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Once again on Some Potential Finno-Ugrisms in Latvia

(according to materials of *Latvijas vietvārdu vārdnīca*. [*The Dictionary of Place Names of Latvia*]. *Pilaci – Pracapole*. Rīga, 2006)

Summary

It is a widespread opinion that all possible borrowings from Finno-Ugric languages in Latvian toponymy have already been investigated, studied and described. This article deals with new material found in the last volume of the *Dictionary of Latvian Toponyms* (published in Riga 2006). This material consists of both hydronyms (*Piniers*, *Pindzere*, *Pikstere*, *Pižaga*, *Piņņa strauts*, *Piņķel-valks* etc.) as well as oikonyms and microtoponyms which are not in scientific circulation. The main accent in this article is put on the water-names. Most of these hydronyms are names of small hydro-objects, which means that their names are not ancient. The toponyms under review are of different origins: those of Livonian origin, borrowed from local Estonians (Leivs) or those borrowings from the Estonian language occurring in the borderland. One part of these hydronyms are derived from oikonyms (they are called 'transtoponymic') or from personal names (anthroponymic origin). Most of these hydronyms – as usually toponyms of unclear origin – have many parallel forms (e.g., the limnonym in Naukšēni *Piricis* // *Piriča ezers* // *Piriču ezers* // *Piričezers* // *Piliča ezers* // "*Pirites ezers*" // "*Pirī-ezers*" // "*Pirī-ezers*"). Some of the analysed place names could be considered to be hybrid derivatives. Furthermore, many toponymic examples have unclear etymologies (e.g., "*Potupe*"), but one hypothesis is that they are possible Finno-Ugrisms.

The prominent Ukrainian linguist Prof. Anatoly Nepokupny has once said that it is not possible to explore everything up to the core and that is why science exists. Both the foreign linguists Valentine Kiparsky, Kazimieras Būga, and the Latvian linguists Daina Zemzare, Marta Rudzīte, Antons Breidaks, Valdis Zeps, Kersti Boiko, Dzintra Hirša, Benita Laumane and Ojārs Bušs have written articles on the Finno-Ugrisms in Latvian toponymy. It is generally assumed that the names of all the largest geographical objects – possible Finno-Ugrisms – have already been discovered, described and analysed. Nevertheless, it is sometimes fruitful to re-evaluate this assumption and consequently to "blow away the dust"

from issues, that seem to be so self-evident (Janīna Kursīte). The possible Finno-Ugrisms in this article are examined on the basis of materials from the new volume of *The Dictionary of Place names of Latvia (Latvijas vietvārdu vārdnīca. Pilaci – Pracapole*. Rīga, 2006, hereafter Lvv IV). This is a continuation of a dictionary started by Jānis Endzelīns (Jānis Endzelīns *Latvijas PSR vietvārdi*, I–II, Rīga, 1959, 1961 /A – O/, hereafter Lvv I, Lvv II), although with a slightly changed title in the later volumes: *Latvijas vietvārdu vārdnīca (Paaglis – Piķu-)*. Rīga: LU Latviešu valodas institūts, 2003, Lvv III). The main focus in this article on the Latvian hydronyms of Finno-Ugric origin included in the Lvv IV volume.

A substantial number of Finno-Ugrisms have been recorded in the 352 pages of this fourth volume of *The Dictionary of Latvian Place names*, the majority of which are oikonyms or names and homesteads and inhabited places, but there are also some hydronyms or water names. Some of them have been examined in this article.

