PERSONAL NAMES AND DENOMINATION OF LIVONIANS IN EARLY WRITTEN SOURCES

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Abstract. This paper presents the timeline of ethnonyms denoting Livonians; specifies their chronology; and analyses the names used for this ethnos and possible personal names. If we consider the dating of the event, the earliest sources mentioning Livonians are Gesta Danorum and the Tale of Bygone Years (both 10th century), but both sources present rather dubious information: in the first the battle of Bråvalla itself or the date are dubious (6th, 8th or 10th century); in the latter we cannot be sure that the member of the Rus delegation was really a Livonian. If we consider the time of recording, the earliest sources are two rune inscriptions from Sweden (11th century), and the next is the list of neighbouring peoples of the Russians from the Tale of Bygone Years (12th century). The personal names Bicco and Ger referred in Gesta Danorum, and Либо Арыфастовъ in Tale of Bygone Years are very problematic. The first certain personal name of a Livonian is *Mustakka, *Mustukka or *Mustoikka (from Finnic *musta ‘black’) written in 1040–1050s on a strip of birch bark in Novgorod.

Keywords: Livs, Finnic peoples, ethnonyms, anthroponyms, onomastics

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1. Introduction

This paper (1) seeks to present the timeline of ethnonyms denoting Livonians; (2) to specify their chronology; (3) and to analyse the names used for this ethnos and possible personal names. It is supplemental to the paper by Mauno Koski on words denoting Livonians (Koski 2011).

When we start arranging written sources chronologically, two aspects must be made clear: on the one hand we have the time of the event recorded retrospectively; on the other we have the time of the event of recording it. Also, a third aspect must be taken into consideration – namely the time of creating the preserved copy of a chronicle, normally rewritten with amendments numerous times. Unfortunately some of the data is uncertain: sometimes it is unclear whether the event took place at all, and sometimes the date of the event is unclear.
2. Uncertain information

Ethnonyms with stems of interest to this research are mentioned as far back as by Roman authors of the 1st and 2nd centuries. Pliny the Elder (23–79) mentions the people living in the 500 (!) districts of Skatinavia island in his Naturalis Historia and calls them Hilleviones. Publius Cornelius Tacitus (55–120) speaks in his Germania about a people called the lemovii or levonii. Claudius Ptolemy (90–160) writes about an island called Skandia, where in the northern part live Phinnoi, in the southern part Goutai and Daukiones, while the central part of this island is inhabited by Leuonoi. All of these ethnonyms with the lev- stem were linked to the name Livonians as early as the 18th century (Koski 2011: 57). The stem levio- ~ levo- ~ leuo- does appear to be like the name Livonians, but in other places the name Leuonoi has been interpreted as a misspelling of the word Suiones, which denoted Svear, i.e. Swedes. After analysing the texts of ancient authors, Thomas Grane expressed his view that their authors’ knowledge of northern territories was extremely vague (Grane 2007: 17–18). Other authors (e.g. Grünthal 1997: 245, 247) too consider the references found in ancient writings rightfully dubious. Information is too scarce and sometimes even contradictory; thus it is not possible to prove or reject a hypothesis on possible references to Livonian people, since the people mentioned could not be located properly or their residence description is outright unrealistic. However, it is entirely possible that this ethnonym may have been attributed to Livonians only later and was first used to denote another people, similarly to the word aestii used by Tacitus (see EES 58).

Several centuries later Alfred the Great, the 9th century King of Wessex, and Adam of Bremen in the 11th century mention a people living east of the river Don whom the Saxons call Liubene (also Liobene). The location given indicates anything but Livonians; the phonetic composition, meanwhile, coincides with the ethnonym любъ used in Old Russian chronicles (Grünenthal 1997: 247).

3. Scandinavian sources

If we look at the occurrence of historical events, the earliest mention of Livonians with their appropriate ethnonym may be – but is not necessarily – found in the eighth book of Gesta Danorum (“the heroic history of the Danes”) written by Saxo Grammaticus and completed in ca 1185 (being first published in 1514). In it he describes the battle of Bråvalla, which may have taken place in the year 550 or 750, in which
Liui Saxonumque ("Livonians with Saxons") participated and where Liuorum regis filius Bicco ("Bicco, the son of the Livonian elder") was taken prisoner (SGD 261, 279, 280). Elsewhere the text mentions someone Ger Liuiicus called "Ger the Livonian", or possibly "Ger from Livonia" (SGD 258; see also Saxo 2006: 239, 256, 257). This reference is doubtful; according to some researchers the battle never took place, while others believe that what is described there was a battle that took place some time around the year 1000 – since this chronicle is a mixture of historical and mythological sources (Koski 2011: 57–58; Zemītis 2011: 75). If we date it by the time the chronicle was recorded, this mention of the Livonians is among the earliest, but is not the first.

