

# Latvian Surnames Motivated by Profession

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## Abstract

The article is devoted to contemporary anthroponyms (surnames) of Latvian origin motivated by occupation or profession. The amount of different surnames of this primary semantics is not large – about 7.9%. It is less than analogical groups in neighbouring countries. According to Ernests Blese (1929), surnames of such primary semantics are very old: *Arst* ‘doctor’ 1506, *Czelskallis* ‘ironsmith’ 1573. Documents of the 16th century have provided evidence for professions or occupations which are not used today anymore, such as: *Bozeneke* (= *bozenieks* ‘stick master’), *Groszenicke* (= *grožnieks* ‘rein master’). The most widespread occupational names among Latvian modern surnames are the following: *Mucenieks* ‘cooper’, *Mūrnieks* ‘bricklayer’, and *Kalējs* ‘blacksmith’; cf. such surnames whose frequency is low: *Arājs* ‘ploughman’, *Zemnieks* ‘peasant’ etc. There are also many compound surnames known only in Latvian – no anthroponyms of analogous semantics are recorded in other comparative languages, e.g.: *Mālmeisters* ‘clay master’, *Griķumalējs* ‘buckwheat miller’, *Jaunarājs* ‘new/young ploughman’, *Milzarājs* ‘giant ploughman’, *Smilšarājs* ‘sand ploughman’, *Kalnzemnieks* ‘hill peasant’. Some of them have definitely originated from oikonyms, i.e. from homestead names. The typological study comparing surname systems in Latvian, Lithuanian, Estonian, Finnish, Russian, Polish and German shows many similarities, but also some interesting peculiarities. Especially, a large number of surnames of this etymological semantics is known in German and in Russian.

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Latvia is a small country on the eastern coast of the Baltic Sea with the population of 1.9 million (2014). A large number of modern Latvian personal names are borrowings. However, a significant number of Latvian anthroponyms consist of proper names derived on the basis of the Latvian language itself. Approximately 34% of Latvian surnames can be considered of Latvian origin (Staltmane 1981: 39-40). The remaining surnames are of German (mostly in the western part) and Slavonic origin (mostly in the eastern part of Latvia).

Usually it is stressed in linguistic literature that surnames in Latvia appeared very late (among the latest ones in Europe): in a legitimate way (artificially) surnames were given only at the beginning of 19th century in Vidzeme (middle part of Latvia) and Kurzeme (Western part of Latvia) and in the second half of the 19th century in Latgale (Eastern part of Latvia) (Upelniņš 1936: 225, Staltmane 1981: 7). However, according to historical sources studied by Ernests Blese (1929), it turns out that surnames were used much earlier in cities, especially in Riga (already in the 15th-16th centuries). The latest studies of archival document also show that Latgalian surnames were recorded already at the end of the 16th century (Škutāns 1974, Stafecka 2013). The giving of surnames is directly connected with abolishment of serfdom (at the beginning of the 19th century), as well as with hereditary rights (Plakans and Vezerels 2003: 31). By choosing a surname, the homestead owners were

often advised to take the name of their homestead as surnames (Upelnieks 1936: 247, Balodis 2008: 14).

The etymological-semantic groups of Latvian surnames are (according Balodis 2008):

1. surnames derived from common nouns (from non-onymic lexis):
  - surnames describing the person's outward appearance and character – 14.6%
  - surnames of ethnonymic semantics – 3.7%
  - surnames of semantics of trades and professions – 7.9% (the target of this article)
  - surnames of fauna semantics – 16.2%
  - surnames of flora semantics – 16.5%
  - surnames of physio-geographical semantics – 19.6%
  - other concrete or abstract semantic surnames – 11.3%
2. surnames of anthroponymic origin – 8%
3. surnames of toponymic origin – 2.2%

According to Ernests Blese (1929: 134-135), surnames of primary semantics of occupation/profession are very old: they were recorded in Riga in 15th-17th centuries: *Arst* 1506<sup>1</sup> 'doctor', *Beckers* 1521 'baker', *Blodenex* 1607 'bowl-maker', *Bruwer* 1532/3 'brewer', *Czelskallis* 1573 'smith', *Dorsseneke* 1512 'gardener', *Kalleis* 'smith', *Karwirs* 'soldier', *Kletteneck* 1607 'overseer of the granary', *Melder* 1499 'miller', *Murnix* 1511 'bricklayer', *Mutznick* 'cooper, barrel-maker', etc.