Historical sources have mentioned the limnonym *Pildas ezers* – the lake being situated in the Eastern part of Latvia – Latgale (pronounced as *Pyldys azars* by the Latgallians), which has been recorded as “nad ieziozem Pylda” (in Polish) 1646 (Zeps 1984: 407) Lvv IV: 2. This is a lake of 295 ha in size, apparently a limnonym of deoikonymic origin, coined from the name of the inhabited place *Pilda*. Latvian linguists Marta Rudzīte (Rudzīte 1968, 189), Antons Breidaks (Breidaks 1970: 162; Breidaks 1973: 100), Valdis Zeps (Zeps 1977: 432–433) consider the name of this lake in their studies to be a borrowing from Estonian: oikonym *Pilda muiža* is therefore derived from Estonian *põldemõis* < Est. *põld*, ‘field’ + *mõis*, ‘estate’. Thus semantically this would be ‘field estate’. Note also that a small river (40 km) *Pilda*, falls into this lake (the upper reaches // *Ilža* // *Ruobežniece*, lower reaches // *Isnauda* // *Nukša*) Lup III: 20, /*Pyldys-ups*, earlier *Apsejeva* 1975/ Lvv IV 2. Estonian has many place names with the root *Põld-*. Moreover historically, in the 17th century, scholars demonstrated that the people referred to as the Estonians of Ludza used to live in the area of Ludza in Latvia; although far from Estonia, the Finno-Ugric etymon leaves no doubt as to its origin. There are some discussions regarding when the name of *Pylda* was first recorded in historical sources: A. Breidaks claims that it was in 1766 (Breidaks 1970: 162). However, V. Zeps, quoting Gustaw Manteuffel (Manteuffel 1879: 154), states that there are records of the name as early as in 1572 (Zeps 1977: 432). But then new questions arise as to whether the Estonians came to the vicinity of Ludza in the 16th

century, or that this name had been known already prior to their appearance (Zeps 1977: 433). In his latest monograph, Lembit Vaba mentions the 17th century as the possible settlement time of the Estonians in this region (Vaba 1997: 33).



Pildas ezers

Yet another example of a hydronym of Finno-Ugric origin from the Eastern, or more precisely, the North-Eastern part of Latvia, where one can clearly notice the influence of the Estonians of Vidzeme (which is referred to as Leivi):

Piļik-urga // Pilik-urga // Pilik-upe ditch near river Gauja at Lejasciems. The name had already been associated with Estonian by Daina Zemzare (Zemzare 1940: 61, 78), i.e., with Leivian lexeme *piļika*, ‘rowan tree’, cf. Est. *pīhlakas* Lvv IV: 42. Moreover, Marta Rudzīte supported this etymology (Rudzīte 1968: 189).



Piļikurga

Even though the name **Piniers** 1960 in Liezēre is today the name of a meadow, its structure suggests that it probably once was the name of a lake. This is because it could be considered as a composite: *pine* II, ‘Hündin (bitch)’, which is related to Liv. *pin*’, Est. *pini*, ‘Hund (dog)’ ME III: 219 + Est. *järv*, Liv. *jõra // jāru*, ‘lake’ Lvv IV 50 (thus semantically it could be ‘dog-lake’ or ‘bitch-lake’). Compare this, for instance, to analogous lake-names in Latvia from the derivation point of view: *Ninieris*, *Spicieris*, *Kaņieris* etc. Furthermore, hydronyms of the previously mentioned semantics are not a rarity in the area of the Balts: cf. Lith. river names *Šūnija*, *Šūnykštà*, *Šun-upis* < Lith. *šuo*, ‘dog’ LHEŽ: 336, *Kalùpè*, *Kālupis* (Aleksandras Vanagas mentions Lith. lexeme *kalè*, ‘bitch’ as one of possible connections LHEŽ: 144), Pr. *Suna* river, *Sune* lake, coined from Pr. *sunis*, ‘dog’ (Gerullis 1922: 176).

Maybe the same root could also be spotted also in another potamonym of a potential Finno-Ugric origin or in the river name **Pindzere** in the Western part of Latvia – the right tributary of the River Venta in Raņķi BE II: 158; Latv. *dziņa*, I ‘Wald (forest)’ ME I: 155 (Lv IV: 49) could form the basis of the second component of this hydronym. Here more detailed comments would be necessary: J. Endzelīns in his dictionary manuscript mentions only the relation to the Latvian lexeme *dziņa*. Vallija Dambe, preparing the manuscript for printing, offered a comparison with the mentioned Latvian dialect word *pine*, ‘bitch’. Edīte Hauzenberga-Šturma (FBR: XII 121) explained the phonetic processes, which resulted in *dzere* < *dzira* (cf. the parallel forms of the swamp-name ibidem *Pindzere* // *Pindzira*). If the lexeme *dzira* could indeed be found in the second part of the potential compound, then one could assume that the place name had already appeared in the Latvian language and its relation would therefore be indirect with the Finno-Ugric languages of the Baltic Sea (with the above mentioned lexeme *pin*’ with the meaning ‘dog’) – contrary to the previous example, where the examined place name *Pinieris* undoubtedly appeared in the Livonian language.



