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## BALTIC \*BALĀ ‘MUD, BOG, MARSH’ AT THE INDO-EUROPEAN BACKDROP

Baltų \**balā* ‘purvas, liūnas, pelkė’  
indoeuropiečių kalbų kontekste

### ANNOTATION

In this article the Baltic term \**balā* ‘mud, bog, marsh’ is analyzed from the point of view of its word-formation and etymology. The discussion of preceding etymologies leads to the choice of the cognates in Germanic \**pōla-*, and possibly Continental Celtic \**bolā*, all ‘swamp, marsh’, plus newly the Slavic term \**ǫb(v)lv* ‘source, spring; well’ as \**ǫ-b!°* ‘unmuddy’ = ‘clear (water)’. The Germanic comparanda imply the rare initial \**b-*, for some linguists, namely representatives of the Leiden school, indicating the “non-Indo-European” origin. It is tested if the etymon could represent an extension in *-l-* from the root \**ǫ<sup>u</sup>eb<sup>h</sup>-* ‘marsh, swamp’ in the zero-grade of ablaut in agreement with the ideas of Alexander Lubotsky.

KEYWORDS: Baltic, Germanic, Celtic, Slavic, source, umuddy, swamp.

### ANOTACIJA

Straipsnyje baltišką terminą \**balā* ‘purvas, liūnas, pelkė’ analizuojamas žodžių darybos ir etimologijos požiūriu. Aptarus ankstesnes etimologijas, pasirinkami giminiški žodžiai – germanų \**pōla-* ir galbūt žemyno keltų \**bolā*, reiškiantys ‘pelkė, liūnas’, o taip pat naujai pridodamas slaviškas terminas \**ǫb(v)lv* ‘versmė, šaltinis; šulinys’, kuris analizuojamas kaip \**ǫ-b!°* ‘nepurvinas’ = ‘skaidrus (vanduo)’. Kai kurių kalbininkų, kaip antai Leideno mokyklos atstovų, teigimu, germaniški lyginamieji žodžiai nurodo retą žodžio pradžios \**b-*, kuri suponuoja „neindoeuropietišką“ kilmę. Remiantis Aleksandro Lubotskio idėjomis,

straipsnyje analizuojama, ar šis etimonas galėtų būti nulinio balsių kaitos laipsnio šaknį \*g<sup>u</sup>eb<sup>h</sup>- ‘liūnas, pelkė’ praplečiančio elemento -l- pavyzdys.

ESMINIAI ŽODŽIAI: baltiškas, germaniškas, keltiškas, slaviškas, versmė, nepurvinas, pelkė.

## 1. ATTESTATION

1.1. Lithuanian *balà* ‘mud, bog, marshy area; spilled water, puddle’, dial. also *balė*; derivatives: *balýnas* ‘swamp, bog’, *balýnė* id., *balýstas*, -à dial. ‘muddy, marshy’, *balókšnis* ‘small muddy area, puddle, water-filled hole, e.g. in a road’, *balótos pėvos* f. pl. ‘muddy meadows’, *liúnabalė* ‘boggy meadow’.

Toponyms: river names *Baláitis*, *Balínis*, *Bālupis*; lake names *Baluosýs*, *Baluošas*, *Bālakampis*, *Bālažeris*; place names *Bālos*, *Balalė*, *Bališkės* 2x, *Bāliškiiai* 2x, *Bališkiai* 2x, *Balūškiai* 2x, *Ažūbaliai* 12x, *Ažūbalis* 9x, *Pabaliai*, *Ūžbaliai* 9x, *Užūbaliai* 17x, cp. *Balagānas*, *Balagānai*, *Bālbutai*, *Baldegiai*, *Bālkalnis*, and *Ēgliabaliai*, *Ožkabaliai* 3x, *Šlapabalė*, *Veršiobalis*, *Vīlkabaliai* 3x (Smoczyński 2018: 86: some of these names may belong to the adj. *bālas* ‘white’; *ALEW* 87).

1.2. Latvian *bala*<sup>1</sup> ‘clayey, treeless valley’, pl. *balas* ‘soggy, infertile soil’ (ME I: 253), besides *bēlute* ‘hole filled with water’ (ME I: 278), which corresponds to Lithuanian *balūtė* id. (Nevskaja 1977: 18); derivatives: *baliņa* ‘puddle’ (ibid.).

Toponyms: river name *Balupe*, i.e. ‘swamp-river’ (Endzelin 1934: 121); mountain name *Balates kalns*, i.e. ‘swamp-mountain’ (Fraenkel 1962–1965: 30).

