.

¹⁵ The Suf is used to name/mark agents and was earlier used to name the property/characteristics holders (Ambrasas 1993: 149).

¹⁶ The choice of the adjective, therefore, is in line with Stachowski’s (2018) hypothesis that the further the tributary is from the river’s mouth, the less important it is, which is reflected in the river’s name. The ellipsized marker in *Upésé* is retrievable from the context of the opposition. The length of the *Upésé* is 7 km, thus, the marker could be Lith *Didžioji* ‘big/great’.

1.6. Potamonyms Reflecting the Named Hydro Object's Purpose

The meaning of the hydronyms classified within this group may be associated with the utilization of the named rivers for diverse purposes or advantages. **Máltupis** (the Šalčia trib.) is a compound potamonym the second component of which conveys the meaning of Lith *ùpē* / *ùpis* 'river', while the first component, as Vanagas (1981: 203) argues, may be related to Lith *málti* 'to grind grains into flour'. It is possible that once there was a mill installed by the river, its concept was transferred to the potamonym: Lith *mált-i* + *ùpis* → the river by which the grains are ground → *Máltupis*. Other representatives in this group are **Didýsis Piřčiupis** (the Merkys trib.; Šlčn D, Vrn D) and **Mažasis Piřčiupis** (the Merkys trib.; Šlčn D, Vrn D), which share the identical topolexeme *Piřčiupis*, the first component of which is related by Vanagas (1981: 260) to Lith *pirtiš* 'bathhouse', while the second component is Lith *upiš* 'river'. Taking into consideration the historical facts that the vicinity was a favourite hunting place of Grand Dukes of the GDL and there once was a royal hunting estate, the motivation of *Piřčiupis* can be interpreted as: Lith *pirt-iš* [*t* → *č*] + *upiš* → a bathing river/bathhouse river → (*Didýsis* / *Mažasis*) *Piřčiupis*.¹⁷

1.7. Potamonyms Reflecting the Sound Produced by Water

The potamonyms of this category are characterised by the sound produced by the currents of the named streams. **Ciras** (or *Cýras*) (the Šalčia trib.), cf., VK entries Pol *Cyr*, Rus / Bel *Ijbip* (1973 expedition). The potamonym may be related to Lith *čiréti* 'to warble, tweet, chirp' or *čirvēti* 'to chirp, tweet' with the replacement of the initial *č* to *c* (also, cf. Vanagas 1981: 75–76; LVŽ II 27) and is Lith *m* inflexion *-as* derivative. Thus, the potamonym may be motivated by the sound made by water reminiscent of the chirping of birds: Lith *čir-éti* [*č* → *c*] + *-as* → a wabbling, chirping stream → *Ciras*. Similar sound characteristics with a somewhat negative connotation are reflected in **Pabáldė** (the Šalčia trib.), which may be related to Lith *pabálda* 'knocking' or may be Lith *pa-* and *f* inflexion *-é* derivative from Lith *baldà* 'knocking' or *báldyti* 'to knock, to slam'. The potamonym thus may be motivated by the sound its current produces: Lith *pabáld-a* + *-é* / *pa-* + *bald-à* (*báld-yti*) + *-é* → a stream producing a noisy sound / a noisy stream → *Pabáldė*.

¹⁷ For the motivation and semantics of the differentiating markers Lith *Didýsis* (← *didýsis* ← *didis* 'great, big') – *Mažasis* (← *mažasis* ← *mážas* 'small'), see Skorupa (2019: 151–152; 2023: 200–201).

2. POTAMONYMS OF OPAQUE MOTIVATION AND SEMANTICS

This category comprises potamonyms, the motivational interpretation of which is complicated by the insufficiency of corroborating data and is, therefore, restricted to the mere possibility of discovery. At the time of nomination, it is likely that the meanings of the names were evident to the nominator, and their underlying motivations were clear. However, over time, the significance of these potamonyms has faded. This is due in part to the absence of individuals who resided along the named rivers or streams and had firsthand knowledge of their meaning. The evolution of language over centuries has also contributed to the loss of these meanings, as certain words that served as the origins of these names have undergone semantic shifts or have fallen out of use altogether. As a result, determining the motivations behind these potamonyms can prove to be a challenging task.