Pindzere

Another hydronym – a potential Finno-Ugrism – the river name **Pikstere** // **Pikstere** // **Pikstupe** // **Piksupe** (Germ. **Pixternscher Bach**) – the left tributary of the River Daugava in Sēlpils (between Pļaviņas and Koknese – a river that is 20 km long, which starts from Lake **Piksteres ezers** // **Piksa ezers** (Germ. **Pixtern-See**). These names have been left without an etymon in *The Dictionary of Place Names of Latvia* (Lv III: 374-375; Lv IV: 100), as only a reference is given that they could be place names of Finno-Ugric origin, although they are located in an area where Finno-Ugrisms are not characteristically found (Lv III: 375; Lv IV: 100). It seems that the original form could have had a short root vowel *-i-*, and the long vowel *-ī-* could appear by the way of folk etymology, related to the name of a fish that is carp-like Latv. *pīkste* I ‘Schlammpeizger (Cobitis fossilis)’ ME III: 230 or (Misgurnus fossilis L.) < *pīkstēt*, ‘piep(s)sen’, ‘peep’ (Laumane 1973: 157); the second part of the hydronym could be Est. *järv*, Liv. *jōra* //

jāru, ‘lake’ (although this explanation is quite hypothetical). Maybe one could compare these hydronyms with Liv. *pīk*, Est. *pīk*, ‘Pike, Spiess, Lanze (pike, spear, lance)’ Kett.: 296, Wied.: 831. If this were the case, the lake name could be considered a primary form, but the river borrowed its name from the lake-name, which is also recorded in a nominative form, *Pikstere*. So this could be an earlier derivation than the river name. However, there still are many questions and uncertainties concerning this potamonym (see also Balode 2004: 8).



Pikstere

It is possible that additional scholarly work needs to be conducted to determine the Livonian etymon for the name of branch of the River Daugava – ***Pižaga*** (*Piřhaga*) in Dole (Dole Island) 1967: Liv. *pōz*, *pāz* (this etymology was already proposed by August Bielenstein [Bielenstein 1892: 43]), *pōž*, ‘Kalkstein (limestone)’ Kett.: 309. (Lv IV: 97).



Pižaga

The name of a small lake (3.6 ha) in Naukšēni – the Northern part of Latvia – ***Piricis*** // ***Piriča ezers*** // “***Piriču ezers***” E I: 99 // ***Piričezers*** // ***Piliča ezers*** // ***Pilicis*** 1952, which was recorded in 1638 as “***Pirizsche***”-See, and obviously should be compared to the Est. *piir*, ‘border’ or maybe with the Est. *piirits*, ‘executioner, hangman’ Wied.: 834, but maybe also with an Estonian verb *pirisema*, ‘sob, snivel, whimper, peep’ Lv IV: 68. With great reservation, Marta Rudzīte has compared this limnonym to the Est. place name *Piirijärv*, as well as to the Latvian lexeme *pirītis*, ‘bendes kalps, tiesu sulainis /executioner’s servant, court’s servant/’ ME III: 223 (Rudzīte 1968: 189) (Lv III: 68); even so, this lexeme is known only from written sources.



Piricis

In addition, there are the interesting potamonyms **Piņņa strauts** in Pēternieki 1959 and **Piņņu strauts** in Ozolnieki 1959. Although they have been related in *The Dictionary of Place Names of Latvia* they have been related (though accompanied by several question marks) to the Latvian lexeme *piņņi*, ‘Mitesser (acne)’ ME III: 221 (this comparison comes from Jānis Endzelīns’ manuscript), Vallija Dambe, in her version of the manuscript, reminded us that a word *piņņi* is used with the meaning ‘Finnen (Finns)’ Lvv IV: 60–61. Inter alia, Finland was called *Pinnu-zeme* already in the Gothard Friedrich Stender’s “Augstas gudrības grāmatā no pasaules un dabas” [The book of the highest wisdom of nature and the world] (1796). Nevertheless, these potamonyms most credibly are hydronyms of anthroponymic origin – coined from the relatively widely spread surname *Pinnis* (Staltmane 1981: 158), which could have originated both from the nickname and from the ethnonym (although, of course, the origin of the ethnonym *piņņi* is not Finno-Ugric).