1.3. In Old Prussian the corresponding appellative is not known, only toponyms, which are probably related:

Lake name *Balyngen* (1361) corresponding to the Lithuanian hydronym *Balinguva*;

place names as 1409 *Balionynen*, 1284 *Balowe*, 1423 *Balositen* ~ Lithuanian *Baluoso ežeras* (Gerullis 1922: 15, 232; Toporov 1975: 184; Blažienė 2005: 24), 1782 *Balite* (Blažienė 2000: 15), *Balupiany*, 1790 *Ballupöhnen* ~ Lithuanian river names *Balūpis*, *Bālupis* (Przybytek 1993: 18), 1423 *Bolausen* (Gerullis 1922: 14; Blažienė 2005: 32–33).

1.4. There are traces of the related Baltic hydronyms outside the territory of the historical Baltic languages, namely *Bályn* in the basin of the Ukrainian river *Desna* corresponding to the name of the Lithuanian lake *Balínis* (Toporov, Trubačev 1962: 176; *SHU* 32), or the river *Baly* from the basin of the river

<sup>1</sup> The word is attested only in the neighborhood of the Latvian-Lithuanian language border. That is why it is possible to think about the Lithuanian origin of this Latvian word (cf. *ALEW* 87).

Horyň (Trubačev 1968: 227, 249; *SHU* 32), although its Slavic origin cannot be excluded too.

1.5. Baltic origin can be ascribed to one Northeast Russian dialectism *balarúžina* ‘puddle’ from the basin of the upper Volga, Vjatka and Don (cf. Vasmer I: 46 and Anikin 2008: 127, preferring the primary form with metathesis of liquids *\*baralúžina* or *\*barolúžina*). It is tempting to think about the primary Baltic – East Slavic compound *\*bala-lužina* corresponding to e.g. Polish *kałuża* < *\*kalo-luža* (Pastrnek 1902: 303), Czech *kaluž* < *\*kalo-luža* ‘puddle’, lit. ‘muddy puddle’ (Machek 1968: 237), although the segmentation *kal-uža* is also in the play.

## 2. THERE ARE AT LEAST TWO APPROACHES TO ETYMOLOGIZING BALTIC *\*BALĀ*

2.1. The Baltic term *\*balā* ‘mud, bog, marsh’ has usually been connected with Slavic *\*bòlto* ‘swamp’, which penetrated into some modern non-Slavic languages of the Balkans: Albanian *baltë* ‘mud, swamp’; Romanian *baltă* ‘mud, swamp’; Modern Greek βάλτος ‘swamp’ (Derksen 2007: 53). But with regard to the word formation, the exact counterpart of Slavic *\*bòlto* is Baltic *\*baltas* ‘white’ > Lithuanian *báltas*, Latvian *bal̃ts* ‘white’, Old Prussian NL *Namuynbalt* (Derksen 2015: 80), which should be related to Lithuanian *bālas* ‘white’, Latvian *bāls* ‘pale’; Slavic *\*bělb* ‘white’<sup>2</sup> (Derksen 2015: 78), and further Greek φαλός· λευκός (Hesych.), φαλιός ‘bright, white-spotted’ (Call.), etc.; Gothic *\*bala-*, recorded by e.g. Ennodius: *de equo badio et balane* ‘of a gray and *bala* horse’ (Lehmann 1986: 59; Pokorny 1959: 118–119). These cognates imply the initial *\*b<sup>h</sup>-*.

2.2. The alternative set of cognates to Baltic *\*balā* ‘mud, bog, marsh’ agree with it in both word formation and semantics, while the initial should be reconstructed as IE *\*b-*, e.g. without any aspiration.

2.2.1. West Germanic *\*pōla-* (*EWAhd* 6: cc. 505–507; Kroonen 2013: 398; non-IE):

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<sup>2</sup> The semantic relation between ‘swamp, marsh, mud’ and ‘white’ can be illustrated by the transparent Slavic examples like Polish *biel* (dial.), *bielaw*, Belorussian *bel* ‘swampy meadow’, both derivable from *\*bělb* ‘white’ (Derksen 2007: 53; *ESSJ* 2: 180).

