

Finno-Ugric ‘dog’ and ‘wolf’

This article briefly examines the history of ‘dog’ and ‘wolf’ in Finno-Ugric(FU)/Uralic(U) languages on a lexical basis. There are several old Finno-Ugric words for ‘dog’ with etymologies that demonstrate a long coexistence between domestic dog and man, while the word for ‘wolf’ is a later innovation in all those Finno-Ugric languages that have one. The etymology of ‘dog’ and ‘wolf’ is one of many topics that have been discussed by Jorma Koivulehto (1983, 1993). This study presents further evidence from the Finno-Ugric languages that supports Koivulehto’s conclusion on the origin of Finnish *susi* ‘wolf’ and its cognates. The importance of language and cultural contacts for distinguishing between ‘dog’ and ‘wolf’ is strong in the light of the applied lexical data.

The prehistory of domestic dog and wolf

Mitochondrial DNA control region sequences of dogs and wolves show considerable diversity and support the hypothesis that wolves were the ancestors of dogs. As Mesolithic sites around the world indicate, the dog was the first domestic animal. The origins of domestic dogs go back more than 100,000 years before the present, but there are episodes of admixture and genetic exchange between wolves and dogs. The genetic diversity of dogs may have been enhanced by occasional interbreeding with wild wolf populations. Conceivably, it is assumed that the first domestication of wolves was not an isolated event, but rather a common practice of humans. (Vila & al. 1997, Savolainen & al. 2002.)

The circumstantial evidence of the genetic data for dogs and wolves suggests that dogs may have had diverse origins and the domestication of the wolf took place in many different areas. Recent genetic analyses of domestic dogs and wolves suggest that early domestic dogs were not morphologically distinct from their wild relatives. Accordingly, the gradual change that began around 10,000 to 15,000 years ago from nomadic huntergatherer societies to more sedentary agricultural population centers may have imposed new selective restrictions on dogs that ultimately resulted in marked phenotypical divergence from wild wolves. (Vila & al. 1997.)

A larger genetic variation in East Asia than in other regions and the pattern of phylogeographic variation both suggest an East Asian origin for the domestic dog, which can be approximated to about 15,000 years ago. Individual finds attest the early presence of the domestic dog in Southwest Asia as well as Early Mesolithic northern Europe (Benecke 1987, Clutton-Bock & Noe-Nygaard 1990, Savolainen & al. 2002). The detailed analysis of mitochondrial DNA data has, however, challenged science to reestimate the dating. Recent research suggests that the actual origin of domestic dogs may have even been as far back as 40,000 years ago, or, alternatively, not more than 15,000 years ago (Savolainen & al. 2002). However, it is notable that the oldest subcluster of clade A in Europe is estimated to be only $9,000 \pm 3,000$ years old. In sum, there are considerable genetic differences between Late Paleolithic and Early Mesolithic canid finds with respect to the affinity between dogs and wolves (Benecke 1987: 36–37).

The data used in the genetic analyses mentioned above do not originate from those areas where the FU languages are or were presumably spoken. Yet, a hypothesis

may be set up to show that even in domains where agriculture spread to earlier and population density grew faster, the genetic distinctness between domestic dog and wild wolf need not have been very old. In other words this difference probably was only slight or at least not very relevant at the time of the late Neolithic when the FU and Indo-European (IE) proto-languages would have been spoken.

‘Dog’ and ‘wolf’ in Finno-Ugric languages

The way ‘dog’ and ‘wolf’ are manifested in the Finno-Ugric languages shows considerable divergence. There are three old word stems with the meaning ‘dog’ each with a different distribution: the first being Finnic-Samoyedic, the second Finno-Permic and the third, Ugric. All three have an old etymological background that must go back several thousand years.