Documents from the 16th century have given evidence of such professions or occupations which are not used today anymore: *Asger* (= *āžģēris*<sup>2</sup>) 1516 'sb. who tans goat skins', *Berneaucklis* (= *bērnauklis*) 1604 'baby-sitter', *Dwelnicke* 1507 'towel-maker', *Jostneke* 1518 'belt-maker', *Groszenicke* 'reins-maker', *Kanengeters* (< Germ.) 'can master', *Pestell* (= *pestelis*) 'magician, sorcerer, wizard', *Struckennick* 1508 (= *striķenieks*) 'rope maker', *Telegannis* (= *teleganis*) 1539 'herdsman of bull-calf', *Wirbenick* (= *virbenieks*) 'bar maker' (Blese 1929: 134-135).

Most widespread names of professions among Latvian modern surnames are the following: *Mucenieks* (112) 'cooper', *Mūrnieks* (111) 'bricklayer', *Kalējs* (103) 'blacksmith', *Dreimanis* (95) 'turner', *Zvejnieks* (88) 'fisherman', *Strēlnieks* (43) 'rifleman'; cf. such surnames of occupation semantics whose frequency is low: *Zemnieks* (8)<sup>3</sup> 'peasant', *Arājs* (38) 'ploughman', etc.

The data of Latvian Top-10 surnames do not include any surname of the semantics of occupation:

<sup>1</sup> The number after the surname shows the year of the record in historical documents according to Ernests Blese (Blese 1929).

<sup>2</sup> The word in brackets after historical form of surname shows the corresponding lexeme in Standard Latvian nowadays.

<sup>3</sup> Numbers in brackets show the frequency of the surnames according to the diverse dictionary of Latvian surnames published in the monograph by Velta Staltmane (Staltmane 1981).

1. *Kalniņš* < Latv. origin ‘hill’
2. *Bērziņš* < Latv. ‘birch-tree’
3. *Ozoliņš* < Latv. ‘oak-tree’
4. *Liepiņš* < Latv. ‘linden-tree’
5. *Jansons* < Germ./Scand. origin
6. *Ozols* < Latv. ‘oak-tree’
7. *Pētersons* < Germ./Scand. origin
8. *Krūmiņš* < Latv. ‘bush’
9. *Balodis* < Latv. ‘pidgeon’
10. *Kļaviņš* < Latv. ‘maple-tree’ (data of 2009) (Balodis 2012: 34)

The typological study is based on the card-index of 2,700 Latvian surnames, coined on the basis of Latvian appellatives, and the surname material from neighbouring countries, e.g. Estonian, Finnish, Lithuanian, Polish, Russian, German surnames (about 8,700 surnames altogether). The comparison of all seven anthroponymic systems has proven that almost in all languages, with insignificant exceptions, there are surnames with etymological meaning ‘blacksmith’, ‘brewer’, ‘ploughman’, ‘bee-keeper’, ‘cook’, ‘shoemaker’, ‘potter’, ‘carpenter’, ‘gardener’, ‘hatter’, ‘singer’, ‘shepherd’, ‘glasscutter’, ‘soldier’, ‘innkeeper’, ‘hunter’, ‘butcher’, ‘wheeler’, ‘saddler’, ‘judge’, ‘peasant’ etc.

For example,

- surnames with the primary meaning ‘blacksmith’<sup>4</sup>:
  - o Latv. *Kalējs, Kalējiņš, Apškalējs, Dzelzkalējs, Dzelzkalis, Pīpkalējs, Smilškalējs, Strīkkalējs, Kalvis, Kalvītis, Kalvāns, Kalvišs, Kaļva*
  - o Est. *Sepp, Raudsepp*
  - o Finn. *Seppä, Seppänen, Seppälä, Rautanen*
  - o Lith. *Kalvis, Kalvaitis, Kalvelis, Kalvėnas, Kalvinis, Kalvinskas*
  - o Pol. *Kowal, Kowalczyk, Kowalewski, Kowalicki, Kowalski*
  - o Russ. *Кузнецов, Кузничиков, Кузнец, Ковалёв, Ковалевский, Коваленко, Коваленков, Ковалик, Коваль, Ковальков, Ковальчук*
  - o Germ. *Schmidt, Schmid, Schmied, Schmedt, Schmitz, Schmidl, Schmidtke, Schmidtmann, Schmiedler, etc.*
- surnames with the primary meaning ‘cook’<sup>5</sup>:
  - o Latv. *Pavārs, Pavāriņš, Pavārnieks*
  - o Est. *Kokk, Kokkar*
  - o Finn. *Kokki*<sup>5</sup>
  - o Lith. *Vireika, Vireikis*