2.1. Potamonyms With Opaque Lexical Character of the Base

2.1.1. Potamonyms from appellative or personal names can have various interpretations regarding their motivation and semantics. They may reflect distinctive features of the named water body or convey possessivity.

Bienė (the Merkys trib.) and its dialectal forms VK *Bienka*, *Benà*, *Bienà* (1963 expedition) may be made by the principle of analogy from the potamonym *Binež* or is derived from InE **bhei-*, cf. Lith *mùšti* ‘to rush, flow, gush’ (cf. Vanagas 1981: 63; LVŽ I 472), hence, it may convey the meaning of a fast, vigorous water flow, which is unlikely, as the form is questionable: InE **bhei-* cf. Lith *mùšti* → gushing, fast-flowing stream → *Bienė*. a more likely version is that the potamonym is of anthroponymic origin and was derived from PN Lith *Benýs* or Pol *Biení*, *Bienia*: *Benedykt* (cf. PDBe) conveying the meaning of possessivity: PN Lith *Ben-ýs* (or Pol *Biení*, *Bienia*) + *-é* / *-a* → a stream in the lands belonging to *Benýs* or *Biení*, *Bienia* → *Bienė* (*Bienka*, *Benà*, *Bienà*).

Cùdykas Didelis (the Visinčià trib.) forms the opposition with ***Cùdykas Mäžas*** (the Cùdykas Didelis trib.).¹⁸ Both potamonyms are composite names the first components of which may be derived from anthroponyms *Tidikas* → *Cidzykas* → *Cudzykas* (Vanagas 1981: 76). Alternatively, the first components

¹⁸ More on this opposition, see Skorupa (2023: 50, 59).

may be related to Lith *cudà* / *cūda* ‘amazing, extraordinary’, cf. Lith *cūdas* ‘wonder, miracle, marvel’ ← from Pol *cud* ‘wonder, miracle, marvel’, or to Pol *cudzy* ‘alien, foreign, strange’, or PN Pol *Cudzik*. Thus, the motivation of both potamonyms may be explained by several models: 1) Lith *cudà* / *cūda* / *cūdas* → an amazing, extraordinary, marvellous river → *Cūdykas* (*Didelis* / *Māžas*), or 2) Pol *cudzy* → a strange/alien river → *Cūdykas* (*Didelis* / *Māžas*). The potamonyms could also be PN-motivated: *Tidikas* / *Cidzykas* / *Cudzykas* / *Cudzik* → the river in the territory belonging to *Tidikas* / *Cidzykas* / *Cudzykas* / *Cudzik* → *Cūdykas* (*Didelis* / *Māžas*). The differentiating markers are motivated by the lengths of the streams.

Drukupē (the Gauja trib.) is a compound potamonym the first component of which may be related either to PN *Drūkas* or Latv *drukis* ‘small, squab, stumpy child’ (cf. Endzelīns 1956: 229), or could be related to Latv *drukns* ‘stumpy, squab’. Therefore, hydronyms with the base *druk-* may be of configurational, metaphorical meaning (Vanagas 1981: 92). The second component is Lith *ùpē* ‘river’. The motivation and semantics of this name may be explained by the relative length of the named stream, which is approx. 12 km: Latv *druk-* + Lith *ùpē* → a short river, stream → *Drukupē*. Considering the possibility of the stream to be derived from the anthroponym, the motivation may be explained by the stream’s location in the lands belonging to a person, thus, conveying the meaning of possessivity: *Drūk-as* + Lith *ùpē* → a stream in the lands belonging to *Drūkas* → *Drukupē*.