Piņņa strauts, Piņņu strauts

The name of a rivulet in the Western part of Latvia – **Piņķel-vals**, which apparently is of Livonian origin, has been recorded in Dundaga U IV: 254 (ibidem “*Pinkal-viggā*”, which is known from August Bielenstein’s notes B U IV: 255). Another toponym occurs in the close neighbouring area, in Lubezere, which could also be a transferred name, – **Piņķeļ-vals** 1962 // **Pinkeļu vals** U IV: 200 has been recorded: probably both hydronyms come from Liv. *pīnkald*, ‘scharf (sharp)’ Kett. 298: 285 (Lvv: IV 52).



Pinkel-vals in Dundaga

The unadapted hydronyms of Livonian origin in the territory of Latvia have to be mentioned separately. For example, there is a Livonian bay name, **Pitka-tabar-küvģ**, in Ance (which is also known as a calque *Gar-ast-līcis*):

Liv. *pitka*, 'lang (long)' Kett.: 293 + *tabâr*, 'Schwanz, Schweif (tail)' Kett.: 405 (Lvv IV: 91).

The same root of the first component occurs in the name of the River ***Pitrags-up*** in Dundaga U IV: 260 // "*Pitrag-upe*" // "*Pitraga upe*" // "*Pitragas upe*" // and "*Kukšupe*" in the middle reaches Lup III: 22 (Lvv IV: 92): the oikonym *Pitrags*, which is Livonian inhabited place < Liv. *pitka*, 'long' + Latv. *rags*, 'Kap (cape)' (in this way Vallija Dambe in the manuscript of the dictionary, explains this name with the use of a question mark Lvv IV: 92). However, Valentin Kiparsky has another hypothesis for this toponym and relates it to Liv. *põddõr*, 'deer', considering the second part of the place name to be a Livonian lexeme *aigà*, 'coast, surroundings, side'; Kiparsky suggests that further vowel changes took place in the Livonian language itself so that $\ddot{o} > \ddot{u} > i$ (KF: 230), because the form *Pudteraggen* was recorded in the documents of 1582-1583 (Boiko 1989: 39). Nonetheless, Kersti Boiko criticizes Kiparsky's hypothesis (Boiko 1994: 220) on the grounds that such vowel changes have taken place in the western vernacular of the Livonian of Northern Kurzeme, but the village of *Pitrags* is located in the territory of the eastern vernacular. However, Boiko did not propose a new hypothesis.

The limnonym "***Püfar-efers***" in Dundaga, which is mentioned in the lists compiled by A. Bielenstein, should be definitely related to the Livonian language B U IV: 255. It may in fact be the same hydro-object, which is known as ***Pizar-lõp-jära*** lake in Ance 1964: Liv. *pizâr*, 'Blutegel (leech)' Kett.: 292. + *jõra*, 'Landsee (lake)' Kett.: 93 (Lvv IV: 95).

Many of the Finno-Ugrisms analyzed in this article remain more or less unclear. Nevertheless, some hypotheses also relate them to the Finno-Ugric languages. A rivername "***Potupe***" in the Madona region is one such uncertain name from the point of view of the origin Lup II: 31 (apparently the same river is also recorded in Viesiena during the expedition in 1970). There is also a homestead, "*Potes mājas*", in the same vicinity (Bērzaune), (but there is no indication as to whether it is pronounced as an [o] or [uo]). Perhaps it is possible to compare this place name with the Estonian homestead name *Poti*. One should add that although both Bērzaune and Viesiena are located quite far from the Estonian border, there are recordings of the traces of the Estonian language in this vicinity. For instance, A. Bielenstein (1892) and O. Bušs (2005) have written about Estonians and the possible influence of their language in Latvia – Mārciena vicinity. Though one also cannot reject the possibility of the anthroponymic

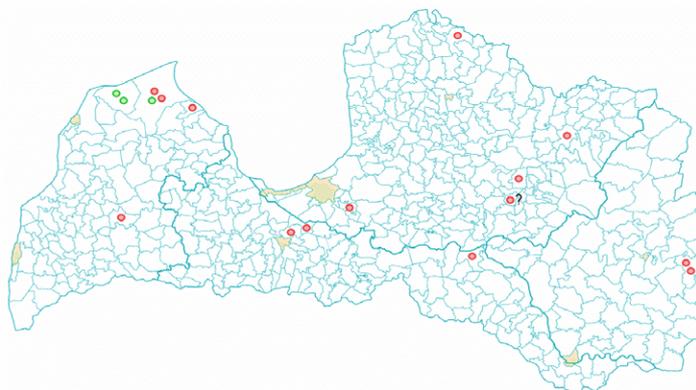
origin of this place name – cf. the personal name *Pots* (Staltmane 1981: 122). (Lvv IV: 347)



Potupe

Until now, these Latvian hydronyms were not mentioned in the lists of the water names of Finno-Ugric origin with the exception of three hydronyms: *Pildas ezers*, *Piriču ezers* and *Pīļik-urga*.