- Old English *pōl* m. ‘swamp, marsh’,<sup>3</sup> Middle English *pōl(e)* ‘small body of still water, pond, lake, marsh’, English *pool* ‘small body of still water, pond, lake, marsh, shallow water in a sea’;
- Old English > Old Norse *pollr* m. ‘round bay, pond, puddle’, Icelandic, Faroese *pollur* m. id., Norwegian *poll* id. (> Saami Nor. *bōllo* ‘small round fjord’), plus Norn *pōl*, *poil* m. ‘narrow bay, pond, marsh’ > Manx *poyll* (de Vries 1962: 427);
- Old Frisian *pōl* m. ‘marsh, muddy hole, hole filled with water’, New West Frisian *poel* m./f. ‘stagnant water, pond, lake, depth’;
- Old Low Franconian *puol* ‘pond, marsh’ (usually in toponyms), Middle Dutch, Dutch *poel* m. ‘swamp, marsh, pond, stagnant waters’;
- Middle Low German *pōl*, *pūl* m. ‘puddle, marsh’; from here Danish *pōl* ‘puddle’, Norwegian (Bm./Nn.) *pōl* m. ‘hole filled with water, puddle, swamp’, Old Swedish, Swedish *pōl* id. (with the plural umlaut);
- Old High German *pfuol* m. (*a-* or *i-*stem), from the 11<sup>th</sup> cent. in glosses: ‘marsh, puddle, hole with liquid manure; cloaca, lama, palus, volutabrum’, German *Pfuhl* m. ‘small pond; accumulation of dirt water, liquid manure’.

The lengthened root vowel in West Germanic *\*pōla-* standing against the short root vowel in Baltic *\*balā* could be explained via the *vṛddhi*-formation of the Germanic form. The unlengthened root vowel in Germanic may be identified in Dutch *peel* ‘marsh, swamp’ < West Germanic *\*pali-*. Boutkan & Siebinga (2005: 309) further added Modern East Frisian *paller(d)* ‘swamp, marsh’ < *\*pall-*, and Modern Icelandic *pula* id. < *\*pul-*.

From the perspective of word formation, the protoforms *\*pōla-* and *\*pali-* may represent a pair, which is analogical to Northwest Germanic *\*mōra-* ‘swampy soil’ and Germanic *\*mari-* ‘sea’ (Udolph 1994: 135; cf. Darms 1978: 158–166).

2.2.2. Another language differing between the Indo-European voiced and voiced aspirated stops is Sanskrit. C.C. Uhlenbeck (1898: 99, 97) thought about a connection with Old English *pōl* m. ‘swamp, marsh’, Old High German *pfuol* ‘marsh, puddle, hole with liquid manure’, Lithuanian *balā* ‘mud, bog, marshy area; spilled water, puddle’ on the one hand and Sanskrit *jambāla-* ‘mud, clay, marsh’ (*Pañcatantra*, etc.) on the other hand. Uhlenbeck saw in the Sanskrit word a compound, where the first component should correspond to Vedic

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<sup>3</sup> The Old English origin has been ascribed to such insular Celtic forms as Middle Welsh (14<sup>th</sup> cent.), Welsh *pull* ‘hole, pond, puddle; mine’, Old Cornish *pol* ‘puteus’, Middle Cornish *pol* ‘hole, well; ditch, moat’, Old Breton NL *Pul-Bili*, Middle Breton *pul*, *poul*, Breton *poull* ‘hole, ditch’; Irish *poll* ‘hole, opening in earth’ (Deshayes 2003: 595). Old English *pull* m. *a-st./f. ō-st.* ‘pond, bay’, with the variant *pyll* m. (*a-st.*) ‘narrow bay, arm of a river, pond’ > Middle English *pil* ‘narrow bay’, English *pill* id., are probably a back-borrowing from Brittonic.

*jmā́-* ‘earth’. On the other hand, Kuiper (1948: 60–61) saw here a loan of Mundic origin on the basis of Santali *jab jab, job job, jobo, jobho* ‘wet, moist, damp’, *jobo* ‘to dirty, wet, roll in mud or water’, *jubhi* ‘marshy, swampy, boggy’, Mundari *jubhi*, Ho *jobe* ‘mud’, Kharia *jobhi* ‘swampy ground’, etc. In principle, it is legitimate to think about a hypothetical hybrid Mundic – Indo-Aryan compound *\*jab-bāla-* whose both components bear a more or less identical meaning ‘mud’. The component *\*bāla-* could reflect both *\*beHlo-/boHlo-* and *\*bolo-* in agreement with Lex Brugmann or its lengthened *vṛddhi-*variant. Although this idea is attractive, it remains only a speculation.