Contrary to the lexical history of the domestic dog, words meaning ‘wolf’ do not include a single etymology in FU that would extend to more than one subgroup. Either a euphemistic metonym or a loan word is used to indicate it. Essentially, this distinction was based on subsistence and economy. In the territories of reindeer husbandry the FU languages of the arctic zone, i.e. the Saamic languages, Mansi, Khanty and the Samoyedic languages all use numerous metonyms or etymologically unknown words, while those Finno-Ugric peoples for whom agriculture became the primary way of living, very frequently express ‘wolf’ with a loan word. Veps and Hungarian are exceptions to this rule, since their words for ‘wolf’ are derivations semantically based on metonymy.

‘Dog’

There are three old FU words for ‘dog’ that all have been reconstructed to an early proto-language stage though their distribution in the FU languages is not uniform. These are 1) Finnish *koira* (with cognates in other Finnic languages, Komi, Ob-Ugric, Hungarian and Samoyedic) (SSA 1: 385, UEW 168–169), 2) North Saami *beana*, Finnish *peni* (~ Mordvin, Mari, Permic) (SSA 2: 335–336, UEW 371), and 3) Hungarian *eb* (~ Ob-Ugric) (UEW 836, EWU 291). However, it should be noted that the meaning ‘dog’ in Finnish *koira* (resp. Finnic and Komi) is secondary and cannot be reconstructed in the oldest stage.

In addition to these three, FU languages may also display words meaning ‘puppy (dog)’, of which the distribution is much more limited. This word type often is a loan word. Russian (dial.) *kut'a* ‘puppy, whelp’ has been assumed to be the origin of many FU words: Estonian *kuts(ikas)* (Must 2000: 161–162, “obviously connected with Russian”; the sound change $t > ts$ actually is an indication of the influence of Russian dialects), Mordvin *kut'a*, *kut'u* (cf. also Chuvash *kâžâgâ*, *kâžâk*, alt. *kučuk* ‘shchenok’ (Paasonen 1990–96: 981)), Udmurt *kuća*, Komi *kyćan*. The Hungarian etymological dictionary (EWU 855) is more reserved in its comments on Hungarian *kutya* ‘dog’ as a possible Slavic loan. (Hungarian *kölyök* ‘puppy, whelp’ is considered to be likely a Bolgar Turkic loan word (EWU 815).

The Saamic languages display a Scandinavian loanword with the same meaning ‘puppy, whelp’: L *vielpés* (LO 1402), I *vielpis* (also ‘whelp of wolf’; IWb III: 403), N *vielppis* (~

fielppis) (Nielsen 1979 III: 761), Ko *viel'pes* 'junger Hund, Welp' (Itkonen, T.I. 1958: 742). This word has an obvious Proto-Scandinavian origin:

< Proto-Saamic **vielppees* < **vĕlppēs*

< *Proto-Germanic **hvelpaz*, cf. Old Norse *hvelpr* 'Welf, junger Hund' ~ Icelandic *hvolpr*, Norwegian *kvelp*, Swedish *valp*; Old English *hwelp*, Old High German *welp*, *wulp* (de Vries 1961: 271); German *Welp* < Low German 18th century (Kluge 1989: 786).

The ending of Saamic (North Saami) *vielppis* resembles certain old derivational suffixes. Korhonen (1981: 319–320, 327) distinguishes between two Proto-Saamic adnominal derivative suffixes **-s* that have been adjusted to the declension of old **-s*-derivations. The latter group includes many Finnish loan words in Saamic. In fact, the *-is* in *vielppis* is etymologically not a derivational suffix, but a replacement of the Germanic masculine nominative ending (Ante Aikio and Petri Kallio, p.c.).

In spite of the words listed above, there are only a few others with the basic meaning 'dog' that occur in individual FU languages. Erzya Mordvin provides an example of such a case and has two other words for 'dog': *kiska* (Paasonen 1990–1996: 782) and *šarka* (Paasonen 1990–1996: 2216). The etymologies of these words are unclear, but their phonological structure suggests that they are relatively late innovations. The vowel combination *i-a* in Erzya *kiska* and the voiceless stop *k* and word-final *-a* in *šarka* are signs of a recent change in the structure of those words¹. However, individual languages may display numerous expressions that emphasise a special feature of the dog, such as its colour. Those Saamis, for instance, who practised extensive reindeer husbandry would exploit the abilities of the dog in their everyday-life². Distinguishing between hair colour was an important means of calling the dog (T.I. Itkonen 1948: 181–182). One of the "cognitive synonyms" (Cruse 1986: 270–285) is North Saami *šūvon*, etymologically an IE loan word (Sammallahti 1999: 79; see below).