<sup>4</sup> Comparison with Estonian, Finnish, Lithuanian, Polish, Russian, German surnames are based on corresponding dictionaries: Kohlheim and Kohlheim (2000), Maciejauskienė, Razmukaitė and Vanagas (1985-1989), Mikkonen and Paikkala (1992, 2000), Rymut (1999-2001), Gandzhina (2001) and Nikonov (1993).

<sup>5</sup> At least part of Finnish surnames (or earlier bynames) are coined from toponyms (homestead names) (Paikkala 2004: 22), so sometimes they correspond to the names of professions only formally.

- Pol. *Kucharz, Kuchar, Kucharczyk, Kucharek, Kucharski*
  - Russ. *Поваров*
  - Ger. *Koch, Kocher, Köcher, Kochs, Kock, Köck, Kocks, Köch(e)l*, etc.
- surnames with the primary meaning ‘shoemaker’:
- Latv. *Kurpnieks*
  - Est. *Kingsepp, Kängsepp, Kingisepp, Kingisepp, Kingsep*
  - Finn. *Suutari, Suutarinen*
  - Lith. *Kurpaitis, Kurpauskas, Kurpavičius, Kurpininkas, Šiaučiūnas, Šiaučiulis, Šiaučiukas*
  - Pol. *Szewc, Szewczyk, Szewczuk*
  - Russ. *Сапожников*
  - Ger. *Schuster, Schomaker, Schu(h)macher, Schomann, Schuchmans, Schumann*
- surnames with the primary meaning ‘fisherman’:
- Latv. *Zvejnieks*
  - Est. *Kalur, Kalamees*
  - Finn. *Kalastaja*
  - Lith. *Žuvininkas*
  - Pol. *Rybak, Rybin, Rybar, Rybarski*
  - Russ. *Рыбаловлев, Рыбаков*
  - Germ. *Fischel, Fischer(s), Fischle, Fischmann*
- surnames with the primary meaning ‘potter’:
- Latv. *Podnieks*
  - Est. *Pottsepp, Pottisep*
  - Finn. —
  - Lith. *Puodėnas, Puodžiukaitis, Puodžiūnas, Puodžius, Puodys*
  - Pol. *Garncarz, Garncarzyk*
  - Russ. *Гончар, Гончаренко, Гончарик, Гончаров*
  - Ger. *Topf, Töpfer, Töpfner, Töpfer, Gro(p)per, Grö(p)per, Graper Gräper, Grapner, Auler, Aul, Aulmann, Eilenbecker, Eiler, Eul(n)er, Ullner, Pott, Pottbacker, Pottbäcker, Pottbecker, Potter, Pöttger, Pütjer, Dipper, Düppenbecker, Dörper, Dopfer, Döpf(n)er, Ha(f)fner, Häf(f)ner, Hefe, Hef(f)ner*, etc. (it seems, that the largest amount of surnames of this semantics is recorded in German)
- surnames with the primary meaning ‘hatter’:
- Latv. *Cepurnieks*
  - Est. *Kübarsepp*
  - Finn. *Hattunen* (?) (most credible that this is a surname of transonymic, respectively, toponymic origin)
  - Lith. *Kepuraitis*