Ščerba (the Verža trib.) may be of anthroponymic origin and related to PN Pol *Szczerba* or Bel / Rus *Щурба*, *Щерба* (cf. Biryla 1966: 280). Several families with this surname live in the district. In such a case, the potamonym may be motivated by the personal name and convey the concept of possessivity: PN Pol *Szczerba* or Bel / Rus *Щурба*, *Щерба* → a stream in the lands belonging to *Szczerba* / *Щурба*, *Щерба* → *Ščerba*. On the other hand, the potamonym may be related to Pol *szczerba* / Rus *щерба* (*щербина*) ‘a deficiency, loss; a crack; an empty place; a gap; unevenness, a pit, a knocked-out place’ and may be motivated by the riverbed which forms a crack/ditch in the fields across which the stream flows: Pol *szczerba* / Rus *щерба* (*щербина*) → a stream flowing in the crack/ditch → *Ščerba*.

2.1.2. Potamonym derived from an appellative, anthroponym, or oikonym presents several versions of its motivation and semantics, cf.: **Dūdōkas** (the Merkys trib.) is probably Lith *Suf* -*okas* derivative from Lith *dūdà* ‘pipe-shaped wooden or metal wind musical instrument (whistle); pipe’. This version may be plausible, as the actual riverbed of the stream is almost ideally straightened. Thus, the semantics of the potamonym may metaphorically convey the meaning of the pipe: Lith *dūd-à* + *-okas* → a stream with a pipe-like straight riverbed →

Dūdōkas. On the other hand, the name may be motivated by the concept of possessivity and be derived either from PN Lith *Dūdà*, cf. the model: PN Lith *Dūdà* + *-okas* → a stream in the lands belonging to *Dūdà* → *Dūdōkas*; or could be motivated by its location near *Dūdà* village, which once existed in the vicinity of Turgeliai (Turgeliai eld.) (cf. LVŽ II 369). In this case, the motivation may be explained by the concept of possessivity, i.e., the meaning of belonging to the place (oikonym).

2.1.3. Potamonym derived from an oikonym or anthroponym is a composite name ***Jūršiškės upėlis*** (the Nezdilė trib.) the first component of which may be either Lith Suf *-iškės* derivative from PN Lith *Jūrša*, *Jurša*, *Juršas*, *Jūršé*, *Jūršé*, *Juršia*, or *Juršys* (cf. LVŽ IV 268), or is a result of transonymization of the oikonym into the potamonym, as the named stream is in the vicinity of *Jūršiškės* (Dainava eld.). The second component presents the nomenclature term that names the type of the object named: Lith *upėlis* ‘stream’. Therefore, the semantics and motivation of the potamonym may be explained by two models: 1) PN Lith *Jūrš-*, *Jurš-* + *-iškės* + *upėlis* → a stream in lands belonging to *Jūrša* / *Juršas* / *Jūršé* / *Juršia* / *Juršys* → *Jūršiškės upėlis*; 2) *Jūršiškės* + Lith *upėlis* → the stream in the vicinity of *Jūršiškės* village → *Jūršiškės upėlis*.

2.1.4. Potamonyms derived from an appellative or oikonym present two cases with several versions of the interpretation of their motivation and semantics.

Pasgrindà (the Verseka trib.) names a stream flowing through Vaidagai (Kalesinkai eld, Šlčn D) and Pasgrinda (Matuizos eld., Vrn D) villages. It is not clear whether the potamonym or oikonym is the primary form. In case the potamonym is the result of transonymization, its motivation may be explained by the concept of possessivity and convey the meaning of belonging to the place (oikonym): *Pasgrinda* → the stream in the vicinity of *Pasgrinda* village → *Pasgrindà*. Alternatively, the potamonym may be a variant of Lith *pagrindà* ‘causeway, stone-paved, branch-lined path through the swamp’ or Lith *pāzgarda* ‘contempt’ (cf. Vanagas 1981: 238, 247). It is possible that the potamonym reflects the physiographic features and may be motivated by the stream’s solid, firm bottom allowing one to wade the stream through. Thus, the potamonym may reflect the meaning of wade: Lith *pagrindà* → a stream possible to wade through / a stream with wade → *Pasgrindà*.