'Wolf'

Compared to 'dog' there is a dramatic difference in the way 'wolf' is conceptualised in the FU languages. In fact, the etymologies of the words for 'wolf' are divergent and may likely be any one of three possibilities: 1) a loanword (examples are presented below), 2) an euphemistic metonym or 3) an unknown etymology. There is no word for 'wolf' that occurs in more than one FU subgroup. In the arctic zones where the traditional prevailing economic way of life was not based on agriculture the 'wolf' was a frightening beast and constant threat to reindeer herds. Numerous euphemistic expressions have been used to denote 'wolf'.

The most widespread basic term for 'wolf' in the Saamic languages is (North Saami) *gumpe*, which has cognates in all other Saamic languages except the most geographically extreme South and Ter Saami (Lehtiranta 1989: 58–59). In addition to *gumpe* the Saamic languages have several other words with the meaning of 'wolf' and these are not transparent metaphors. They are mostly more local, e.g. North Saami (dial. Sweden) *ruomas*, Ume Saami *vaisjee* (Schlachter 1958: 148) and Ter Saami *čalhk* (T.I. Itkonen 1958: 642). The most widespread are (Ume Saami) *stålhpee* 'wolf', (North Saami) *stálpi* and (Inari Saami) *stälppi* 'wolf (also as a collective name),

¹ Mansi *āker* '(small house) dog' (Munkácsi 1986: 27) is semantically more specialised and subordinate to 'dog'.

² In traditional reindeer husbandry some dogs were very aggressive toward the reindeer and could even kill calves. The reindeer were afraid of the dog especially when it was dark and when wolves would move about. (T. I. Itkonen 1948: 172–176.)

especially as a wild beast (Inari Saami)' (IWb III: 173–174, Lagercrantz 1939: 837; cf. below).

The divergence as well as semantic motivations of various euphemistic expressions for 'wolf' are even more interesting from the taxonomical perspective of canids and its distinctions between 'dog' and 'wolf'. The dictionary of Skolt and Kola Saamic languages by T. I. Itkonen (1958) provides an illustrative list of the wide range of euphemisms that are used to avoid a direct reference to 'wolf'. In Saami folk tradition it was believed that one should use only a metonym for a wild beast (wolf and bear), especially on a hunt. The reindeer owners hoped to keep a wolf away from their herds by purposely not mentioning of its name (T.I.Itkonen 1948: 362). The list of meanings contains such expressions as 'lean guy, thin tail', 'the dog of God' (see, T.I.Itkonen 1948: 366–367), 'the one on the road', 'the one living outside' etc. (T.I.Itkonen 1958: 162, 282, 317, 369, 686, 796, 918). Skolt and Kildin Saami *paldes* 'wolf' is derived from the verb 'to scare, frighten' Skolt Saami *pâ'ldded*, Kildin Saami *pa'lded*).

The conceptualisation of 'wolf' in the Ob-Ugric languages resembles that of the Saamic languages in the sense that they have an etymologically opaque taboo word for 'wolf' (Mansi *śēs*⁴ 'wolf', Munkácsi 1986: 593; Khanty *jöyrəy*, *jewra*, *jewar* 'wolf', Karjalainen 1948: 141, Steinitz 1966: 352) though speakers prefer to avoid it and use euphemisms instead. A euphemism may in turn change into a taboo word. Those metonyms that have been used in different Mansi and Khanty dialects include such expressions as 'reindeer-biting-animal(-man)', 'tooth-animal' (Munkácsi 1986: 482, 483, 520, 690), 'carcase-animal', 'hairy' and 'the one who lives on the swamp' (Karjalainen 1948: 634). Nenets Samoyed is an example of a language in which the reference to 'wolf' is always based on a euphemistic metonym that means something else, literally such as 'animal/beast', 'the recipient of the reindeer sacrifice', 'the one (who is) outside', 'outsider', 'monster', 'grandfather', 'the beast for a reindeer' and 'long tail' (Pyrerka & Tereschchenko 1948).