- Pol. *Czapnik*
  - Russ. *Шапочкин, Шапочников, Шапошников*
  - Germ. *Hutmacher, Huter, Hutter*
- surnames with the primary meaning ‘servant; farm-hand’:
- Latv. *Kalpiņš*
  - Est. *Teener, Sulane*
  - Finn. *Ankkuri, Palviainen (?)*, *Herronen* ‘servant of the lord’
  - Lith. *Tarnauskas, Tarnavičius, Tarnevičius*
  - Pol. *Ślugocki, Ślusznik, Ślužewski, Śługa, Ślug*
  - Russ. *Батрак, Батраков*
  - Germ. *Knecht, Knechtel, Knapp(e), Dienert, Bub(e)*
- surnames with the primary meaning ‘peasant’:
- Latv. *Zemnieks, Kalnzemnieks, Lejzemnieks, Vāczemnieks, Veczemnieks, Muizemnieks, Jaunzemnieks, Bērzemnieks, Mūrzemnieks, Salazemnieks, Gruntzemnieks, Brīvzemnieks, Birzemnieks, Muižzemnieks*
  - Est. *Talupoeg, Põllumees*
  - Finn. *Talonpoika, Viljanen (?)*
  - Lith. *Laukininkas, Laukionis*
  - Pol. *Chłopski, Chłopiński*
  - Russ. *Крестьянинов, Крестьянkin, Крестьянцев*
  - Germ. *Bauer, Bauermann*

In some languages surnames of analogic semantics are not fixed in the card-index under review (there are empty places in the comparative table which maybe could be filled up in the future), for example, surnames with primary meaning ‘ploughman’:

- Latv. *Arājs, Jaunarājs, Kalnarājs, Dziļarājs, Milzarājs, Mežarājs, Muižarājs, Pļavarājs, Silarājs, Smilšarājs, Zemarājs*
  - Est. —
  - Finn. —
  - Lith. *Araitis, Arys, Arius*
  - Pol. *Oracz, Oraczewski*
  - Russ. *Пахарь*
  - Germ. *Pfluger, Pflüger, Pflugmacher, Pflügner, Ackermann*
- surnames with the primary meaning ‘doctor’:
- Latv. *Ārste, Dakteris, Dakternieks*
  - Est. *Arst*
  - Finn. —? cf. *Huusari* ‘healer /ārstnieks, dziednieks/’
  - Lith. *Daktaras, Daktaraitis, Daktaravičius, Daktaris, Doktoravičius*
  - Pol. *Doktor, Doktorowicz, Doktorski*
  - Russ. *Докторов, Докторенко*
  - Germ. *Arzt*

- surnames with the primary meaning ‘bee-keeper’:
  - Latv. *Bitenieks, Bitnieks, Dravnieks, Dravenieks*
  - Est. —
  - Finn. *Mesiäinen, Mehiläishoitaja ?*
  - Lith. *Bitenekas, Bitiniekas* (< borrowed from Latvian?), *Drevininkas* (?), *Drevininkaitis, Drevinskas*
  - Pol. *Bartnik*
  - Russ. *Пчелин, Пчельников, Пчёлкин, Пчеловодов, Пасечник, Пасечников*
  - Germ. *Bienemann, Biener, Bienert*
  
- surnames with the primary meaning ‘singer’:
  - Latv. *Dziedātājs*
  - Est. —
  - Finn. *Laulaja, Laulajainen*
  - Lith. *Dainius, Dainys, Dainaras, Dainauskas, Dainavičius, Dainelis, Dainiūnas*
  - Pol. *Śpiewak, Śpiewakowski*
  - Russ. *Песнопевцев, Песенников, Песельник, Песельников*
  - Germ. *Sänger*
  
- surnames with the primary meaning ‘gardener’:
  - Latv. *Dārznieks*
  - Est. *Aednik*
  - Finn. —
  - Lith. *Daržinauskas, Daržininkaitis, Daržinis, Daržininkas*
  - Pol. *Ogrodnik, Ogrodniczuk*
  - Russ. *Огородников, Огородник*
  - Germ. *Gartner, Gärtner, Gertmann*

There are some rare surnames with the primary meaning of occupation and semantic analogies are used in a few languages, for instance:

- Latv. *Students* ‘student’
- Pol. *Student, Studentkowski*
- Russ. *Студентов*

One more example of a rare surname recorded only in two comparative languages:

- Latv. *Ecētājs* ‘sb. who harrows’ < Latv. verb *ecēt* ‘to harrow’
- Germ. *Eger, Egerer, Egermann, Egger, Eggers*

