

# The Names of the Apostles as Estonian Christian Names

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THE APOSTLES are among the most highly venerated saints and accordingly their names have been in high favor in all Christian countries. They have shared the fate of other saints' names which have become popular among the various Christian nations and have been used in different language areas.

Since the names of the earliest saints originated from Hebrew or Aramaic, Greek, and Latin, they usually did not agree with the pronunciation and structure of the languages of the many newly Christianized peoples, and so the name forms underwent several changes. This process resulted in the rise of numerous variants. In addition, a great number of pet forms of favorite saint names were used there in everyday life. Because Christianity and the influence of the Catholic Church came into Estonia mainly from Germany, German forms of saints' names and their shortened and hypocoristic forms became popular in the former area. They replaced the native Estonian names of the pagan era, which disappeared from use by the 16th century. The saints' names continued in general use after the Reformation and even after the elimination of Catholicism (viz., Roman Catholicism) in Estonia (in the first half of the 17th century when the whole country went under the rule of Lutheran Sweden).

The foreign forms of the various saints' names and their hypocoristics were completely adapted to the Estonian pronunciation and morphology: foreign sounds were replaced by native ones; the length of sounds was adjusted to the Estonian quantitative system (see Note 2); stress was shifted to the first syllable; the name forms were adjusted to the Estonian declension system; and native diminutive suffixes (especially *-o*, *-u*) were added to hypocoristic forms.

The number of the various name forms was further increased by borrowings from different languages. During the medieval and the 17th-century contacts with the Scandinavians — primarily the Swedes — some Scandinavian forms were adopted. In the 19th century the Greek Catholic minority of the Estonians often used Russian forms of the saints' names. In the present century, especially during and immediately after the First World War, a reaction against the monotony of the common Christian names arose and a love of novelty brought about a change in the taste in names. At first, names of various other nations and their hypocoristic forms of saints' names were taken over, especially English ones, which were in fashion in the first two decades of the present century. Likewise some Swedish names were also used at that time. In the late thirties and early forties Finnish names, including Finnish shortened forms of saints' names, were in high favor. However, a revival of obsolete popular forms of saints' names is especially characteristic of the period between the two World Wars, during the time of the political independence of Estonia. Earlier there had usually been two kinds of Christian names in use: official forms written in records and documents, and colloquial, popular forms (for instance, if a boy was baptized under the name *Johannes*, he would at first be called with the hypocoristic *Juku* ['jukku] or *Juss* [juʃ:], later *Juhanes* ['juhanes] and, in his old age, *Juhan*). But many of the old popular forms (some of which had been in colloquial use only), which long before had been adapted to the structure of the Estonian language, came also to be used officially, as baptismal names. In accordance with the modern preference for short Christian names in other European countries, archaic pet forms of saints' names again came into fashion, and have remained favorites up to the present time. The old hypocoristics and other popular forms were revived, while foreign forms — such as *Andreas*, *Johannes*, or *Mattias* — went out of fashion.

Below is a list of the Apostles' names and their pet forms which have been used as Christian names by the Estonians.

*Andreas* (the name of the Disciple Andrew, brother of Simon Peter), a name of Greek origin — Gr. Ἀνδρέας (from ἀνήρ, ἀνδρός 'man')<sup>1</sup>: Est. *Andres* ['andres]<sup>2</sup> (cf. German and Scand. *Andres*<sup>3</sup>)

<sup>1</sup> The names are listed in the familiar Latin form. E. G. Withycombe, *The Oxford Dictionary of English Christian Names* (New York & London, 1947); E. Hell-

and *Andrus*, the popular and usual forms;<sup>4</sup> *Andreas*, the foreign form that has been used occasionally; *Andrei*, the Russian form (used primarily by the Greek Catholics); *Andi*, *Ando*, and *Andu*, pet forms which have become modern independent names.