2.2.3. A more probable relative could be found in the pre-Romance dialectism *bola* ‘swamp, marsh’, which was recorded in Piedmont in North Italy and the canton Ticino/Tessin in South Swiss, in the locality Arbedo. Meyer-Lübke (1935: n. 1191b) thought about its Gaulish or Ligurian origin and identified its relatives in German *Pfuhl* and Lithuanian *balà*. But the Ligurian language was probably not used so far from the Mediterranean coast. Both Piedmont and Ticino are territories where Lepontic was used. Independent of the Celtic<sup>4</sup> or Ligurian origin of *bola*, the initial *b-* can reflect both IE *\*b-* & *\*bʰ-*, while the root-vowel *o* only IE *\*ō*.

2.2.4. Duridanov (1969: 19) offered to connect the Dacian toponym Βάλαυσον (Procopius of Caesarea, *De Aedificiis* 4.4: a castle in the district of Skassatena) with Old Prussian *Bolausen*, etymologizing both on the basis of Lithuanian *balà* ‘swamp, marsh’ or *bālas* ‘white’, and the Lithuanian derivational suffix *-aus-*, which forms e.g. the Lithuanian hydronyms such as *Lėtausas*, *Smukaūsis*. Alternatively, Duridanov thought about a compound whose second component should be the root *\*h<sub>2</sub>eus-* (cf. Pokorny 1959: 90; Kümmel, *LIV* 275–276), which forms such hydronyms as the name of the Italian river *Ausa* (cf. Krahe 1964: 44) or *\*Hous-(t) >* Old Prussian *austo* ‘mouth’, Russian *ustʹje* ‘river mouth’, etc. (Pokorny 1959: 784–85).

2.2.5. One could add yet another unrecognized cognate, Slavic *\*ǫb(ǫ)lv* ‘source, spring; well’.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Kuryłowicz (1925: 208) tried to identify another Celtic candidate for relationship in some Gallo-Romance terms reflecting the hypothetical Gaulish starting-point *\*balko-*, which is reconstructed on the basis of forms such as Old Provençal *balc* ‘humide’, Forezianish *bauche* ‘iris d’étang’, Dauphinish *bauchi* ‘foin de marais dont on fait litière au bétail’ (*FEW* I: 211). Wartburg (l.c.) further mentioned Romanian *bâlc* ‘swamp’ and Irish *balc* ‘getrockneter Lehm; Kruste, die sich infolge der Hitze auf der Oberfläche der Erde bildet’. The stem *\*balko-* is compatible with the forms analyzed in § 2.2. only if it is derived from *\*b<sub>1</sub>Hko-* (cf. Zair 2012: 82–84).

<sup>5</sup> In the Slavic languages there is a rich terminology applied to sources or wells: e.g. *\*ǫzrojǫ*, *\*ǫztoǫv*, *\*ǫzvooǫ*, *\*ključǫ*, *\*koldězǫ*, *\*krynica*, *\*oko/\*okǫno*, *\*ǫb(ǫ)lv*, *\*pomy*, *\*rod(ǫ)nikǫ*, *\*sopotǫ*, *\*stubbǫ*, *\*stubbǫja*, *\*tymę*, *\*virǫ*, *\*v(ǫ)rělo/\*v(ǫ)rǫtǫkǫ*/*\*v(ǫ)rulja*, *\*žerdlo* (see Udolph 1979).

2.2.5.1. In the appellative function it appears only in the South Slavic branch and on the northwest periphery of the West Slavic branch:

Church Slavonic (of Russian redaction) *оуболь* ‘φρέαρ, puteum’, i.e. ‘well’, recorded in *Патерикъ синайскій*, v. 143 (Sreznevskij III: 1116):

• *жена нѣкто хольюбива оуболь рьяше и, глоубиноу прѣмногую копавъши, не обрѣте воды* (‘puteum fodit’).

*Възя стѣо (икону) и низвътсивъше ѣго въ оуболь, абиѣ скоро вода изиде въ кладѣзѣ.*

Although there are phonetic and morphological features of the East Slavic provenance in this text, the lexical Russisms are missing and so it is possible to accept the South Slavic origin of the word *оуболь* (cf. Sławski 1971: 445).

• Bulgarian *vǎbel* (Pazardžik, Preslav, Northeast), *vǎbel* (Rodopi), *vǎmbel* (Solunsko) ‘source, spring, well’ (*BER* I: 201).

• Macedonian *jabel* ‘hole filled with water, water hole, pool, source’, dial. *jubel* ‘pond’ (Stamatoski 1973: 78).