If the names mentioned were really the personal names of Livonians, the Latinised name Bicco (Scandinavian Bikki)\(^1\) could be phonetically linked to the apppellative *pikkoi 'small, little', cf. Votic pikkarain, Fennic pikku, Pikko (the name of a small lamb), Piko (the name of a person), Aunus pikkaraine, pikoi ~ pikki 'a little', etc. In this case, the word is an -oi diminutive, which in the latter period of the Livonian language existed only in rudimentary form (Mägiste 1928: 1–3, 74, 100–101). The problem here is posed by the fact that the stem, *pikk-oi 'short', has not been recorded in Livonian (or Estonian), but they do have a word piški- with this meaning, e.g. 1582–1583 Matte Piszekelmitte and others (Kiparsky 1938: 254; Stoebke 1964: 63). At the same time, it is not entirely impossible that at some point in the past this stem formed part of Livonian vocabulary. Even less probable is connecting the name Bicco with the Livonian apppellative pitkā 'tall, long', e.g. Livonian 1290 Pitkekeleybe (Feuerabend 1985: 241) < *pitkā-leipā (cf. pitkā + lēba 'bread'). However, we do not find similar anthroponyms among old Scandinavian male names (ONMN).

The name Ger is too short to base any uncontroversial conclusions upon it. Among the possibilities are the Finnic stems *Ker- and *Kēr-, such as Estonian Hans Kerropoyck from 1534, Finnish Kero(i) from the 16th century, Kierikainen (Ger-i-) from 1374 and Kiero from the 16th century (Stoebke 1964: 37, 165). These could be linked to some apppellatives, such as kerä ‘ball, globe’, kiero ‘crooked, distorted; deceptive; askance’, kierre ‘coil’, etc. On the other hand, we cannot rule out Germanic names, cf. compound stems such as Gerhard (cf. old High German gēr ‘spear’, hard ‘hard, brave’), Germar (cf. māri ‘famous’), Gerolf (gēr and wolf), etc. (Nauman et al. 1984: 41, 42). It

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1 Bikki as the name of a disloyal adviser of a king is known from Skáldskaparmál, a part of the Prose Edda (early 13th century) and the Volsunga Saga (late 14th century).
is not possible to immediately associate this name from the text by Saxo Grammaticus with the old Scandinavian word geirr ‘spear’ (see ONMN).

Reliable written records of Livonians are only found after the year 1000, but these take the form of mentioning the lands of the Livonians, i.e. Livonia. From the beginning or first half of the 11th century is a text on the Åda runestones of Södermanland (Söd. 39): h[an] trukn-þi . // . a li[.f. lanti [a Lifl[andi] ‘he was drowned in Livonia’, and another in Vekholm church in Uppland (UP. 698): han . ut fai . a liflainþi ‘he fell in faraway Lifland’ (Mel’nikova 2001: 308, 324; Koski 2011: 57). Both texts contain the parts lif- ‘Livonian’ and -land. Therefore we have here a typical Germanic name, similar to the German land name Livland used later (Koski 2011: 54). The Scandinavian texts also include locations containing the names of people, such as Kúrland, Virland ‘Virumaa’ (a region on the north Estonian coast), Refaland ‘Rävalamaa’ (cf. refalir ‘people of Refaland’; Reval – the German name of Tallinn) and Kirjálaland ‘Karelia’ (cf. kirjálir ‘Karelians’; Dzhakson 2001: 30, 33–35). Therefore the first time the Livonians are mentioned in written sources indirectly is during the first half of the 11th century. In rune inscriptions there are also place names from Livonia or nearby, such as i . tuna . asu (Söd. 121) ‘at the mouth of the river Daugava’ (if we read í Dyna ósa), um . tumisnis (Söd. 198) ‘round Kolka Cape’ (cf. Germ. Domesnes), a . uit,au [most probably Vindan] (Gotl. 135) ‘River Venta’, etc. (Mel’nikova 2001: 299, 302, 307). Thus, the rune stones bear witness to the visits Scandinavians made to the lands of the Kuronians and Livonians in the early 11th century; they have collected tribute from Kuronians as long ago as in the 9th century (Saxo 2006: 31).

