

## STRAIPSNIAI

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### BALTIC, SLAVIC, GERMANIC

**Abstract.** The western Indo-European vocabulary in Baltic and Slavic is the result of an Indo-European substratum which contained an older non-Indo-European layer and was part of the Corded Ware horizon. The numbers show that a considerable part of the vocabulary was borrowed after the split between Baltic and Slavic, which came about when their speakers moved westwards north and south of the Pripet marshes. Germanic and Balto-Slavic were never contiguous Indo-European dialects at any stage of their prehistory.

**Keywords:** Baltic; Slavic, Germanic; Indo-European dialects; substratum; vocabulary.

It is generally assumed that Germanic and Baltic developed from contiguous Indo-European dialects. Reconsidering the chronological relationships, I have come to the conclusion that this view cannot be correct because Balto-Slavic had not yet diverged from Indo-Iranian at the time when the ancestors of the Germanic tribes separated from their eastern neighbors. I now think that the order in which the attested branches of Indo-European left the original homeland in the Russian steppe was the following (cf. Kortlandt 2010, 1–6; 47–50):

1. Anatolian;
2. Tocharian;
3. Italo-Celtic (cf. Kortlandt 2007, 149–157);
4. Germanic;
5. “Temematic” (cf. Holzer 1989; Kortlandt 2010, 73–80);
6. Balkan languages (Greek, Phrygian, Armenian, Thracian, Albanian, in this order);
7. Balto-Slavic;
8. Indo-Iranian (cf. Kuz’mina 2007, 220–223);

The earliest contacts between Germanic and Balto-Slavic speakers can be dated to the early Middle Ages.

Saskia Pronk-Tiethoff has made clear that there are no Proto-Germanic loanwords in Proto-Slavic because “the two homelands were at best about 900 kilometres removed from each other” (2013, 72). The Proto-Germanic homeland can be identified with the area between the Erzgebirge, the Thuringian Forest, the Harz and the river Elbe (cf. Udolph 1994, 925f.) and the Proto-Slavic homeland with historical Galicia (cf. Udolph 1979, 619–623). There were two waves of early Germanic loanwords into Slavic, one from the Goths in the south and the other from the Germans in the west (cf. Pronk-Tiethoff 2013, 217–273). These can be identified with the early Slavic expansions to the south and to the west, respectively (cf. Kortlandt 2011, 149). There is no evidence for earlier contact between Germanic and Slavic speakers and there are no traces of earlier Germanic presence east of the river Elbe. It appears that the Balts never came into direct contact with Germanic tribes because the Lechitic (Polish + Pomorian + Polabian) migration to the northwest intervened (cf. Udolph 1979, 626; 638; 1994, 918–920). Since the Goths never lived on the Baltic coast (cf. Kortlandt 2010, 27–30), it follows that early Germanic loanwords in Baltic always passed through a Slavic intermediary.

In the “Temematic” branch of Indo-European discovered by Georg Holzer (1989), the original tenues *\*p*, *\*t*, *\*k* became voiced *b*, *d*, *g* while the mediae aspiratae *\*b<sup>h</sup>*, *\*d<sup>h</sup>*, *\*g<sup>h</sup>* became voiceless *p*, *t*, *k*. Holzer lists 45 Slavic etyma borrowed from Temematic (1989, 50), of which 11 are also found in Baltic. Matasović does not dismiss Holzer’s theory out of hand but considers it unproven and points out that most of the Baltic and Slavic reflexes do not go back to a single prototype (2013, 78–81). This suggests that Baltic and Slavic borrowed independently from a language that was spoken to the west of the Slavic homeland, probably in the area between the rivers San and Vistula. At that time, the Balts occupied the territory north of the Pripet marshes up to the lower Vistula. This leaves the area between the Elbe and the Vistula unaccounted for. Here may have been the territory of the *Venedi* (*Venethi*, *Οὐενέδαι*) mentioned by Plinius, Tacitus and Ptolemaeus, later known as *Wenden* or *Winden* after the Lechitic expansion (cf. Porzig 1974, 128). They were probably related to their namesakes in Slovenia and to the *Veneti* in northern Italy. The voiced obstruent in *Venedi* and *Οὐενέδαι* is

reminiscent of the Temematic development. This opens the possibility that the reflexes of *\*b<sup>h</sup>*, *\*d<sup>h</sup>*, *\*g<sup>h</sup>* were fricatives in Temematic, as they were in the Italic languages including Venetic, and that they became devoiced and either shortened to stops or borrowed as stops in Baltic and Slavic, which did not have the corresponding fricatives.