• Serbian (Montenegro) *ūbao*, gen. *ūbla* ‘hole dugged out in the earth, where the water is drawn; kind of well’ (Karadžić 1935: 788; Skok III: 533–34); Serbian arch. *ub(ъ)lъ* ‘piscina receptaculum aquae’: *право нис потокъ подъ оубълъ* (Daničić 1864: 343); Serbian (Kosovo) *ubo*, *ubla* ‘measure of capacity (for liquids)’ (Elezović 1935: 376).

• Serbian > Albanian *ubël*, pl. *ubla* ‘well, shaft, hillside well’ (Popović 1960: 378; Sławski 1971: 448; Udolph 1979: 439; Orel 1998: 482 surprisingly connected the Albanian word with Gothic *ubils* ‘evil’).

• Polabian *\*vǫbǎl* ‘well’ is reconstructed on the basis of records such as *Wumbâl & Wûmbâl* ‘Brunnen’ (Hennig: *Vocabularium Venedicum*), *Wungwool* ‘Der Brunnen’ (*Vocabularium et Phraseologicum Vandalicum*), *Wungwóol* (Eccard), *Wungwōl* ‘Un puits’ (Pfeffinger) – see Polański 1994: 1040.

2.2.5.2. Taking in account the toponymic distribution of *\*ǫb(ъ)lъ* and its derivatives, it is common in all Slavic branches:

• Greece: NL Ἄμπλιανη, Ὀμπλοῦ Μονή, Βαμπέλι, Βόμπλο (Vasmer 1941: 24, 80, 136, 190).

Albania: NL *Vunbeli* – near the city of Elbasan (Udolph 1979: 440).

• Bulgaria: NF *Vǎbela* – tributary of the Luda Kamčija river by Asparuxovo in the south of the Varna region; NL *Vǎbel* – Nikopolsko by the Danube in the north of Bulgaria; *Vǎbela* – by Levočevo, the region of Smoljansko in the south of Bulgaria, etc. (*BER* I: 200).

• Macedonia: NF *Jábel*; NL *Jablinje & Jablišta*; *Vumbel* (Udolph 1979: 440–441).

- Montenegro: *Uba*, gen. *Ubla* – 2 hydronyms by Nikšić; NF *Uba* – by Boka Kotorska; *Ublica* – by Danilovgrad; *Ubalac* – by Nikšić; NL *Ubalac* – by Podgorica (Udolph 1979: 440–441).

- Croatia: *Ubla* – hydronym on the island of Brač; bay *Ubli* with two sources on the island of Lastovo; NF *Ombla* – by Dubrovnik (via the Italian mediation).

- Slovenia: NF *Ubel* (first 1260); NL (*Malo, Veliko*) *Ubelsko*, 1402 *Vbelczk* (Bezljaj II: 282).

Slovakia: NL *Ubl’a*, 1773, 1808 *Ubly*, *Ubla* – village by the city of Humenné (Majtán 1972: 433); NF *Ubl’a* = *Ublianka* (tributary of the Uh river) – district of Snina, northeast Slovakia and the adjacent part of Ukraine (Udolph 1979: 441; *SHU* 577).

- Czechia: NL *Úblo*, 1377 *Ubla* – village by the city of Krnov; *Ublo* (from the 15<sup>th</sup> cent.) – village by the city of Vizovice (Hosák, Šrámek 1980: 628).

- Germany: NL *Wamlitz*, 1261 *Wammelitz* – district of Randow; NF *Vamleitz* – by the city of Gusborn; *Fammels* – by the city of Tollendorf; *Fummels* – by the city of Teichlosen – all in the neighborhood of Hannover (Udolph 1979: 441).

- Poland: NL *Wąblany*, 1470–1480 *Wamblany*, 1508 *Wablani* – district of Opoczno in south-central Poland; FN *Ubliczn(y)* – district of Hrubieszów in Southeast Poland; NL 1583 *Ublišće* – district of Równe in Southeast Poland till 1939, today Rivne in Western Ukraine (Udolph 1979: 441).

- Belarus: NL *Úbel’* – to the southeast of Minsk (Udolph 1979: 441).

- Russia: *Ublja* – hydronym at the border of the former Voroněž and Kursk guberniyas (Udolph 1979: 441).

2.2.5.3. Up to the present time several attempts have been offered to etymologize *\*ǫb(v)lv*:

2.2.5.3.1. Brückner (1918: 185) separated the South Slavic forms whose initial he derived from *\*vb-* (like Miklosich 1886: 396), from Polabian *wungwool* ‘well’, which he connected with Czech *úval* ‘valley basin’ and Polish *wqwal* < *\*ǫvalv*. On the other hand, Skok (III: 534) tried to connect the South Slavic forms with Polish *wqwal*.