Paraistė (the Šalčia trib.) names the river that flows in the vicinity of Burtimonys, Paraistis and Janonys villages (Butrimonys eld.). It may be related to Lith *paraistys* / *paraistė* ‘a place at a swamp overgrown with trees and bushes’, being motivated by the named stream’s location in the vicinity of such place: Lith *paraistė* → a stream in/by the swampy area overgrown with trees and

bushes → *Paraistė*.¹⁹ The name may also be related to Lith *paraistis* ‘feathery-leaved fern growing in wet forests’. Thus, the potamonym may be motivated by the phytolexeme: Lith *paraist-is* + *f* inflexion *-ė* → a stream in the area covered by feathery-leaved fern thickets → *Paraistė*. Alternatively, the river name may be a result of transonymization and is motivated by the oikonym: *Paraist-is* + *-ė* → a stream flowing in the vicinity of *Paraistis* → *Paraistė*.

2.2. Potamonyms Derived from Polysemous Appellatives

The indeterminate source of motivation within this category pertains to the vague characteristics of the motivating appellatives attributed to the potamonym. Though the postulated hypotheses to the origins of these potamonyms are plausible, the exact concept that the potamonym encodes remains indiscernible in the case of ***Gervinė*** (the Žižma trib.) that names the river in Belarus (Bel *Гервіня*) and Lithuania. The name may be related to and is Lith *Suf -inė*²⁰ derivative from Lith *gérvė* ‘crane’ (cf. Vanagas 1970: 157) or Lith *gežvinas* ‘male crane’. The potamonym may convey the meaning of a place: Lith *gérv-ė* / *gežv-inas* + *Suf -inė* → a river where cranes live/nest → *Gervinė*. Alternatively, the potamonym may be related to Lith *gervinė* ‘blackberry (*Rubus caesius*)’, was motivated by this phytolexeme, and conveys the meaning of the areas covered with blackberry bushes/thickets in the vicinity of the river: Lith *gervinė* → a river in an area covered with blackberry bushes → *Gervinė* (also cf. LVŽ III 155–157).

2.3. Potamonyms Motivated by Lexemes of the Same Form Conveying Different Meanings

The motivation and semantics of several potamonyms are now opaque as they were probably derived from lexemes of the same expression (form) conveying different meanings.

Utelinė (the Verseka (Versaka) trib.) may be Lith *Suf -inė* derivative from Lith *utélė* ‘small wingless parasitic insect’ and motivated by the concept of

¹⁹ The name may also be Lith Pref *pa-* derivative from the physiographic (nomenclature) term Lith *ražtas* ‘swamp overgrown with trees and bushes’ (cf. Vanagas 1981a: 24).

²⁰ The *Suf* is used to derive words denoting places (Ambrazas 1993: 63, 231).

a place infested with parasites: Lith *utēl-ė* + Suf *-inė* → a stream infested with parasites → *Utēlinė*. But it may also be derived from Lith *utēlynė* ‘overgrown place’ and convey the meaning of such a place: Lith *utēl-ynė* + Suf *-inė* → a stream in an overgrown place/a stream overgrown with lush vegetation → *Utēlinė*.

Versekà (the Merkys trib.) and **Versekà (Versakà)** (the Gauja trib.), according to Vanagas (1981: 374), could get their names by analogy with *Viršia* and could be derived from Lith *veřstis* ‘to roll (in waves)’, *viřsti* ‘to rush, flow, gush’, or from Latv *vērst* ‘to bend, turn’. Alternatively, these names could be derived from Lith *versmė* ‘spring, source; gushing, seething stream’ or *veřsmas* ‘eruption’. The fact that both rivers are rather fast-flowing and are fed by a myriad of springs along their winding riverbeds and the surrounding fields, makes all the above motivational versions plausible. Hence, the names may convey several meanings: Lith *veřs-tis* / *viřsti* / *vers-mė* / *veřs-mas* / Latv *vērst* + Lith Suf *-eka* → a river fed by springs/a fast-flowing, gushing river/a river with a winding riverbed → *Versekà (Versakà)*.

