

Studies of Mansi toponymy in the XVI-XXI centuries¹

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Abstract. The article highlights information about the history of localization of the Mansi people, as well as provides a general overview of toponymic studies of the Mansi language, from the first theories that emerged at the beginning of the XX century to modern ones, including critical ones.

Keywords. Mansi dialects, toponymy, localization.

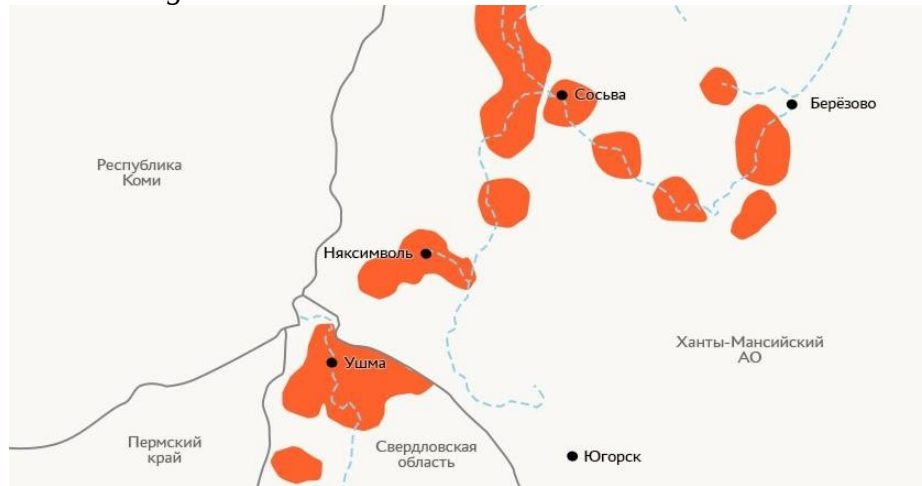
1 INTRODUCTION

In the current conditions of the rapid decline in the number of native speakers of the Mansi language, the territory of their residence is narrowing. Today, the Mansi language is spread mainly along the lower reaches of the Ob River and to the east of the Ural Mountains: in the Khanty-Mansiysk Autonomous District, along the left bank of the Ob River and its tributaries (the Sosva, Lyapin Rivers), as well as along the Lozva River; a small number of native speakers of the Mansi language

¹ Supported by Russian Science Foundation, project no. 20-18-00403 'Digital Description of Uralic Languages on the Basis of Big Data'.

also live in the Yamal-Nenets Autonomous District of the Tyumen Region, Sverdlovsk areas (Fig. 1).

Fig. 1. Mansi settlement area. The current situation.



It is known that Mansi habitats have changed over time. Previously, the localization of this people was determined much to the west and south of the modern territory. According to toponymy data [Sokolova], until the XVI century, the Mansi lived in the middle Urals and to the west of it, in the Perm Kama region, on the tributaries of the Kama, Vishera and Chusovaya rivers, as well as in the upper and middle reaches of the Pechora River, in the south their territory was limited to the upper reaches of the Ufa River and the lower reaches of the Tura, Tavda, Sosva, Pelym and Lozva rivers. There is also a hypothesis that in the XVII–XVIII centuries the Mansi inhabited the entire strip of the western foothills of the Urals from the upper reaches of the Pechora in the north to the upper course of the Ufa River in the south [Pudovkin, Pudovkina, Dolgorukova 2012].