4. Old Russian sources

The first or second event on the timescale describing the ethnos of Livonians is found in an Old Russian chronicle entitled “Повесть временных лет” (Tale of Bygone Years), but this source too is uncertain. The chronicle tells us about a peace treaty between the Rus and the Greek in 944 or 945, where according to E. A. Melnikova the name of one member of the delegation could refer to a Livonian. In various copies of this document the spelling of the name varies: Либиар Фастов, Либи арьфастовъ, Либиарфостов, Либи Арьфастовъ or Либи Арьфастов (PVL 97, PSRL 35, Mel’nikova 2001: 327–328). The researcher has linked this name to the Scandinavian anthroponym Arnfastr (orn ‘eagle’, fastr ‘fast’), which has also been
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found in a Swedish rune stone inscription dated between 1020 and 1060. It is rather a common male name in Old Swedish and Old Danish, but also in the Norse language, and in rune texts, including the form arfast ~ arfastr, where the meaning of fastr is not ‘fast’, but ‘firm, strong’ (ONMN). If the comparison drawn by E. A. Melnikova is correct, this really is one of the earliest Livonian names. It is a Scandinavian name. The early presence of Scandinavians in the area of the Livonian settlements in Kurland is also reflected in archaeological finds from the 7th and 10th centuries (Zemītis 2011: 78), and the early dealings between Scandinavians and Russians is a well-known fact.

If this guess by E. M. Melnikova holds, Libi may be an ethnonym derived from Latvian or Livonian, cf. Latvian libis ‘Livonian’, Livonian lib ~ libe (1767 Liebi) ‘Livonian’ (Winkler, Pajusalu 2009: 108–109). It is unsure whether this ethnonym was originally pronounced with a b or not. A. Zaliznyak has analysed early Finnic and Scandinavian loans and proposes that using the letter ō to express the sound /v/ from the source language indicates loaning the word through the dialect spoken in the Pskov-Novgorod region (Zaliznyak 2004: 55). The singular form of the ethnonym would then be либинъ (see also below).

This contract with the Byzantine Empire was most probably written in Greek or Old Russian, since there are also records about the use of the latter dating to before the conversion of Russia to Christianity in the late 10th century (Možejko, Ignatenko 1988: 32–34). S. M. Mikheyev (2011: 198) states that the texts of the contracts made with the Rus, together with stories about how the contract was made, originate from the chronicle of Georgios Amartolos, who lived in the 9th century, or rather from the amendments to this chronicle made before 948, whose authorship is attributed to Symeon the Logothete (Russian Логофет) who lived during the next century (Xronika; Mixeev 2011: 198). But this chronicle and its various versions and translations would be an entire research topic in itself.

With no specific date presented, this chronicle lists Livonians among the peoples paying tributes to Russia: “Въ Афетови же части сьдить русь, чюдь и вси языць: меря, муroma, всь, мордва, заволочьская чюдь, пермь, печера, ямь, уegra, литва, зымигола, корсь, льтегола, либь.” (PVL 62, 64) ‘In the lands of Japheth there live Russians, Chudes and other peoples, such as Merya, Muroma, Ves, Mordvin, Zavolochska Chudes, Perm, Petchera, Yam, Ugra, Lithuanians, Semigallians, Curonians, Letigalls and Livonians’. The last word is the collective noun syncretistically denoting both the people and the land. Similar to many other ethnonyms it contains the
letter ъ, which in this period was pronounced as an extremely short, reduced i [i] (Možejko, Ignatenko 1988: 104). According to M. Vasmer, this Old Russian word is a loan word from Latvian, cf. ībis ‘Livonian’ (Fasmer I 305; see also Grünthal 1997: 247). If we look at the time of writing, it is the second mention; but if we consider the content of the document, it is the earliest mention of the Livonians. In communicating the dating of this entry of the chronicle, written records are vague, so the dating is given according to the time the chronicle was written.

According to Latvian archaeologist Guntis Zemītis (2011: 75), the first mention of Livonians in historical documents dates from 1113 – the dating derived from the time the chronicle containing it was written. The same year has also been given as the first mention of the Livonians by Eduard Vääri (2005: 111). To say that PVL was written in the 12th century (Boiko 1998: 5) is too approximate, but to say that it was written during the late 11th or early 12th century is also inexact (Koski 2011: 54). This precision (1113) derives from Old Russian literary history (e.g. Prokofyev 1988: 6; Kuskov 1998: 50, 54). Academician A. A. Shakhmatov supposed it in several of his works more than a hundred years ago.