Žižmà (the Gauja trib.) names the river in Belarus (Bel *Жыжма*) and Lithuania, which Vanagas (1981: 402, 405; 1981a: 115) attributes to hydronyms formed from the names of emotional impressions and conveying an emotional evaluation. This hydronym, however, may be attributed to the opposition *good – evil* and motivated by the sound produced by the water flow, as the name may be derived from Lith *žiežti* ‘growl, be angry, scold, howl’ cf. Lith *žiežmara* ‘witch’, *žižé*, *žiūžé* ‘spitfire, harpy’ with a formant *-ma*: Lith *žižé* / *žiūžé* → the angry, howling river → *Žižmà*.

2.4. Metaphoricity

The configurational, metaphorical meaning may be traced in **Špigùle** (the Merkys trib.), which Vanagas (1981: 335) argues, is an alteration of *Špygūtis*, the form used by the Lithuanian-speaking locals in the District, and is Lith DIM Suf *-ulé* / *-u(i)tis* from Lith *špygà* / *špýgas* ‘fig; fist with the tip of the thumb protruding through the other fingers’. Semantically, this may be a hydronym of configurational meaning associated with the names of body parts. Also, the name may convey the meaning of ‘twisted bundle of straw, used to start covering the roof’ or ‘small, meagre, stunted, shrivelled’. This leads to several motivation versions: 1) Lith *špyg-à* / *špýg-as* + DIM Suf *-ulé* / *-u(i)tis* → a small, meagre, stunted, winding stream → *Špigùle* (*Špygūtis*); or 2) ~ → a stream by which the straw for roofing may be obtained → *Špigùle* (*Špygūtis*).

2.5. Potamonyms of Complex Semantics

The names in question may have originated from appellatives that could evoke various associations in different languages. However, due to a lack of available data, the etymons' origins are unclear, making it challenging to determine their genetic affiliation with a particular language.

Gaujā ((Bel *Гаўյя* / *Гаєвյя*), the Nemunas trib.), Būga (1961: 852) supposes, may be related to *Gavī, *Gavjās 'cow river' from Latv *giuovs* (govi) 'cow' or Lith *gaujā* 'pack'. In Bronys Savukynas' (1966: 188) view, this potamonym may be related to Lith *gótī* 'to rush', *atgótī* 'to come quickly', and *nugótī* 'to go quickly'. Meanwhile, Janīs Endzelīns (1974: 565) believes that *Gaujā* is related to Skt *džavate* 'to haste, hurry'. Other, including similar, etymologies are provided in LVŽ III 101. Thus, the name may be motivated by the animal species and convey the meaning of the river flowing through pastures where cows graze: Latv *giuovs* (govi) → a river along which cows graze → *Gaujā*. Alternatively, the name may be motivated by the fast water flow: Lith *gótī* → a fast, rapid river → *Gaujā*.

Merkys ((Bel *Мерычанка* / *Мяркіс*) the Nemunas trib.) may have originated from *-merč* or *-merk* (the root of Selonian origin) or Lith *mérkti* 'to rain heavily', 'to dip, dive into water' (cf. Būga 1961: 276; Vanagas 1970: 66), or from Bel *мяречка* 'swamp' (Būga 1961: 502). The name can be motivated by regular river floods during the rainy season or in spring when it collects water from melting snow from fields it flows across, conveying the meaning of flooding river: Lith *mérkti* + inflexion *-ys* → sinking, flooding river → *Merkys*. Also, it could be motivated by the swampy river basin and conveys this meaning: Bel *мяр-еча* + Lith inflexion *-ys* → a river flowing through swampy areas → *Merkys* (*Мерычанка* / *Мяркіс*).