Some of the metaphors describe the appearance of the wolf as 'hairy', 'tooth-animal' or 'lean (one)', but extrinsic expressions that emphasise some its behavioural features are at least as frequent. The literal meanings of these compounds depict the wolf as an animal living 'outside', 'on the road' or 'in the swamp', or as a beast that threatens and attacks the reindeer and, thus, indirectly, man's economical well-being. In addition to these two basic types there are certain euphemisms that are more stereotypical as metonyms from the viewpoint of lexical semantics. A given word is used with a secondary meaning, one with which the word originally did not occur. These words are means of suppletive metonyms that simply refer to the wolf with another word such as 'monster' and 'grandfather'.

Because the euphemisms that are used for wolf in FU languages are divergent, the lexical stock does not seem to open considerable perspectives for an etymological analysis. However, it is noteworthy that there is one semantic type that occurs more systematically in FU languages, i.e. metonyms that refer to the wolf as an animal with a tail. In this case, most commonly 'wolf' is a denominal derivation of 'tail'. This

³ The Finnish meanings in the given dictionary are 'riukuniekka, riukuhäntä'.

⁴ The early assumption repeated by Katz (1988: 90, 2003: 112) according to which Finnish *susi* 'wolf' corresponds to Mansi **śēś* ~ **śūś* (reconstructed by Katz) is not phonologically plausible and based on a wrong and out-of-date hypothesis of vowel alternation in FU languages. In fact, the way Katz reconstructs the consonants contradicts the Finnic-Mansi comparison as well. Moreover, the etymology that Koivulehto has shown for Finnish *susi* demonstrates the different origin of the Finnic and Mansi 'wolf'. (Koivulehto 1983: 118–119, 1993: 22–25.)

kind of expression for ‘wolf’ occurs in Saamic (Ume Saami *sieibèhka* ‘wolf’ < *säibee* ‘tail’; Schlachter 1958: 116, cf. also Lagercrantz 1939: 789), Finnic (Veps *händikaz*⁵ ‘wolf’ < *händ* ‘tail’), Hungarian (*farkas* ‘wolf’ < *farok* ‘tail’; EWU 358–359) and Samoyedic. In Mansi, a similar derivation, which should be translated word-for-word as ‘twigtail’, means ‘dog’ (*ńir-leypä* ‘Hund’ < *ńir* ‘Gerte, Rute, Zweig, Reis’ + *leypä* ‘geschwänzt, schwänzig’; Munkácsi 1986: 256, 363). Conclusively, in this semantic domain the way ‘wolf’ is manifested crosses the border between agricultural and non-agricultural areas.

Those metonyms of ‘wolf’ in which the tail of the animal is the essential semantic element are probably more relevant for biological interpretations than lexical ones, since words meaning ‘tail’ originate from very different sources. The sociobiological significance of the tail is obvious because it is one of the most important indicators of the wolf’s senses and behaviour towards its companions, other animals and environment. The social relationship of the wolf pack of wolves as well as the animal’s individual responses are expressed by means of its tail. As regards the title of this paper, it appears to me that the habits of the two canids, dog and wolf, are more important in the light of lexical data than distinctive biological characteristics. The companionship of the domestic dog to man is evidenced by those old FU words that are represented in several FU language groups. On similar grounds one may conclude that since the words for ‘wolf’ are considerably younger than those for ‘dog’ in FU languages, the habits of the wolf and the harm it has caused have played a greater role in the life of the speakers of prehistoric FU languages than ‘wolf’ as a certain mammalian species.