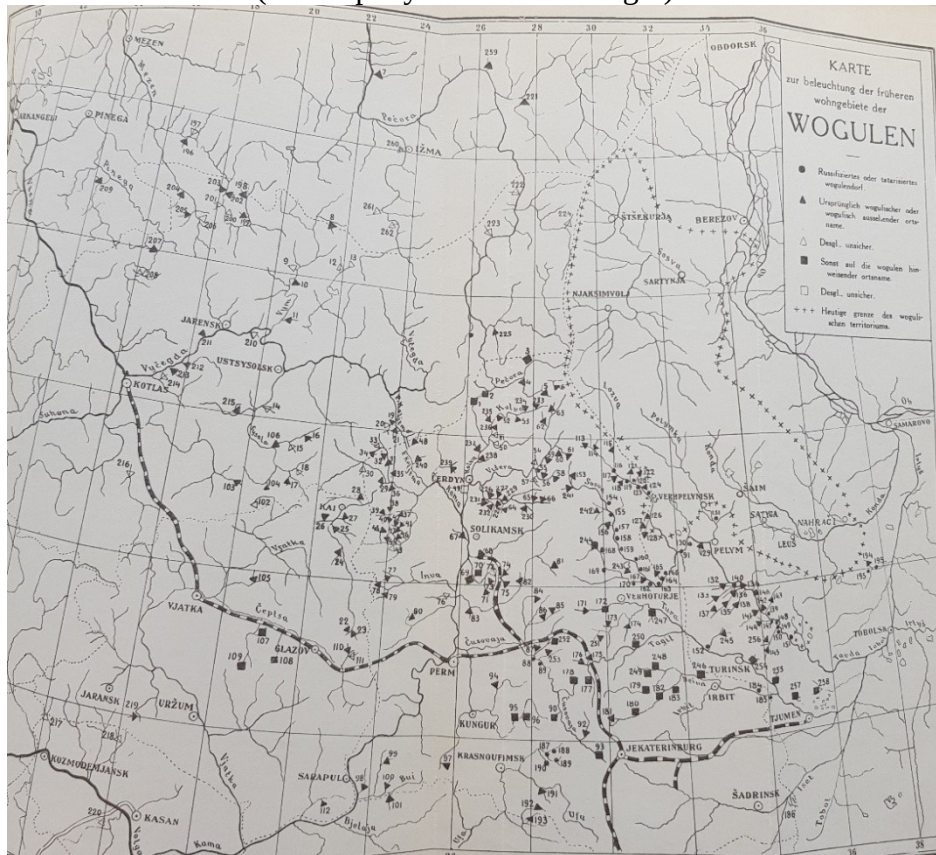
In the historical reference [Sokolova] it is reported that even in Russian documents of the XVI century. Mansi are mentioned along the rivers Chusovaya, Tagil, Neiva, Kokui, Barancha, Vishera, Pechora, Lozva, Sosva, Lyalya, Konda. However, by the XVII century, this zone had significantly decreased to Vishera in the west, middle Lozva in the north, middle and lower reaches of the Pelym and Sosva in the east and the upper reaches of the Tura and middle reaches of the Tavda in the south. Two centuries later, due to the appearance of Mansi in Northern Sosva and Lyapin and their disappearance from the territory of Tura and Tavda, these borders were shifted to the east and north of the country. By the beginning of the XX century, small settlements of Mansi remained on Vishera, on Pelym, Sosva and Ivdel.

The information of Z. P. Sokolova, regarding the initial localization of Mansi to the south and west of the Ural Mountains, correlates with the data of Artturi Kannisto. "The researcher is sure that the area of their residence in the middle of the XVIII century spread in this territory, in the districts of the Republic of Tatarstan. Pechora and Izhma, but later occupied by other peoples" [Kannisto 1927: 57-74]. In favor of this, according to Kannisto, as evidenced by the numerous villages discovered, whose population according to official data at the beginning of the XX century was counted among the Mansi, despite the complete linguistic fusion with the neighboring Russian and Tatar populations.

There is also a historical testimony of the priest Pitirim (XV century) about the residence of Mansi near the tributaries of the Pechora. This is also evidenced by a number of dictionaries of the

Verkhotur, Cherdyn and Kungur dialects of the Mansi language, recorded by P. S. Pallas at the end of the XVIII century [Pallas 1787; 1789].