Vókē (the Neris trib.) may be related to Tat *voka* 'water' (Krajewski 2013: 225) or Lith *vóktis* 'to clean', *vókti* 'to harvest'. Both motivation versions may be plausible. On the one hand, Tartars were people brought to Lithuania by the Grand Duke Vytautas and settled in the vicinities of the river, calling it by a common word denoting water. On the other hand, this name could be motivated by the cultivated fields around or the seasonal flooding of those fields, during which the river "cleaned/harvested" them. Hence, several meanings of the potamonym: 1) Tat *vok-a* + Lith *f* inflexion *-é* → water → *Vókē*; or 2) Lith *vók-tis* / *vók-ti* + *f* inflexion *-é* → a harvesting, cleaning river → *Vókē*.

2.6. Potamonyms Motivated by Colour

Colour-motivated hydronyms are one of the most universal semantic categories in the nomenclature of many Indo-European languages (Vanagas 1981a: 97–101).

Ditvà (the Nemunas trib.) may be related to Thr Διτας, Διτα or Alb *ditē* ‘day’ (which in prehistoric time could mean ‘light’) (cf. Vanagas 1970: 213; 1981: 88; LVŽ II 298). The name could be motivated by the bright light colour of water and convey the meaning of light, cleanliness, or clarity: ?Thr Διτας, Διτα / Alb *ditē* → a light, clear river → *Ditvà*. Though the version is arguable and needs further investigation.

Júodupė (the Kamena trib.) and **Júodupė** (the Verseka trib.) are related to and derived from Lith *júoda* ‘black’ + *ùpē* ‘river’ (Vanagas 1970: 232–233; ibid. 248; 1981: 138; LVŽ V 204–214). Leino (2011) and Stachowski (2018) argue that colour in hydronymy is often motivated by the colour opposition, e.g., *black–white*, and may be observed in the direct correlation of hydro objects characterized by geographical proximity. However, the analyzed rivers do not form oppositions with any other potamonyms motivated by the Lith *baltà* ‘white’. Thus, their motivation may be subject to several interpretations. In his research, Stachowski (2018) suggests that the ‘black’ colour in toponyms may be motivated either by the colour and fertility of the surrounding soil – the more fertile the soil, the darker it is, or by the named object’s age, or object’s significance. Both potamonyms name relatively small streams that are tributaries of bigger rivers. Hence, the colour component in both may be motivated by the streams’ insignificance or smallness: Lith *júoda* + *ùpē* → insignificant, small river (tributary) → *Júodupė*. Alternatively, both names may symbolically indicate the vicinities with fertile soil or may have conveyed other meanings at the time of denomination.

Raudonėlė (the Merkys trib.) may have originated from Lith *raudónas* ‘red’ (Vanagas: 1981: 274) and was derived by Lith DIM Suf *-élė* that marks the smallness of the named stream. The name could be motivated by the colour of the soil in its vicinity, or the colour of water: Lith *raudón-as* + DIM Suf *-élė* → a stream with red (brown) water → *Raudonėlė*.

2.7. Potamonym of Completely Opaque Semantics and Motivation (Unidentifiable Origins)

Okva (Lake Papis) is of completely opaque motivation and semantics, as at the time of writing this paper no linguistic or extralinguistic data that could

explain the origin of this potamonym was available to us. This name presents an interesting case for further research.

CONCLUSIONS

The motivational interpretation and meaning of potamonyms represent a complex and nuanced domain of inquiry that seeks to explicate the multifarious connotations, denotations, and implications of potamonyms, as well as the various factors that can shape and transform them over time. By analyzing 55 potamonyms in Šalčininkai District, several conclusions can be drawn.

1. The potamonyms under investigation can be classified into two distinct categories: those that possess transparent semantics and motivation, and those that exhibit opaque semantics and motivation.