There are some anthroponymic examples recorded only in Latvian and Lithuanian, for example:

- Latv. *Dzirkalis* ‘millstone cutter’
- Lith. *Girniauskas, Girnavičius, Girnikaitis, Girnikas*
- Latv. *Mērnieks* ‘land surveyor’
- Lith. *Miernykas, Mierninkas*

Many compound surnames are known only in Latvian (very often they are coined from corresponding toponyms – homestead names – which in their turn have the primary meaning of occupation): Latv. *Jaunarājs* ‘young/new + ploughman’, *Milzarājs* ‘large/huge + ploughman’, *Silarājs* ‘pine forest + ploughman’, *Smilšarājs* ‘sand + ploughman’, *Zemarājs* ‘soil + ploughman’ or ‘lowland + ploughman’, *Smilškalējs* ‘sand + smith’, *Strīkkalējs* ‘bar + smith’, *Kalnzemnieks* ‘hill + peasant’, *Lejzemnieks* ‘vale + peasant’, *Vāczemnieks* ‘German + peasant’, *Veczemnieks* ‘old + peasant’, *Muižzemnieks* ‘estate + peasant’, *Jaunzemnieks* ‘young/new + peasant’, *Mūrzemnieks* ‘brick/stone wall + peasant’, *Gruntzemnieks* ‘soil, ground + peasant’, *Brīvzemnieks* ‘free + peasant’, *Birzemnieks* ‘grove + peasant’, *Vārtukapteinis* ‘gate/goal + captain’, etc. By the way, some of them have very low frequency also in Latvia, e.g. *Smilškalējs* (1),<sup>6</sup> *Zemarājs* (1).

On the other hand, there are surnames of primary semantics of occupation in other neighbouring languages with no analogues known in Latvian anthroponymic system, for instance:

- Finn. *Kesti* ‘stranger, foreigner, German merchant’;
- Est. *Kardsepp* ‘tinsmith’, *Katalsepp* ‘pot-master’, *Kivisepp* ‘stone-cutter’, *Töldsepp* ‘carriage master’, *Luksepp* = *Leesment* ‘key-smith’, *Pangsepp* ‘bucket master’, *Plekksepp* ‘tinsmith’, *Tahasepp* ‘coinage smith’, *Voksepp* ‘master of spinning-wheels’, *Opman* ‘steward of estate’;
- Germ. *Köhler* ‘charcoal-burner’, *Körber* ‘basket-maker’, *Splettstösser* ‘splinters chopper’, *Stricker* ‘rope maker’, *Täscher* ‘bag-maker’, *Riemenschneider* ‘belt-maker’, *Wollman* ‘wool master’, *Wächter* ‘guardsman’.

An especially large number of surnames of this semantics is used in Russian (but surnames of analogical semantics are not recorded in Latvian), for example:

- Russ. *Коновалов* ‘veterinarian’ *Солеваров* ‘salt master’, *Муковоз* ‘flour carrier’, *Водовоз*, *Водоносов* ‘water carrier’, *Быкадоров* ‘bull skinner’, *Звездочёт* ‘astrologer’, *Кожмякин* ‘tanner, skinner’, *Воскобойников* ‘candle-master’, *Перочинцев* ‘feather-master’, *Протопопов* ‘head priest’, *Дяконов* ‘assistant of the priest’, *Раснопов* ‘former priest’, *Суфлёров* ‘prompter’, *Бронников* ‘weapon master’, *Сокольников* ‘hunter with hawk’,

<sup>6</sup> Frequency of Latvian contemporary surnames is given according to the Diverse dictionary of Latvian surnames published in the monograph by Velta Staltmane (Staltmane 1981).