Fig. 2. Map of Mansi toponyms, according to A. Kannisto (▲ – toponyms of Mansi origin).



blue – Cherdyn, green – Kungur, red – Solikamsk, purple – Verkhotur, yellow – Kuzino

According to Kannisto, another proof that the Mansi habitats were previously much more extensive than at present are toponyms ending in -ya, encountered by the researcher outside the established

Mansi places of residence and explained from the point of view of their language or pointing to them [Kannisto 1927: 73]. This may be evidenced by the toponyms discovered by the researcher near the Sysola and Vym rivers in the lower reaches of the Vychegda River. A number of Mansi toponyms are found in the area of the northern mouth of the channel flowing from the Kama River to Vychegda (for example, the toponyms *Lapja*, *Vol'* (*Loβōl'*), *Loþja*, *Pešja*), as well as at the northern Keltma and in other places (Fig. 2).

However, as later studies of Mansi toponymy show, these arguments are not confirmed (see [Maydanova 1962], [Glinskikh 1972; 1978], [Matveev 1968; 1982], [Napolskikh 2015], [Gaydamashko 2022]). Thus, in the article by A. S. Krivoshchekova-Gantman, the opinion is expressed that "the ending *-ya* in the geographical names of the Upper and Middle Kama region can go back to the Perm word *yu* 'river' or be a reflection of the Perm suffix of adjectives *-a*" [Krivoshchekova-Gantman 1983: 21]. Thus, most of the postulated A. Kannisto toponyms to the west of the Urals are not Mansi, but Permian. At the same time, single Mansi lexemes do not have evidentiary force. The most possible toponymic formant *-tor* (Lake Valentorskoye, Andorrskoye, Colter) is mentioned in the works of A. K. Matveev, but no toponyms with a similar affix have been found south of the Tavda basin [Matveev 1990].

According to O. V. Smirnov, "all the materials accumulated to date make it possible to divide the territory where toponymic traces of Mansi residence are found into two zones that differ significantly from each other in the density of the Mansi substrate, its character and partly

dialect affiliation. The first zone covers the basin of the Tavda River. This is the territory where, back in the XIX – early XX century, western and southern Mansi groups lived, finally assimilated by the middle of the XX century, whose dialects have come down to us in the records of B. Munkachi, A. Kannisto and other scientists. The second zone is to the south and southwest of this area (mainly in the Middle Urals, in the upper reaches of the Tura and Tagil rivers and in the middle reaches of the Chusovaya River), where the Mansi were assimilated until the beginning of the XIX century" [Smirnov 2001: 48].

In the article "Substrate Mansi toponymy on the territory of the former residence of Mansi" O. V. Smirnov, analyzing historical written sources and mapping the information obtained in the study of modern Russian toponymy, comes to the conclusion that the western slopes of the Urals were inhabited by Mansi from the eastern side, while in the territory of the Middle Urals they did not move west of the middle course of the left tributaries of the Kama. The author believes that "the material of the substrate Mansi toponymy is of fundamental importance for the search for Mansi toponyms in other territories claiming the status of ancient Mansi, since chronologically and geographically it is closest to the extinct ancient Mansi dialects" [Smirnov 2001: 48-50]. In his work, Smirnov gives a voluminous list of Mansi hydronyms and microtoponyms distributed throughout the lower reaches of the Tavda, for example: *En'ya river* 'big river', *lake Lachtur* 'round lake', *lake Tumpa* 'island (lake)', *river Hyuksa* 'sable (river)', *tract Porvor* 'transverse forest', *swamp Kilyay/Tilyay* 'swamp', *tract Saleur* 'deer

mountain', *Kulya river* 'fish', *Ponyinya river* 'net, seine', etc. The researcher also identifies some dialectal features – the presence of toponyms in š (č), characteristic of western and southern dialects, as opposed to s in northern (*shish-/chish-* with northern *sīs* 'back' [MK 1986: 551]).

Search for substratum Mansi toponyms in the areas adjacent to the Middle Urals – settlements of the upper reaches of the pp. Tura, Tagil and Southern Sosva, the middle reaches of the Chusovaya River, showed significant differences with the results of the study of the Tavda River basin: the absence of characteristic formants and the weak representation of substrate names on the territory of the Tavda basin and the western slopes of the Middle Urals indicate that the Mansi population in these areas was rare [Smirnov 2001: 54]. According to Smirnov, the Mansi hydronyms ending in *-ya* and *-chash/-shash/-chach* (the rivers Bushash, Tyachach, Pashya, Surya, Nyrya and others) have been preserved most completely in the studied territory.