A. Potamonyms with transparent motivation and semantics are easily identifiable and lack ambiguity. These names reflect the concepts and convey the meaning of a) vegetation species (4), b) animal species (2), c) physiographic features (8), d) relationship with other objects (6), e) water state (7), f) the named object's purpose (3), and g) sound perception (2).

B. Potamonyms with opaque motivation and semantics refer to river and stream names where the motivational interpretation is complex due to insufficient supporting data. The interpretation of these names is limited to mere possibilities of discovery due to a) the opaque lexical character of the base (9), b) polysemy of the motivating appellative (1), c) motivating lexemes of the same form that convey different meaning (4), d) metaphoricity (1), e) complex semantics as the motivating lexeme conveys different associations in different languages (3), f) motivating lexeme expresses the concept of colour (4), and g) unidentifiable semantics and motivation (1).

2. The impact of language contacts is traced in 11 potamonyms that demonstrate varying models of formation.

1) Potamonyms of Slavic origin are either Slav Suf derived from Slav PN (1), Lith transliteration of Slav appellatives (1), or Lith transliteration of Slav appellative or PN (1);

2) Contaminated potamonyms that are: a) Slav affixes derivatives from Lith bases – Suf derivative from Lith oikonym (1); Pref and Suf derivative from Lith appellative (1); b) Lith Suf derivative from Slav appellative (1);

3) Potamonyms of unclear origins are likely derived with Lith inflexions from Lith / Pol PN or InE stem (1); Lith appellative or PN, or from Slav appellative or PN (1); Lith or Latv appellative (1); Lith or Bel appellative (1); Lith or Tat appellatives (1).

ABBREVIATIONS

Alb – Albanian; approx. – approximately; Bel – Belarusian; BY – Belarus; cf. – compare; D – district; DIM – diminutive; El – Elektrénai; eld. – eldership; *et al.* – and others; *f* – feminine; ff. – forward; InE – Indo-European; km – kilometer; Latv – Latvian; Lith – Lithuanian; *m* – masculine; PN – personal name; Pol – Polish; Prus – Prussian; Rus – Russian; Skt – Sanskrit; Slav – Slavic; Suf – suffix; Šlčn – Šalčininkai; Tat – Tartarian; Thr – Thracian; Trak – Trākai; trib. – tributary; Vrn – Varénà.

POTAMONYM SOURCES

GK – *Gamtos katalogas. Lietuvos vandens telkiniai* [Nature Catalogue. Water Bodies of Lithuania]. Available at: <http://ezerai.vilnius21.lt/>.

GP – *Lietuvos erdvinės informacijos portalas* [Lithuanian Spatial Information Portal]. Available at: <https://www.geoportal.lt/geoportal/>.

R1872 – *Russia 1872 Map. Arcanum Maps – Historical Maps Online*. Available at: <https://maps.arcanum.com/en/map/russia-1872/>.

ŠDMW – *Šalčininkai District Municipality website*. Available at: <http://www.salcininkai.lt/>.

UETK – *Lietuvos upių, ežerų ir tvenkinių kadastras* [The Rivers, Lakes and Ponds Cadaster of the Republic of Lithuania]. Available at: <https://uetk.am.lt>.

VK – *Lietuvių kalbos instituto Baltų kalbų ir vardyno tyrimų centro vietovardžių, surinktų iš gyvosios kalbos, kartoteka* [The Catalogue of Lithuanian Place Names Written from the Living Language of the Research Center of Baltic Languages and Onomastics at the Institute of the Lithuanian Language].

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MW – *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*. Available at: <https://www.merriam-webster.com/>.

PDBe – *Lietuvių kalbos instituto lietuvių kalbos išteklių informacinė sistema „E. kalba“: Pavaržių duomenų bazė* [The Institute of the Lithuanian Language Informational System of the Lithuanian Language Resources: The Surnames Database]. Available at: <http://ekalba.lt/pavardziu-duomenu-baze>.