*Bartholomaeus* (the patronymic surname of Nathanael), an Aramaic name (meaning 'son of Talmai': Est. *Pärtel* ['pært:tel]<sup>5</sup> (cf. Ger. *Bärtel*<sup>6</sup>), the popular form;<sup>7</sup> obsolete *Pärtelmes*, *Pärtmus*;<sup>8</sup> pet form *Pärt*.

*Jacobus* (the name of two Disciples — James the elder, Zebedee's son, and James the younger, Alphaeus' son), a Hebrew name (meaning 'seizing by the heel,' 'supplanter'): Est. *Jaagup* ['ja:ğup.], the popular form;<sup>9</sup> *Jakob*, the written form (the popular pronunciation of which is likewise ['ja:ğup.]); *Jaak*, the popular pet form

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quist, *Svensk etymologisk ordbok* (Lund, 1948); M. Gottschald, *Deutsche Namenkunde* (Berlin, 1954); and *Nordisk Kultur VII: Personnamn*, ed. A. Janzén (Stockholm, 1947) have been consulted for the Greek, Hebrew, and Aramaic forms occurring in this paper.

<sup>2</sup> The phonetic transcription of the International Phonetic Association has been used in this paper.

Regarding the quantity of sounds, there are three significant degrees of duration of both vowels and consonants in Estonian — short, long, and overlong. The sign: marks the long degree, and :: the overlong degree. The durations marked with . and : are shorter durations of the long or overlong degrees, respectively, and are conditioned by their quantitative environment; the . also marks the lengthened short degree in non-initial syllables. All names, including forms which retain foreign stress or sounds, are adapted to the quantitative system of Estonian.

The primary stress falls on the first syllable in native Estonian words; therefore, in the colloquial use of foreign names the main stress is usually shifted to the first syllable.

<sup>3</sup> E. Nied, *Heiligenverehrung und Namengebung* (Freiburg im Breisgau, 1924), p. 43; *Nord. Kultur VII*, pp. 30, 141, 213.

<sup>4</sup> The name of the feast day of St. Andrew is Est. *andresepäev* (*Andrese*, gen., plus *päev* 'day').

<sup>5</sup> There are no voiced plosives in Estonian; therefore these are replaced, in pronunciation, by tenues (all of which are unaspirated) initially, and by voiceless mediae in voiced environment medially in foreign names (as well as in loanwords), even if they are written with *b*, *d*, *g*.

<sup>6</sup> Nied, *op. cit.*, p. 43.

<sup>7</sup> St. Bartholomew's day is *pärtlipäev*; *Pärtli* is the gen. of *Pärtel*.

<sup>8</sup> These obsolete forms are recorded as Estonian masc. names in the dictionary by F. J. Wiedemann, *Estnisch-deutsches Wörterbuch* (St. Petersburg, 1869), s. v.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. *jaagupipäev* 'St. James's day.'

that has become an independent baptismal name and has been one of the favorite names since the thirties; obsolete *Jakkob* and *Jakkab*.<sup>10</sup>

*Johannes* (the name of the Disciple and Evangelist John), Gr. Ἰωάννης, from Hebrew (*Jōchānān* < *Jehōchānān* 'the Lord is gracious'), the commonest saints' name in most Christian countries: Est. *Juhan*, the popular form; *Johannes* (the popular pronunciation is [ˈjuha.nes] while [joˈhannes] is rather rare), *Joannes*, *Johann* [joˈhan::], *Joann*; *Jaan* [ja::n] (cf. Ger. *Jahn*), the most popular name which was developed from the pet forms and is one of the modern favorites;<sup>11</sup> *Jaanus* (cf. *Janus* and *Janusch*, Slavic forms in Germany<sup>12</sup>); *Hannes* (cf. Ger. *Hannes*<sup>13</sup>) and *Hannus* (cf. *Hannusch*, a Slavic form);<sup>14</sup> *Hans* (usually pronounced [ant::s]) (Ger. *Hans*), *Ants*, a very popular name; *Henn*, *Henno*, *Enn*, *Enno*, pet forms that have become independent names;<sup>15</sup> *Hanno*, obsolete *Hann*.<sup>16</sup> The Russian form *Ivan*, Latvian *Jahnis* (the 19th-century spelling of *Jānis*), English *John*, and the Finnish hypocoristic *Juko* have also sometimes been used as Christian names — the Finnish form since the thirties of the present century, the others chiefly in the 19th century.