When considering the way the Indo-Europeans took to the west, it is important to realize that mountains, forests and marshlands were prohibitive impediments. Moreover, people need fresh water, all the more so when traveling with horses. The natural way from the Russian steppe to the west is therefore along the northern bank of the river Danube. This leads to the hypothesis that the western Indo-Europeans represent successive waves of migration along the Danube and its tributaries. The Celts evidently followed the Danube all the way into southern Germany. The ancestors of the Italic tribes, including the Veneti, may have followed the river Sava towards northern Italy. The ancestors of Germanic speakers apparently moved into Moravia and Bohemia and followed the Elbe into Saxony. A part of the Veneti may have followed them into Moravia and moved along the Oder through the Moravian Gate into Silesia. The hypothetical speakers of Temematic probably moved through Slovakia along the river Orava into western Galicia. The ancestors of speakers of Balkan languages crossed the lower Danube and moved to the south. This scenario is in agreement with the generally accepted view of the earliest relations between these branches of Indo-European (cf. Holzer 1989, 165 on Temematic).

If the theory advanced here is correct, Stang's "Lexikalische Sonderübereinstimmungen" between Slavic, Baltic and Germanic (1972) cannot be the result of common innovations but must be dated after the separation of Baltic and Slavic from Indo-Iranian and the movement of their speakers to the northwest, where they came into contact with the Corded Ware horizon. Matasović has argued that there are no early Uralic loanwords in Balto-Slavic (2013, 82, cf. Kallio 2005) and that there are hardly any loanwords from the Balkan peninsula (2013, 87f.). He counts 26 words in Baltic and Slavic (of which 12 are attested in both) that are shared with western Indo-European (Germanic, Celtic, Italic) and may be of non-Indo-European origin, mostly nouns referring to cultural items, flora and fauna (2013, 83–87). Oettinger (2003) lists 64 innovations common to at least Celtic or Italic and Baltic or Slavic, of which 23 do not have a root attested elsewhere in Indo-European. Stang (1972) lists 188 words limited to Baltic, Slavic and

Germanic, of which 54 are found in Slavic and Germanic, 66 in Baltic and Germanic, and 68 in all three branches.

Thus, I think that the western Indo-European vocabulary in Baltic and Slavic is the result of an Indo-European substratum which contained an older non-Indo-European layer and was part of the Corded Ware horizon. The numbers show that a considerable part of the vocabulary was borrowed after the split between Baltic and Slavic, which came about when their speakers moved westwards north and south of the Pripet marshes. These events are older than the westward movement of the Slavs which brought them into contact with Temematic speakers. One may conjecture that the Venedi occupied the Oder basin and then expanded eastwards over the larger part of present-day Poland before the western Balts came down the river Niemen and moved onwards to the lower Vistula. We may then identify the Venedic expansion with the spread of the Corded Ware horizon and the westward migration of the Balts and the Slavs with their integration in the larger cultural complex. The theory that the Venedi separated from the Veneti in the upper Sava region and moved through Moravia and Silesia to the Baltic Sea explains the “im Namenmaterial auffällige Übereinstimmung zwischen dem Baltikum und den Gebieten um den Nordteil der Adria” (Udolph 1981, 61). The Balts probably moved in two stages because the differences between West and East Baltic are considerable (cf. Kortlandt 2009 *passim*). Stang notes the presence of eight words that are limited to Prussian and Germanic (1972, 78).

The hypothesis of an Indo-European substratum in Baltic and Slavic is actually supported by the semantics of the shared vocabulary of Baltic, Slavic and Germanic (cf. Stang 1972, 79–82). There are no pronouns and particles (except Lith. *jaũ* ‘already’, Slavic (*j*)*u*(*že*), Gothic *ju*), almost no religious or abstract concepts, no words for relatives, many words for plants, animals, natural phenomena, and agriculture, few but important words for social phenomena (*draũgas* ‘friend’, *kiẽmas* ‘court(yard)’, *káimas* ‘village’, *liáudis* ‘people’, *valdýti* ‘to rule’), and especially many technical terms for wooden tools and utensils. There is no discernible formal or semantic difference between the Indo-European and the non-Indo-European parts of the substratum vocabulary. Half of the technical terms are common to Baltic, Slavic and Germanic while the large majority of the other half are found in Baltic but not in Slavic. There is no reason to assume earlier contacts between Balto-Slavic

and western Indo-European or other languages of the Corded Ware horizon. The dat.pl. ending *\*mus* which is common to Germanic and Balto-Slavic is an archaism that was replaced by the ablative ending *\*b<sup>h</sup>os* in Italo-Celtic and *\*b<sup>h</sup>ios* in Indo-Iranian (cf. Kortlandt 2014, 8). Germanic and Balto-Slavic were never contiguous Indo-European dialects at any stage of their prehistory.

## BALTŲ, SLAVŲ IR GERMANŲ KALBOS

### *Santrauka*

Vakarų indoeuropiečių leksikos baltų ir slavų kalbose šaltinis yra indoeuropiečių substratas, kuriame būta senesnio neindoeuropietiškojo sluoksnio ir kuriuo kalbėjo dalis virvelinės keramikos kultūros atstovų. Skolinių skaičius rodo, kad didelė dalis leksikos pasiskolinta po baltų ir slavų atsiskyrimo, kuris įvyko jiems pajudėjus vakarų kryptimi link teritorijų į šiaurę ir pietus nuo Pripetės pelkių. Germanai ir baltai-slavai nė vienu savo priešistorinės raidos etapu nebuvo besiribojantys indoeuropiečių dialektai.

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