The linguist's study of Mansi toponymy also allowed us to confirm a number of phonetic features of local Mansi dialects identified by Janusz Guya during the study of Mansi lexical lists in the XVIII century, and to clarify their area. For example, the preservation of the ProtoMansi **ā* in the Chusovsky southern dialect in accordance with the western, eastern and northern o (formants *-chash/-shash /-chach*), the transition of the initial *p-* to *b-* in the Chusovsky, Turin and Tagil dialects (*Bandeika river*, *Bunar*, *Bushash River*) – in the basin of the Yuzhna RiverI Sosva such Mansi toponyms are not recorded [Smirnov 2001: 67]. In general, the author notes that with regard to the dialect

affiliation of toponyms recorded in the territory under consideration, they are most closely related to the South Mansi Tavda dialect.

Regarding the possible presence of Mansi in the territories to the west of the Urals, O. V. Smirnov notes that the Ugric toponymy may exist in this territory, but it cannot be ruled out that these may be traces of a special Ugric branch that has not survived to the present day, but in order to confirm its Mansi or Khanty origin - on these should be systematic toponymic bases and consideration of historical phonetics. Relying on the results of his research, the linguist comes to the conclusion that at present "it can be stated with a high degree of confidence that there are no Mansi differentiating toponymic types characteristic of the Trans-Urals to the west of the Urals" [Smirnov 2001: 72-73].

In the article [Smirnov 2012: 73], the researcher says that the most reliable Mansi toponyms to the west of the Urals are found in the upper reaches of the rivers Sylva, Kosva, Yayva, Yazva, Vishera and in the middle reaches of the Chusovaya River. These conclusions are also confirmed by the research of V. V. Napol'sky [Napol'sky 2015] and the study of R. V. Gaydamashko of the main types of Finno-Ugric anthroponymy of the Kama region and their geographical distribution based on the materials of Russian written monuments of the XVI-XVIII centuries, mentioned in the manuscript [Gaydamashko 2022]².

According to R. V. Gaydamashko, "according to the appellative vocabulary of Russian dialects within the Perm Territory, the Mansi substrate type splits into three areas – conditionally northern or

² Currently, this article by R. V. Gaydamashko is in the press of the journal "Acta Linguistica Metropolitana".

"vishersky", central or "yayvinsky-kosvinsky" and southern or "chusovskaya" (according to the names of the four main left tributaries of the Kama of this territory)" [Gaydamashko 2022: 50³]. The examples of Mansi borrowings in the Vishera area (*nyary*, *ryp*, *tulym(nick)*, *tuman*, *ul*) given in the article confirm the conclusion of O. V. Smirnov and A. K. Matveev [Smirnov 2012; Matveev 2006] on the border of the distribution of the living Mansi toponymy to the limits of the foothills of the Western Urals; in relation to the Yayvinsky-Kosvinsky area (*kulup*, *tulum*, *yukora*) the linguist defines the border in the basins of the Yayva and Kosva rivers and notes that Guya drew the border between the extinct western and southern dialects on this territory; the southern Chusovsky area is characterized by the spread of Mansi substrate vocabulary across the territory of the lower and middle reaches of the Chusovaya River, with the upper reaches of the Sylva, as well as the territories of the adjacent Lysvensky, Suksunsky and Chusovsky districts (*yehala*, *kulup*, *nyurka*). As indicated in [Gaydamashko 2022: 53-55], this type is associated with the influence of the language of Kungur, Sylven and Chusov Mansi, according to a number of researchers belonging to the South Mansi dialects. At the same time, as in the case of the Vishera area, Chusovskaya was settled by Mansi relatively late – in the XV-XVII centuries [Gaydamashko 2022: 53].

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