2.2.5.3.2. Mladenov (1941: 85) judged that *\*ǫb(v)lv* represented an adaptation of Middle Greek *ἔμβολος*, but it did not mean ‘aqueduct’, but ‘roofed street’ (cf. also Vasmer III: 169 who rejected this idea).

2.2.5.3.3. Georgiev et al. (*BER* I: 200) saw a connection with Vedic *ám<sup>h</sup>a-* & *ám<sup>u</sup>-* ‘water’, *ab<sup>h</sup>rá-* ‘rain cloud’; Young Avestan *aβra-* id.; Armenian *amb* & *amp* ‘cloud’; Greek *ὄμβρος* ‘rain’; Latin *imber* ‘rain’, although the reflexes *\*b<sup>h</sup>* & *\*b* vacillate here. The same idea was developed by Sławski (1971: 449) who determined the derivational suffix *\*-vlv*, which he also identified in Slavic *\*ǫgvlv* ‘corner, angle’ ~ Latin *angulus* id., or Slavic *\*pǫkvlv* ‘resin’ ~ Latin *pix*, gen. *picis* id. (cf. Sławski 1974: 111).

2.2.5.3.4. Rozwadowski (1948: 238) accepted the South Slavic – Polabian isogloss with the initial prefix \*ǵ-. His idea was developed by Sławski (1971: 449) who thought about the compound \*ǵ- + \*b<sup>h</sup>el- whose Slavic continuants he identified e.g. in Polish dial. *belt* ‘whirlpool’, Slovenian *bôlt* ‘gorge’ < \*b<sup>h</sup>l<sup>t</sup>ǵ, which may be supplemented by Ukrainian *bouč* ‘deep place in the river hollowed out by water’ < \*b<sup>h</sup>l<sup>t</sup>ǵ<sup>b</sup> (*ESSJ* 3: 120).

2.2.5.3.5. The present new etymology follows the ideas of Rozwadowski and Sławski but also modifies them. The Slavic prefix \*ǵ- had two functions: (1) ‘in, inside’; (2) ‘un-, -less, without’:

(1a) Old Church Slavonic *ǵdolъ* m., *ǵdolъ* f. ‘valley’, Polish *wądoł*, Russian *udol* id. vs. Old Church Slavonic *dolъ* ‘valley’ (Janyšková, *ESJS* 3: 139; Dunkel, *LIPP* 2: 224);

(1b) Slavic \*ǵvozъ > Serbo-Croatian *úvoz* ‘part of courtyard, which is the entrance for wagons’, Czech *úvoz* ‘valley basin’, Polish *wąwoz* ‘deep valley, hollowed road’ vs. Slavic \*vozъ ‘wagon’ (Boryś 2005: 683);

(2a) Old Church Slavonic *ǵrodъ* ‘foolish person, dunce’, Russian *uród* ‘crippled person’ vs. Old Czech *neródcě* ‘unreasonable or foolish person’, Old Church Slavonic *neroditi* ‘to neglect, disregard, not care’ (Janyšková, *ESJS* 10: 618; Šarapatková, *ESJS* 13: 773; Dunkel, *LIPP* 2: 535);

(2b) Old Church Slavonic *ǵtblъ* ‘holey’ vs. *tblо* ‘bottom’, hence ‘holey’ < ‘bottomless’ (Janyšková, *ESJS* 10: 619–620; Dunkel, *LIPP* 2: 535).

It is difficult to interpret \*ǵ- in Slavic \*ǵ-b(<sup>v</sup>)lъ as ‘in, inside’, since there is no adequate function for \*b(<sup>v</sup>)lъ.<sup>6</sup> Taking into account the negative function of the prefix \*ǵ-, the independent root \*b(<sup>v</sup>)l- should be more or less antonymous to the meaning ‘source, spring’. A good candidate for a cognate to the Slavic form \*b(<sup>v</sup>)l- in the zero-grade of ablaut may be Baltic \*balā ‘mud, bog, marsh’ in the full (o) grade of ablaut.

With regard to the preceding arguments, it is possible to analyze Slavic \*ǵ-b(<sup>v</sup>)l<sup>o</sup> as a late IE compound \*ǵ-b<sup>h</sup>l<sup>o</sup> ‘unmuddy’, similar to Greek ἄθολος ‘not turbid, clear’ (Luc. *Hist. Conscr.* 51) from θολός ‘mud, dirt (esp. in water)’ (Arist. *Fr.* 311).