The majority of these hydronyms (as usual the onyms of obscure origin and semantics) have several parallel forms as, for example, the already mentioned lake name in Naukšēni is used in the following forms: *Piricis* // *Piriča ezers* // *Piriču ezers* // *Piričezers* // *Piliča ezers*, and even in the very modified forms // “*Pirites ezers*”// “*Pirī-ezers*”// “*Pīrī-ezers*”// “*Pils ezers*” (Lvv IV: 68).



The map above illustrates the distribution of the hydronyms of Finno-Ugric origin in Latvia on the basis of the *Latvijas vietvārdu vārdnīca /Dictionary of Place Names of Latvia/* (Pīlaci – Pracapole). Rīga, 2006 (Lvv IV)

This last volume of the *Dictionary of Place Names of Latvia* (Lvv IV) also has oikonyms and microtoponyms of the Baltic Sea Finno-Ugric origin, and some of these have not yet been circulated in scientific research. They are the following loans from Estonian and Livonian languages:

The **Pisitava** (// *Pišinava*) name of the former homestead in Ilzene 1961: probably a borrowing from the Estonian language, e.g. < ? Est. *pisitasa*, ‘little by little, slowly’ (Lvv IV: 87).

The **Pīza** inhabited place in the Ventspils region and many place names with this root in this vicinity may be related to the Livonian *pīzaz*, ‘Busch (bush)’ Kett.: 285, Est. *põdsas*, ‘bush’ – an interpretation by Vallija Dambe in the manuscript of *The Dictionary of Place Names of Latvia*, although there is also a Baltic etymology of these place names (see Lvv IV: 94–95).

The **Piziki** village in Dricēni E II: 184: Est. *pizike/ne/*, ‘small’ Lvv IV: 96, although most probably a surname *Piziks* has been a mediator (Staltmane 1981: 175).

The **Pitsepi** homestead in Lielstraupe 1972 (new farm in Mazstraupe 1963): the name of the homestead originated from surname of Estonian origin, cf. Est. *pūtsepp*, ‘barrel maker, cooper’ (Lvv IV: 92).

The **Piēķēpis** homestead in Mārsnēni E I: 21, which has been recorded as “*Peigkeip*” in plough auditorial lists of 1638. For this reason with caution it could be compared to Est. *peig*, ‘bridegroom’ (Lvv IV: 146).

Pojas, referring to several homesteads – in Viļķene E I: 112, Mālpils (?), an estate in Rauna; the origin of these place names seems to be related to the Estonian language: cf. the Est. toponym *Poio*, as well as to appellative *poi*, 1. ‘boy’, 2. ‘some beetle?’ (Lvv IV: 324).

Such oikonyms as the **Poikas** village in Dricēni E II: 184, “*Poike*” homestead in Sīpele U V: 431 (1815) < Est. *poeg* ‘son’ (also Jānis Endzelīns had mentioned such etymology in the manuscript of the dictionary) (Lvv IV: 324) could be considered as being place names of a more clear etymology.

Furthermore, place names such as **Pokani** – the name of four homesteads in Dūre most credibly could be related to the Estonian language – cf. Estonian lexeme *pakan*, ‘pagan’, also maybe *pakane*, ‘cold’ Wied.: 755. Cf. also other Latvian place names with the root *Pakan-*. (Lvv IV: 325) Place names with the root *Pīr-* should also be considered as being borrowings from the Estonian language: a meadow name **Pirenīca** in Lejasciems (Daina Zemzare is also of the same opinion Zemzare 1940: 61), as well as a homestead name **Pīriņi** in Valka E I: 86 k, **Pīri- punkts**, an uninhabited place (the former border crossing in the village of Pedele) in Lugaži 1951, etc. < Est. *piir*, ‘border’, cf. Est. name of the inhabited place *Piira*, although it is possible to interpret “*Pīra kalns*” and other Latvian place names in a different way (Lvv IV: 123). Most probably the meadow name in Lejasciems **Piterma** should be related to the Estonian language –

informants say there is such a grass, but maybe one should search for a personal name *Pēters*, in the local dialect *Pīters* + Est. *maa*, ‘land’ (by Zemzare 1940: 62) (Lvv IV: 131).