Many metonyms of ‘wolf’ are actually based on a similar extension of semantic space such as “Kenning”-metonyms in Scandinavian folk poetry and those that Kuusi (1992) points out in Kalevala epics. Although many euphemisms for ‘wolf’ are actually compound words, as “Kenning”-metonyms are, there are also underived metonyms that do not essentially differ from the compounds. Both types are euphemisms that aim only at avoiding the name of the aggressive and hostile animal.

Very few of the euphemisms for ‘wolf’ in FU, such as the ‘the dog of God’ ~ ‘wolf’ in Saamic, are mythic metaphors. In fact, the mythic component of this particular expression is actually based on a Saami folk legend. The difference between metaphors and metonyms has special importance from the viewpoint of language contact research. Because loan words are semantically more opaque, they typically have only one meaning, and, for the reasons mentioned, they have been able to enter the domain of ‘wolf’ as metonyms as well as more neutral concepts⁶.

Indo-European loans in Finno-Ugric

In the Indo-European languages there are some very early words that originate from **ul̥kʷo-* ‘wolf’ or **ulpʰ-* and have their origin in Proto-Indo-European. The distribution of this stem in Indo-European languages shows that the wolf was widespread throughout the oldest linguistic and cultural Indo-European territory. It even had a

⁵ In Veps the derivation *händikaz* has completely replaced the older Finnic word for ‘wolf’ (Finnish *susi* etc.).

⁶ The relationship between metaphor and metonymy is currently actively discussed at length in both cultural and lexico-semantic studies as in cognitive linguistics. Barcelona (2003: 4) sums up the state of this research by claiming that metonymy is probably more fundamental to language and cognition than metaphor.

considerable role in certain ritual traditions. (Gamkrelidze & Ivanov 1995: 413–417, Pokorny 1959: 1178–79.)

In the beginning of this article it was noted that the genetic analysis of early domestic dogs and wolves emphasises the great resemblance between these two animals. The lexical blurring of different canids is illustratively seen in the way certain words for ‘jackal’ and ‘fox’ in some Indo-European languages have evolved by means of extending the root variant for wolf **ulp^h-*. A similar intertwining between ‘dog’ and ‘wolf’ is common in several Indo-European branches as well (Gamkrelidze & Ivanov 1995: 432–433, 505, Pokorny 1959: 1179).

Although one of the starting points of this article was that many FU words meaning ‘wolf’ are loan words, none of them was borrowed from the earliest known IE words. In fact, very few of them originate from either of the two Proto-IE roots. Contrary to the present-day systematic taxonomy of canids, borrowed FU words for ‘wolf’ etymologically originate from diverse IE sources. The age of these loans varies a great deal. Although the areal distribution of these words suggests that borrowing took place separately in various FU speaking areas some of them are very old and originate from prehistoric times (Finnish *susi*, Udmurt *kion*), while others are often recent loan words that occur in one language only⁷. An illustrative example of the latter type is Estonian *hunt* ‘wolf’ < Middle Low German *hunt* ‘dog’ (Mägiste 1982–83: 407–408, Hinderling 1981: 106, Raun 1982: 14).

One of the observations demonstrating the influence of IE languages on the FU conceptualisation of ‘wolf’ is to be found among Koivulehto’s numerous etymologies. The article, first published in 1983, and revised in 1993, looks at the loss in Proto-Finnic of a dental nasal before an affricate, **-nc-* > **-ć-* (Koivulehto 1982, 1983, 1993). The etymology, which suggests that Finnish *susi* (cognates in Ingrian, Karelian, Votic, Estonian (dial.), Livonian; < **suti* ~ **súci* < **śu(n)ti* ~ **śu(n)ci* ~ **ćunti*) originates from an old IE source < (Pre-Baltic or Pre-Germanic) **k_ṛntó*, is fully adequate and demonstrates the author’s subtle but absolute mastery of all the tools an etymologist needs.