In other sources of Old Russian literary history the dating of this chronicle is given as “around 1113” (see e.g. Dmitriev 1990: 8; Dëmin 2008: 24). Such dating is more accurate. The first version of PVL has not been preserved, but it was included in later chronicles, which were rewritten multiple times, and this is why it is not clear what the last year was that was recorded by the monk Nestor from the Kyiv Pechersk Lavra monastery. Educated guesses have been 1110, 1113 and 1115 (Tvorogov 1996: 139). We must agree with the Old Russian philologist Sava Mikheyev that the chronicle could not have been written before 1113 when Duke Sviatopolk Iziaslavich died, but also not later than 1116 when hegumen Sylvester from the Vydubychi Monastery near Kyiv composed the new (second), radically reworked version of this chronicle on the orders of Grand Duke Monomakh (1053–1125) (Mixeev 2011: 31). From this we grasp that, according to our current knowledge, Livonians were first mentioned in the early 12th century – more precisely during the second decade of the century. The oldest preserved manuscripts of the Tale of Bygone Years are only from the 14th and 15th centuries (Kuskov 1998: 50).

In writing his chronicle, Nestor used the second Kyiv Pechersk chronicle (“Начальный свод”), which was based on the earliest chronicle composed in Kyiv (“Древнейший Киевский свод”); the latter was composed using the texts of the first Kyiv Pechersk chronicle (“Первый Киево-Печерский свод”, 1073) and the old
chronicle of Novgorod ("Древний Новгородский свод", 1050) (Kuskov 1998: 50). The information concerning Livonians was most probably taken from this last source. Thus the first mention of the Livonians could be from the late 11th century, but clear evidence proving it has not been preserved. Indirectly, the link that refers to the lands of Novgorod is the spelling of the word либь (see above).

Next we shall discuss the text written on a 41 × 9 cm strip of birch bark found in Novgorod that was written for a Livonian merchant who lived in Pskov. This text begins as follows: “Грамота отъ Іли і отъ Дъмитра Пльсковъ ко либинъ ко Мостокъ”, which in modern Russian would be “Грамота от Ильи и от Дмитра во Псков к ливу Мостке”, i.e. “Letter from Ilya and Dmitri to the Livonian M. in Pskov”. This letter is proof that Livonians were active in the field of commerce in Novgorod and other towns during the Middle Ages (Zaliznyak 2004: 308).

This historical item (No 776) was discovered in Novgorod, 2.3–2.4 metres underground. Its stratigraphical dating was between 1130 and 1150; non-stratigraphical methods gave the dating as between 1140 and 1170. The most probable time of writing of the letter is considered to be some time between 1140 and 1150 (Yanin et al. 2004: 10). By the time of its writing, it is the third mention of Livonians.

This letter contains the ethnonym либиноу. The singular nominative of this word is либинъ [libinъ] (Zaliznyak 2007: 308). The stem of the ethnonym is либ-, while -инъ is the suffix of singularity in Old Russian (Demyanov 2001: 350). The same suffix has also been used to denote members of other Finno-Ugric peoples (see Saarikivi 207: 208 ff).

This record is another example of this ethnonym being spelled with the consonant b in Old Russian. This tradition continued in the following centuries, albeit in the form of the plural denomination либь ~ любь. As such, we can see that the records of this ethnonym present two lineages: (1) the Germanic (Vikings and Germans) with the letter f; and (2) the Latvian and Russian, with the letter b.

Another intriguing aspect of this item is the dative form of the personal name ко Мостокъ, of which the nominative would be *Mostoka. A. A. Zaliznyak gives its presumed original form as Мъстъка [Mystuка] and links it to the Finnic appellative musta ‘black’, which has the appended diminutive suffix -ъk-a. In his opinion, the latter is more typical of Russian than Finnic languages. A. A. Zaliznyak presents the toponyms Мстино ~ Мустино селище and Мостин ручей as indirect evidence of the occurrence of Musta as an anthroponym in the lands of Novgorod (Zaliznjak 2004: 308–309). Janne Saarikivi thinks the original form of the anthroponym was either
Mostok or Mostoka, and states that this needs some research before we can declare it has either a Slavonic or Finnic suffix (Saarikivi 2007: 235). The form *Mostok has been definitely ruled out, because the dative -b is added to substantives ending in Nominative with the letter a only.