The meadow name *Pornīt* in Dundaga U IV: 257 is related to the Livonian language, with the first part reflecting the Latvian dialectal form *pors* // *puors*, i.e. *purvs* in the standard language, ‘swamp, marsh’ (but maybe one should look here for the Livonian *pōr-* ‘over-’?), and the Livonian lexeme *nīt*, ‘meadow’ Kett.: 250 in the second part of the place name (a hypothesis raised by Vallija Dambe in the dictionary manuscript) (Lvv IV: 343). However, the possibility of a hybrid composite name is unlikely.

The meadow name “*Poismegganiht*” in Dundaga B U V: 257 seems to be Livonian; it is known only from the collections of August Bielenstein < Liv. *pois*, ‘Junge, Bube (young man, boy)’ Kett.: 310 + *mäg*, ‘Berg (hill)’ Kett. 238 + *nīt*. ‘Wiese (meadow)’ Kett.: 250 (Lvv IV: 324).

The toponyms “*Piški sīlda kangers*”, hill, U IV: 253 and “*Pifchkihsपालud niht*”, meadow, B U IV: 257 in Dundaga are also Livonian names: < Liv. *piški*, ‘klein (small)’ Kett.: 292 + *sīlda*, ‘Brücke (bridge)’ Kett.: 369 + *kāngar*, ‘wellenförmige Bodenerhöhung (im Walde) (wavy earth elevation /in forest/), Hügel (hill, slope)’ Kett.: 112 and the already mentioned Livonian nomenclature word *nīt*, ‘Wiese (meadow)’ Kett.: 250 (Lvv IV: 89–90) in the second example.

There is also a Livonian origin in the name of a dale, *Piedāgs-vīga*, in Dundaga 1984 (Liv. “*Peedogfo -wigga*” swamp B U IV: 255) < Liv. *pijedāb*, ‘Kiefer, Pinus silvestris (pine)’ Kett.: 299 + *sūo*, ‘Sumpf, Morast (swamp)’ Kett.: 385 (the etymon version given by V. Dambe) (Lvv IV: 137).

It is also possible that such microtoponyms as the *Pitama* meadow in Sarkanmuiža 1973 (*Pitams* U IV: 284), the *Pitam-kangers* hill U IV: 283, and the *Pitam-kanger-ceļš* road U IV: 285 are of Livonian origin, although no particular etymon is clear (Lvv IV: 90). (See Boiko 1992; 1994a; 1994b for geographic appellatives and their relicts in Latvian lake names, mainly microtoponyms, of the Finno-Ugric peoples of the Baltic Sea.)

In conclusion, both hydronyms, oikonyms, and microtoponyms – possible Finno-Ugrisms – which can be found in the *Dictionary of Place Names of Latvia / Latvijas vietvārdu vārdnīca (Pilaci – Pracapole)*. Rīga, 2006, one should come to a conclusion that not all of them have been acknowledged and described in the linguistic literature. Actually, there are not many place names borrowed from the languages of the Finno-Ugric nations of the Baltic Sea in this volume by percentage (and there are

considerably more oikonyms and microtoponyms than hydronyms). The majority of the mentioned hydronyms are the names of small hydroobjects, the origin of which does not go far back in history. They are of various types: water names of Livonian origin, also some relicts of the language spoken by the local Estonians, and relatively recent borrowings from the Estonian located in the Estonian borderland. Part of these are coined from the names of inhabited places (i.e., they are place names of transtoponymic origin) or made from personal names (i.e., referred to as place names of anthroponymical origin). However, the place names of Livonian origin recorded in the Western part of Latvia, as well as possible hybrid derivations, could be the most ancient and important ones.

List of abbreviations

B – onomastic material from the manuscript of August Bielenstein
 Est. – Estonian
 L. – Latin
 Latv. – Latvian
 Lith. – Lithuanian
 Liv. – Livonian
 Pr. – Prussian

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