⁷ Ter Saami *vīrre* ‘seal; wolf’ displays two meanings that refer to clearly different animals. Neither of them is borrowed from the source language because the word descends from Russian *звер’* ‘animal’ (T.I.Itkonen 1958: 756). Another word, Skolt Saami *nāu’dd* ‘seal, wolf’, has been similarly used in the two meanings. The evidence of North Saami *návdi* ‘wolf; creature, fur animal; beast’ (Sammallahti 1989: 305; Lagercrantz (1939: 518) presents the alternative meanings in the opposite order; E. Itkonen (1969: 148) lists the meanings ‘wildes Tier; Raubtier (bes. Wolf); Pelztier’) suggesting that ‘wolf’ is the primary sense and ‘seal’ is a metaphorical extension of it. More precisely, it is an example of a mythic metaphor (cf. Siikala 1992). According to the old folk belief, seal was a wolf and the Skolt Saamis preferred not to eat its meat (T.I.Itkonen 1958: 906). Before that the metonymic meaning ‘wolf’ rose from the less specified meanings, and originally *návdi* is a Scandinavian or Finnic loan word in Saamic, cf. Old Norse *naut* ‘vieh, rind’, Icelandic and Norwegian *naut*, Swedish *nöt* < Germanic **nauta* ‘property’ (Hellquist 1980: 721, T.I.Itkonen 1958: 275, Lagercrantz 1939: 518, de Vries 1961: 406; E. Itkonen (1969: 148) considers Finnic, cf. Finnish *nauta* ‘bovine’ (< Germanic) as a possible alternative source for the Saamic word).

In some southern Estonian dialects *vilks* ‘wolf’, a Latvian loan word (< Latvian *vilks* ‘wolf’) was used as a euphemistic interjection to frighten the wolf away from the cattle (Vaba 1997: 241).

Erzya Mordvin *veṛgis*, Moksha *v̆rḡas* ‘wolf’ (< Proto-Mordvin **virḡas* < Pre-Mordvin **virkes*) is an Iranian loan word, cf. Old Persian **vrka-*, Avesta *vahrka-* ‘wolf’ etc. (Joki 1973: 342–343, Keresztes 1986: 187).

Mari (East) *pire*, (West) *pirə* ‘wolf’ is commonly labeled as a Tatar loan word (< *bürə* id.; Isanbaev 1994: 118, Paasonen & Siro 1948: 93, Szilasi 1901: 165). Actually, one would expect a syllable-initial *-ii-* in Mari as well because Tatar loan words generally preserve the labial character of the vowel in Mari as both Isanbaev’s and Räsänen’s lists indicate. For this reason, Räsänen (1923: 53) points out that Bashkir *birə*, *bürə* better corresponds to Mari *pire*.

The IE root is **kuon-*, **kun-* ‘dog’; cf. Sanskrit *ś(u)vā*, gen. *śúnaḥ*, Avestan *span-*, *spānəm*, Armenian *šun*, gen. *šan*, Greek *kúon*, *kunós*, Latin *canis* ‘dog’, Welsh *cenaw* ‘young dog or wolf’, Gothic *hund*s, Old Icelandic *hundr*, Lithuanian *šuõ*, Latvian *suns* ‘dog’, Tocharian A *ku*, obl. *kon* ‘(male) dog’ (Pokorny 1959: 632–633). Interestingly, the same IE root **kuon-*, **kun-* that originally meant ‘dog’ and is widely represented in modern IE languages (Pokorny 1959: 632), was borrowed in different stages and places into FU languages⁸. This is also the starting point of Estonian *hunt* ‘wolf’, mentioned above. The same IE root **kuon-* is represented in North Saami *šuvon* ‘good (alert) dog’ (~ Saamic) < **šovonji*, which apparently originates from a Pre-Baltic satem-language (< **šun(i)-*; Sammallahti 1999: 79). (Cf. also Petri Kallio's article in this volume.)