<sup>6</sup> Perhaps with the exception of the root \*b<sup>h</sup>leuH- > Greek φλύω ‘to seethe, boil over’; Latin *fluō*, -ere ‘to flow, run (of waters), *fluvius* ‘river’ (Schirmer, Kümmel, *LIV* 90; de Vaan 2008: 228), although the internal structure of Slavic \*b(<sup>v</sup>)lъ remains uncertain, perhaps \*b<sup>h</sup>l<sup>u</sup>Hu-?



### 3. SUMMARY OF THE PROBABLE INDO-EUROPEAN COGNATES

Summing up, the closest cognates to Baltic *\*balā* ‘mud, bog, marsh’ can be identified in West Germanic *\*pōla-* ‘marsh, swamp’, with the apophonic variants *\*pali-*, *\*pall<sup>o</sup>* & *\*pul<sup>o</sup>*, Lepontic or Cisalpine Gaulish (?) *\*bolā* ‘marsh, swamp’, hypothetical Dacian *\*bal-*, and Slavic *\*ǫb(v)lv* ‘source, spring; well’, interpretable as *\*ǫ-b!<sup>o</sup>* ‘unmuddy’.

### 4. DISCUSSION OF THE HYPOTHETICAL ETYMOLOGY BASED ON THE ROOT *\*g<sup>u</sup>eb<sup>h</sup>-* ‘MARSH, SWAMP, MUD’

Abstracting from the doubtful existence of Indo-Aryan *\*bāla-* ‘mud’, these related forms are known only in the European branches of Indo-European. This limited geographic distribution and the initial *\*b-* qualifies the etymon among candidates on its pre-Indo-European origin, especially from the point of view of the Leiden Indo-European School (see explicitly. Boutkan, Siebinga 2005: 309; Kroonen 2013: 398). Paradoxically, other Leiden representatives offered a solution, which eliminates the argument of the initial *\*b-*. In the dialogue with the present author Alexander Lubotsky (see also Pronk 2013: 4, referring to Lubotsky’s lecture on the same topic from June 18, 2012, Münster) mentioned another IE etymon with the initial *\*b-* represented by Vedic *bāla-* n. ‘strength’, *bālīyān* ‘stronger’, *bāliṣṭha-* ‘strongest’; Greek βελτίων & βέλτερον ‘better’, βέλτιστος & βέλτατος ‘best’; Latin *dē-bilis* ‘weak; crippled’; Old Church Slavonic *bol’ii* ‘bigger’, *bolje* ‘more’ (Brugmann 1897: 507, § 553; Pokorny 1959: 96; Šaur & Havlová, *ESJS* 2: 72). Lubotsky inferred the development of the initial *\*b-* in the consonant cluster *\*db<sup>h</sup>-* > *\*db-* > *\*b-*, while both consonants were preserved in the forms of the full ablaut grade Old Church Slavonic *debelvstvo* ‘thickness, fatness; roughness’, *udobelēti* & *udebelēti* ‘to become fatty’; Latvian *dābls*, *dabļš* ‘rank, abundant’, besides Old Prussian *debīkan* ‘big’ or Hittite *dapiš* ‘every, all; many’ without the *l*-extension (*ESSJ* 4: 201–203; Skalka, *ESJS* 2: 125 mentioned the Slavic derivational suffix *\*-elv*, forming also other adjectives, e.g. *\*tęželv*, *\*veselv*; Pronk 2013: 4).

The reconstruction of the aspirated *\*b<sup>h</sup>* is confirmed by the fact that before this labial there is no lengthened vowel in Balto-Slavic, while *\*b* would imply the lengthening in agreement with Lex Winter & Kortlandt. A good candidate for the analogical solution is the IE root *\*g<sup>u</sup>eb<sup>h</sup>-*:

• Armenian *kaw* ‘clay’ < \**g<sup>u</sup>ob<sup>h</sup>o-* (Olsen 1999: 24 reconstructs \**g<sup>u</sup>ə<sub>1</sub>b<sup>h</sup>o-*, but her reconstruction of the laryngeal in the root is supported only by Slavic \**žàba* ‘frog’ < \**g<sup>u</sup>ēb<sup>h</sup>ā* where the lengthened root-vowel may be explained as the effect of *vṛddhi*<sup>7</sup>);