*Сумников* ‘bag-master’, *Собашников* ‘grower of dogs’, *Иконников* ‘painter of icons’, *Санников* ‘sledge-master’, *Крупенников* ‘seller of goats’, *Гвоздарёв* ‘nail-master’, *Лошкарёв* ‘wooden spoons’ master’, *Бердников* ‘loom-master’, *Воротников* ‘guard of town gate or fortification gate’, *Подключников* < *ключников* ‘supervisor of food reserves/stock’, *Толмачев* < *толмач* ‘interpreter’ (Unbegaun 1989: 93-103, Gandzhina 2001)

There are only a few Latvian first names motivated by profession/occupation. Some of them are known only from historical documents (16th century), and it is not quite clear if they are first names, for example:

- ? *Kalvens* (Calven), cf. *Kalvis*? < Latv. *kalvis* ‘blacksmith’, recorded in Kurzeme in 1582 (Siliņš 1991: 189);
- *Kalvers*: Latv. *kalvis* ‘blacksmith’?, recorded in Vidzeme in 1590 (Siliņš 1991: 189);
- ? *Semneks* (Semnex), *Semniks* (Semnix, Semnick), *Semnings*, cf. Latv. *zemnieks* ‘peasant’, recorded in Zemgale in 1566 (Siliņš 1991: 287);
- ? *Gans*: Latv. *gans* ‘herd’?; or old North. *gan* ‘magic, miracle, wonder’?, recorded in Zemgale in 1566 (Siliņš 1991: 133).

Some Latvian first names with the meaning of occupation are used in 20th century and some sometimes even nowadays:

- *Dziedonis*: Latv. *dziedonis* ‘singer’, included into calendar/name-almanac in 1879, the only record at the beginning of 20th century (Siliņš 1991: 103);
- *Lidonis*: Latv. *lidonis* ‘flyer’, the only record in 1937 in Riga. (Siliņš 1991: 214);
- *Vaidelotis*: Latv. *vaidelotis* ‘ancient /pagan/ priest’, included in name-almanac in 1908, recorded in Riga in the 20th century (Siliņš 1991: 314). In the registers of citizens of Latvia in 2014 there is only one person by the name *Vaidelotis* (m.) and one person – *Vaidelote* (f.) is known (PMLP).
- *Kalvis*: Latv. *kalvis* ‘blacksmith’, included into calendar/name-almanac in 1921, recorded in 1939 in Riga, it was popular after WWII in Riga, Vidzeme and Kurzeme, has lost popularity in 70s. (Siliņš 1991: 189). In 1998 – 17 boys got this name, in 2003 – 11 boys. In 2014 – all together 692 persons by the name *Kalvis* were registered in Latvia (PMLP).

So, theoretically it is possible in Latvian to have both first name and surname of occupation semantics, e.g. *Kalvis Arājs*, *Vaidelotis Zvejnieks*, or theoretically name = surname: *Kalvis Kalvis*, *Dziedonis Dziedonis*.

This study was devoted to surnames of Latvian origin, in other words, formal principle is applied in this case – personal names were considered to be Latvian if they have a reference in appellative vocabulary. There are also indirect Germanisms in Latvian surnames which were coined from Latvian appellatives of German origin, for instance: *Skrīveris*

(Latv. *skrīveris* ‘scribe’ < Est. *krīwel* < Germ. dial. *Schrīver*, ME III 896), *Stūrmanis* (Latv. *stūrmanis* ‘wheelman’ < Germ. *Steuermann*, Germ. dial. *Stūrman*, ME III 1110). Many Latvian surnames have been borrowed from other languages (about 2/3 of all anthroponyms) – from German, Sweden, Russian, Polish, Lithuanian, Estonian (Balodis 2011: 19). For example, Latvian surnames originated from German names of professions: *Ģēģeris* (Germ. *Jäger* ‘hunter’), *Millers* (Germ. *Müller* ‘miller’), *Obermanis* (Germ. *Obermann*, *Ober* ‘waiter’), *Šmits* (Germ. *Schmied* ‘blacksmith’), *Šneiders* (Germ. *Schneider* ‘dressmaker’). They are still in wide use in Latvia.

The analysis of the contemporary anthroponyms of Latvian origin shows that the group of the surnames motivated by occupation or profession is not large (about 7.9%): the comparison with other anthroponymic systems testifies that it is smaller than analogical group in neighbouring countries (it seems that especially large amount of surnames of this etymological semantics is used in German and Russian). The typological study comparing surname systems in Latvian, Lithuanian, Estonian, Finnish, Russian, Polish and German underscores many similarities, but also some interesting peculiarities which are characteristic only to Latvian (for instance, a lot of compound surnames with one component – name of the profession; supposedly these surnames are of transonymic origin, that is they are coined from corresponding toponyms).

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