Finally, the list of more recent IE loan words that mean ‘wolf’ in FU can be supplemented with the following etymology:

Ume Saami *stàlhpee* ‘wolf’, North Saami *stálpi* and Inari Saami *stälppi* ‘wolf (also as a collective name), especially as a wild beast (Inari Saami)’ (IWb III: 173–174, Lagercrantz 1939: 837) have a possible source in Scandinavian that phonologically matches the Proto-Saamic reconstruction without difficulties and explains the word-initial consonant cluster *st-*, which does not occur in words with a FU etymology. Semantically, it must be assumed that like many others, this kind of metonym is also possible. As a loan word, it soon took on the lexicalised meaning ‘wolf’, but was used as a metonym of the basic word for ‘wolf’ *gumpe*. Therefore, it did not evoke the same emotional colours of fear and respect.

< Proto-Saamic **stälppē*

< Scandinavian, cf. Old Norse *stalpi*, Icelandic *stalpi* ‘halbgewachsener Knabe’, Swedish (dial.) *stalpe* ‘Säule’ (de Vries 1961: 543). According to de Vries (op. cit. 551) this word historically belongs together with Scandinavian *stolpi* ‘Pfeiler, Säule’, Icelandic *stólpi*, Norwegian, Swedish and Danish *stolpe* (> North Saami *stoalpu* ‘Pfosten’) with Balto-Slavic cognates (Pokorny 1959: 1020).

Phonologically, the Scandinavian stem matches the Saamic one without difficulties. The development of Proto-Saamic **ā* > (North Saami) **á* is very frequent in Finnic loan words. There are also some old FU stems, in which **a* > **o* > **ō* has not taken place and **a* is represented in **á* > (North Saami) *á* (Korhonen 1981: 90–91).

Semantically, the meaning of the Scandinavian word is quite distant from that of the Saamic. However, if one compares it with the meaning of Icelandic *stalpi* ‘halbgewachsener Knabe’, the Scandinavian source becomes as natural a metonym of ‘wolf’ as Samoyedic ‘grandfather’.

Conclusions

The genetic difference between dog and wolf, the archaeological finds of the earliest domesticated dogs, and the lexical evidence of the Finno-Ugric languages all reflect different time-levels. The time gap constitutes thousands of years. However, the lexical data presented in this overview suggest that the biological distinction between the two canids was probably slight for prehistoric Finno-Ugric speaking communities. It is not clear to which extent the distinction was based on biological features and what other factors were relevant. The most important difference between the two

⁸ Napolskikh (1994: 37, 2001: 370–371) suggests a Tocharian origin for Permic **kion* ‘wolf’ (Udmurt *kion*, *kijon*, *kyjon* ‘wolf’ (WW 105), Komi *kōjin*, *kōin* ‘wolf’ (Fokos-Fuchs 1959: 388, SW 96)), but his phonological explanation is not adequate. The Udmurt and Komi variants suggest different reconstructive forms: **kōin* or **kion* ‘wolf’ depending on which Permic language is emphasised (Lytkin – Guljaev 1970: 139). As such this comparison remains inconclusive. Moreover, it is difficult to understand, why anyone would agree with Napolskikh’s baseless claim that the source was a “Paratocharian” language.

canids obviously was that man could make profitable use of the domestic dog, while its wild relative remained a feared and dangerous threat. If this assumption is correct, the habits and behaviour of these canids were more important than the biological characteristics of the two species.

With regard to economy, there is a clear difference in the way various societies have distinguished between 'dog' and 'wolf'. Those Finno-Ugric languages that were once traditionally spoken in agricultural societies display two separate words. Those Finno-Ugric languages that belonged to societies in which hunting, gathering and reindeer husbandry were the prevailing ways of living do have a lexical concept for 'dog', but prefer to use metonyms of 'wolf'. Although one might expect that metaphors and concrete parallels could supply the expressions for 'wolf', the euphemisms for this word are very rarely metaphors. The 'the dog of God' is an exception and the sole metaphor among numerous metonyms with diverse semantic backgrounds.

The etymological background of 'wolf' in various Finno-Ugric languages emphasises the importance of language contacts, especially the borrowing of Indo-European words that took on the meaning 'wolf' in Finno-Ugric. In many cases the Indo-European word originally meant something other than 'wolf'. In some case such as Finnish *susi* (Finnic) the original meaning of the Finno-Ugric 'wolf' in Indo-European was 'dog'.

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