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Kognityvinis požiūris į Šalčininkų rajono potamonimų motyvaciją ir semantiką

SANTRAUKA

Remiantis kognityvinės onomastikos teorijomis, straipsnyje analizuojami Šalčininkų rajono potamonimai. Vykdant tyrimą laikomasi požiūrio, kad potamonimai, kaip ir visi topominai, turi reikšmę, kuri yra formuojama keletos veiksnių, tokų kaip tam tikros teritorijos geografija, istorija, kalba, kultūra ir pan. Šalčininkų rajonas, užimantis pietinę Vilniaus apskrities dalį, ribojasi su Vilniaus, Trakų ir Varėnos rajonais bei Baltarusija. Žvelgiant iš istorinės perspektyvos, nors Lietuvos teritorijoje, išskaitant Šalčininkų rajono savivaldybės žemes ir teritorijas, plytinčias gerokai toliau į rytus ir pietryčius nuo dabartinės Lietuvos teritorijos, nuo seno gyveno etninės baltų gentys, šiuo metu dauguma Šalčininkų rajono gyventojų tapatina save su lenkais, o lietuviai, rusai, baltarusiai ir kitų tautybių atstovai sudaro mažumą. Todėl šis rajonas yra lingvistinius tyrimus įkvępianti vieta, nes čia kalbiniai kontaktai daro poveikį įvairioms gyvenimo sritims, išskaitant ir kultūrą. Tyrimo rezultatai parodė, kad 55 išanalizuoti potamonimai gali būti suskirstyti į dvi grupes. Skaidrios motyvacijos ir

semantikos potamonimai (32 atvejai) yra lengvai atpažįstami ir aiškiai perteikia augalijos (4), gyvūnijos (2) rūšių, fiziografinių ypatybių (8), santykio su kitais objektais (6) vandens būsenos (7), įvardyto objekto paskirties (3) ir vandens skleidžiamo garso (2) reikšmes. Tuo tarpu neaiškios motyvacijos ir semantikos potamonimai (23 atvejai) kelia aiškinimo sunkumų dėl ne visai aiškaus leksinio pamato (9), motyvuojančio apeliatyvo polisemijos (1), tos pačios formos motyvuojančių leksemų, galinčių perteikti skirtinę reikšmę (4), metaforiškumo (1), sudėtingos semantikos, kai motyvuojanti leksema skirtinose kalbose sukelia skirtinias asociacijas (3), motyvuojančia leksema išreiškiama spalvos samprata (4) bei dėl visiškai neaiškios vardo kilmės (1). Taip pat tyrimas atskleidė kalbinių kontaktų įtaką rajono potamonimijai – identifikuota 11 potamonimų, kurie parodo skirtinimus darybos modelius: 1) slaviškos kilmės potamonimai – slavų asmenvardžio su slaviška priesaga vedinys (1), slavų apeliatyvinis vedinys – jo transliteracija į lietuvių kalbą (1), slavų apeliatyvinis ar asmenvardinis vedinys – jo transliteracija į lietuvių kalbą (1); 2) mišrios darybos potamonimai, kurie yra a) slaviškų afiksų vediniai iš lietuvių kilmės pamatinio žodžio – slavų priesagos vedinys iš lietuviškos kilmės oikonimo (1), slavų priesdėlio ir priesagos vedinys iš lietuviškos kilmės apeliatyvo ir b) lietuvių priesagos vedinys iš slaviškos kilmės apeliatyvo (1); 3) ne visai aiškios kilmės potamonimai lietuviškų galunių vediniai iš lietuvių ar lenkų asmenvardžio ar indoeuropiečių pamatinio žodžio (1), lietuvių arba slavų apeliatyvo ar asmenvardžio (1), lietuvių ar latvių apeliatyvo (1), lietuvių ar baltarusių apeliatyvo (1), lietuvių ar totorių apeliatyvo (1). Tikėtina, kad nominacijos metu potamonimų reikšmės ir jų motyvacija įvardytojui buvo aiškios.

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