Taking into consideration the Finnic names, we can reconstruct it as either *Musta-kka, *Must-u-kka or *Must-o-oi-kka. Such name is not recorded earlier (a point on which A. A. Zaliznjak agrees) or later. Undoubtedly, this name could be linked to the appellative *musta (cf. Livonian musta, Estonian must), because personal and animal names with the stem must- but without any suffix have been recorded among Livonians, Estonians and others, e.g. the Livonian names 1453 Jacop Must, 1506 Magdalene Must, 1582–1583 Michell Most, Estonian 1350 Mustehermen (< *Musta Hermann), 1468 Most, Hans, and Finnish compound words such as Mustapää, Mustasilmä from the 15th century (Kiparsky 1938: 253; Feyerabend 1985: 24; Stoebke 1964: 168).

The anthroponym *Mustakka has the appended diminutive suffix -kka, which is most probably of Finnic origin. This suffix is quite common in old Finnic names and common nouns, cf. *Ilmakka, *Meelikka, *Toivakka; Finnish punakka ‘reddish’ from puna ‘redness’ (Stoebke 1964: 121; Laanest 1975: 136).

In addition to *-kka, the name can include another diminutive suffix: either *-u or *-oi. After Julius Mägiste, the suffix -u ~ -o in the Estonian Mustu ~ Musto (a cow’s or ox’s name), mustu ‘seal with dark skin’, and -o in Finnish Musto (a cow’s name) derive from *-oi but in fact their differentiation in Livonian and Estonian is impossible (cf. Mägiste 1928: 12, 71, 214).

The correspondence between the Finnic u and the Russian o could be found also in birch bark writings (янь Hoi ‘in Nuija’ < nuija ‘club’) and from old loan-words in Russian, such as the Finnic kuva ‘picture, boot last’ and the Russian кова ~ кува ‘shadow’ (Kalima 1919: 50; Xelimskij 2000: 348). In successive syllables there is potential correspondence between the Finnic a and o and the Russian o, for example the Karelian koppala and the Russian копало ~ копала ‘wood she-grouse’ (Kalima 1919: 65; Myznikov 2003: 133), which could also have been reflected in some versions of the name Ar’fastov ~ Arfostov mentioned above (ПСРЛ II 35).
5. Later records

According to Marek Tamm (2009: 8), the first mention of Livonia in Latin prose texts in form in Liflandiam is in a message sent in 1195/1196 by Sido, the provost of the Augustinian monastery in Neumünster, to Gozwinus, a priest in Haseldorf. This time it is again the name of a land derived from the name of the people, and the source language here is German. From the 13th century, the most important source on Livonia and Livonian personal names is the Livonian Chronicle of Henry, but the discussion of these names in this text deserves separate research (see Vääri 2005).

6. Conclusions

Sorting the above information by the times of the events (number before slash) or by the times of its recording (number after slash), we can summarise written sources on Livonians in the form of the following table 1. The asterisk before the number indicates an uncertain event. If we consider the dating of the event, the earliest sources mentioning Livonians are Gesta Danorum and the Tale of Bygone Years, but both sources present rather dubious information: in the first the battle of Bråvalla itself or the year are dubious; in the latter we cannot be sure that the member of the delegation was really a Livonian. If we consider the time of recording, the earliest sources are two rune inscriptions from Sweden, and the next is the list of neighbouring peoples of the Russians from the Tale of Bygone Years.

Table 1. Earliest written sources on Livonians

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Writings, grave inscriptions and historic documents</th>
<th>Time of event(s)</th>
<th>Dating of writing</th>
<th>Oldest preserved version of text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1*/4*</td>
<td>Gesta Danorum</td>
<td>550, 750, ~1000 or never took place</td>
<td>~1186 or 1208</td>
<td>~1275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2*/2</td>
<td>Tale of Bygone Years (2 references)</td>
<td>944 or 945; second one undated</td>
<td>1113–1116</td>
<td>1377 or later</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 1. Continuation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Writings, grave inscriptions and historic documents</th>
<th>Time of event(s)</th>
<th>Dating of writing</th>
<th>Oldest preserved version of text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3/1</td>
<td>Two stones with rune inscription</td>
<td>Early 11th century</td>
<td>Early 11th century</td>
<td>Early 11th century</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/3</td>
<td>Letter on birch bark</td>
<td>1140s or 1150s</td>
<td>1140s or 1150s</td>
<td>1140s or 1150s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/6</td>
<td>Livonian Chronicle of Henry</td>
<td>~1184–1227</td>
<td>1224–1227</td>
<td>14th century</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6/5</td>
<td>Message sent by Sido</td>
<td>1195 or 1196</td>
<td>1195 or 1196</td>
<td>1195 or 1196</td>
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</table>

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Märksõnad: liivlased, läänemeresoome rahvad, etnonüümide, antroponüümide, onomastika