

## ON THE SOUTH-WESTERN LIMITS OF THE NENETS NOMADISM

*“So That the Voivodes on Belezer Protect them from Russian People”*

*The paper attempts to take a fresh look at some of the published historical sources, in which one can see direct or indirect indications that the Samoyed Nenets once wandered further from the territory of their current compact residence. The author analyzed the royal letters and petitions of the 16th-17th centuries, the notes of foreign travelers about Russia of the same period, the works of Soviet and Russian historians and ethnographers. These sources trace the routes of the Nenets advance to the west in different historical epochs. One of the petitions provides evidence that trade and exchange relations between the Nenets and Russians in the 17th century took place not only in the well-known centers of Pustozersk, Mezen, Obdorsk, but also in the remote Belozersk region. Earlier Nenets-Russian contacts took form of military clashes, which may be confirmed by some archaeological finds on Vaygach Island. A critical consideration of the autobiography of the monk Lazar of Murom suggests that the Nenets could not roam near Lake Onega in the 14th century. In addition, the paper rejects the hypothesis of some researchers about the extensive ties between the Nenets and the Saami in the past and the spread of the Saami toponyms on the tributaries of the Pechora River.*

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**For citation:** Kvashnin, Y. N. 2023. To the Question of the South-Western Limits of Nomadic Nenets. *Herald of Anthropology (Vestnik Antropologii)*. 3: 52–67.

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