The name of the Apostle *Judas Thaddaeus* (or *Lebbaeus*) has been in disfavor because it was also the name of Judas Iscariot, the traitor, and has not become established as a Christian name in Estonia.

*Matthias* (the name of the Apostle who was chosen to the apostleship after Christ's resurrection, in the place of Judas Iscariot), Gr. Ματθαῖος, a contraction from *Mattathijah*, a Hebrew name (meaning 'gift of Jehovah') whose form has been early confused with that of *Matthaeus* (the name of the Evangelist). Est. *Mattias* (pronounced [ˈmatːtias] or matˈti:jas]) has been rare, while *Madis*

<sup>10</sup> F. J. Wiedemann, *op. cit.*, s. v.

<sup>11</sup> It occurs in numerous names of churches which were dedicated to saints who bore the name *Johannes*: *Jaani kirik* (*Jaani* is the gen. of *Jaan*, and *kirik* 'church'). The day of John the Baptist, Midsummerday, is *jaanipäev*. It was mostly because of the great popularity of John the Baptist that the name became a special favorite.

<sup>12, 13, 14</sup> Gottschald, *op. cit.*, pp. 353 f.

<sup>15</sup> *Henn*, -o and *Enn*, -o have also been pet forms of *Henrik* < *Heinrich*.

<sup>16</sup> Wiedemann, *op. cit.*, s. v.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. *madisepäev* — the day of St. Matthias (Feb. 24).

<sup>18</sup> Nied, *op. cit.*, p. 45.

[ˈmadi.s] is the popular form<sup>17</sup> (cf. Ger. *Madis*<sup>18</sup>). *Matt* [maɤ:ː], *Mati*, and *Mats* [mat:s], [maɤ:s] (cf. Ger. *Matz*, Swed. *Mats*) are pet forms which have become Christian names; *Matti* is Finnish.

*Petrus* (originally the surname of the Disciple Simon, son of Jonas), Gr. Πέτρος (πέτρος 'stone', πέτρα 'rock'), a translation of Aramaic *kēphā* 'rock': Est. *Peeter* (Ger. *Peter*); *Peet*. *Peedu* (a diminutive form); obsol. *Päär(u)* (cf. Swed. *Per*).

*Philippus*, Gr. Φίλιππος ('lover of horses'): Est. *Viilip* and *Viilup*, the archaic popular forms; *Philipp*, the rare written form; obsol. *Vilpus*.<sup>19</sup>

*Simon* (the name of two Apostles — of St. Peter and of Simon Zelotes), the New Testament form — Gr. Σίμων — of the Hebrew name (*Shimeōn* 'heard' or 'hearkening') that appears as *Simeon* in the Old Testament: Est. *Siimon*, *Siim*.

*Thomas*, Gr. Θωμάς, an Aramaic name (Aram. *tōmā* 'twin'): Est. *Toomas* [ˈto:mas]. English *Tom* has occurred occasionally in the present century.

This list illustrates the well-known fact that proper names spread easily into different language areas. But it also demonstrates that foreign names are adopted and incorporated into a nation's stock of names only if they are accompanied and supported by a wide cultural influence and by direct contacts between the people involved. The use of different foreign name forms in Estonia in the present century was only a temporary fashion caused by a love of novelty; but the old saints' names, including the Apostles' names, stayed in general use because they had been introduced by the strongest cultural factor in the Middle Ages, namely, the Church, which had influenced every aspect of life. Saints' names have persisted in spite of various name-giving fashions, and their old shortened forms constitute the most essential part of the modern stock of Estonian names.

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<sup>19</sup> Wiedemann, *op.cit.*, s.v.