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On South Estonian (Ludza and Leivu) Proper Names in Latvia and Their Possible Cognates in other Finnic Areas (Livonian and Krevinian)

There were two South Estonian “islands” in Latvia: Leivu in Northern Latvia and Ludza in Latgalia, the eastern region of Latvia. In their historical living areas, they left traces in the proper name systems. Given South Estonian’s unique position within the Finnic language family (Kallio 2014: 163) and the distinct status of Leivu within the South Estonian dialects (Kallio 2021: 135), investigating South Estonian toponyms – especially those outside Estonia – requires careful consideration of the specific features of South Estonian dialects, including their phonology, vocabulary, etc.

For example, in Latgalia near Ludza, there is the name *Pilda* (Latgalian *Pylda*), which refers to a lake, river, and manor. This name is commonly associated with the Estonian appellative *põld* ‘field’ (Rudzīte 1968: 189; Breidaks 1970: 162; Breidaks 1973: 100), a comparison seems that appears logical. In EKNR, the name is even recorded as *Põlda*. One counterargument, however, is that *Pilda* was mentioned before the supposed immigration of Estonians into the area (Zeps 1977: 432–433). This argument overlooks the fact that in South Estonian dialects, the native Finnic word *nurm* (‘field’) is used more widely than the Germanic loanword *põld*. The word *nurm* is also frequently employed in appellative and toponym formation. Consequently, the (South) It is possible that the name has Baltic roots, as suggested by comparisons to Latvian *pilt* ‘to drip’, Lithuanian *pilti* ‘to pour liquid’, and the Baltic **pilnas* ‘full’, **pild-* ‘to fill’. In the Leivu area, there is also a river named *Pilupe* (Leivu *Põllupī*), which is a dialectal form of *Pilnupe* (*pilns* ‘full’), resulting from *ln > ll* assimilation in Latgalian (Zemzare 1940: 80).

On the other hand, South Estonian proper names often have cognates in other Finnic naming systems. For instance, *Pujāti* (in Courland, Kiparsky 1939: 231; 410), *Pujati* (in Latgalia, LĢIA VD), *Pujas* (near Bauska, Dziļleja 1932: 31), as well as *Puja(s)* and *Pujukalns* in Northern Latvia (LĢIA VD) occur across various Finnic regions within Latvia. These names are consistently explained as being of Finnic origin (LVV V).

In the Ludza region, there is a toponym *Ņukši* (previously written as *Nukši*) and a river named *Ņukšu ups*, which Breidaks presented as Finnic (1973: 99). Similarly, in the Bauska region, the historical area of Krevins, there is a homestead named *Nukši*, which might have Krevinian origins (Dziļleja 1932: 31–32). This presentation will explore the potential Finnic origins of *Ņukši* / *Nukši* from the critical point of view.

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