• Proto-Germanic \**kwabban-* ‘marsh, swamp’<sup>8</sup> > Icelandic *kvap*, *kvapi* ‘jelly, jelly-like fat’, Danish arch. *kvabe* ‘slime; jellyfish, medusa’, Danish dial. *kvabbe* ‘fatty animal’, Norwegian *kvabb* ‘muddy soil’, Nynorsk *kvap* ‘something wet or raw’, Swedish dial. *kvabb* ‘something fatty and thick’; Old English \**cwabba*, reconstructed on the basis of Middle Latin (1185) *quabba* ‘marsh, swamp’, Middle English *quabbe* id., English dial. *quab* ‘muddy place’, West Frisian *kwabbe*, *kwab* ‘object consisting of a tender fat or flesh, very thick person; ling, kind of worm, sea medusa; clod’, Middle Dutch *quappe* ‘designation of numerous fish species’, Early Modern Dutch *quabbe* ‘designation of some fish’,

<sup>7</sup> Proto-Slavic \**žàba* < \**g<sup>u</sup>ēb<sup>h</sup>ā* and Old Prussian *gabawo* < \**g<sup>u</sup>ob<sup>h</sup>euā* represent the same relation between the root-vowels as Proto-Slavic \**vědro* ‘bucket, pail’ and \**voda* ‘water’ or Proto-Germanic \**wēta-* ‘wet, moist, damp’ and \**watar-/watan-* ‘water’ (Kroonen 2013: 583).

<sup>8</sup> All the known appellatives were registered only after AD 1000. The first attestation could be shifted c. 900 years back if the ethnonym Κοβανδοί from the Cimbrian Peninsula (today Jutland) was of the same origin. It was recorded by Ptolemy in his *Geographia* (2.11.7):

Τὴν δὲ παρῳκεανίτιν κατέχουσιν ὑπὲρ μὲν τοὺς Βρουκτέρους οἱ Φρίσιοι μέχρι τοῦ Ἀμισίου ποταμοῦ, μετὰ δὲ τούτους Καῦχοι οἱ μικροὶ μέχρι τοῦ Οὐισούργιος ποταμοῦ· εἶτα Καῦχοι οἱ μείζους μέχρι τοῦ Ἄλβιος ποταμοῦ·

ἐφεξῆς δὲ ἐπὶ τὸν αὐχένα τῆς Κιμβρικῆς Ξερσονήσου Σάξονες, αὐτὴν δὲ τὴν χερσονήσον ὑπὲρ μὲν τοὺς Σάξονας Σιγούλωνες ἀπὸ δυσμῶν, εἶτα Σαβαλίγγιοι, εἶτα **Κοβανδοί**, ὑπὲρ οὓς **Χάλοι**, καὶ ἔτι ὑπὲρ τούτους δυσμικώτεροι μὲν Φουνδοῦσιοι, ἀνατολικώτεροι δὲ Χαροῦδες, πάντων δ’ ἀρκτικώτεροι Κίμβροι.

“The shore by the Ocean is inhabited above the *Bructeri* up to the Amisia river, and after these the *Cauchi minores* up to the Visurgis river; then the *Cauchi maiores* up to the Albis river; from there to the isthmus of the Cimbrian Peninsula the *Saxones*, the peninsula proper above the *Saxones* from the west the *Sigulones*, then the *Sabalingii*, then the **Cobandi**, above which the **Chali**, and still above these to the west the *Fundusii*, to the east the *Charudes*, most to the north the *Cimbri*.”

Available at: [https://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Gazetteer/Periods/Roman/\\_Texts/Ptolemy/2/10.html](https://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Gazetteer/Periods/Roman/_Texts/Ptolemy/2/10.html). If Κοβανδοί was corrected as \*Κοαβανδοί, it would be possible to interpret them as \**kwabanda-* \*‘‘people from swamps’’. This interpretation could be at least indirectly supported by the interpretation of the following ethnonym Χάλοι as \*‘‘people from rocks’’ with regard to Gothic acc. sg. *hallu* ‘rock’, Old Runic *halaz* ‘stone’, Old Norse *hallr* ‘stone’, Old English *heall* id. (Lehmann 1986: 174), maybe representing the semantic opposition to the Κοβανδοί. The same participial suffix can be identified in other ethnonyms as *Auganzi* (Jordanes, *Getica* 60.2) if it reflects \**augandja-* or *Burgundii* (Ammianus 18.2.15), *Burgundiones* (Plinius 4.99), *Burgunziones* (Jordanes 83.5) from \**burgundja(n)-* \*‘‘people with forts’’ (see Schönfeld, bearb., 1911: 37–38, 55–58). The attempt of Zeuss (1837: 152) to connect Κοβανδοί with other Germanic ethnonyms, apparently of heterogenous origin, Χαῦβοι (Strabo), *Aviones* (Tacitus), Ὀβιοι (Petrus Patricius), *Chaviones & Chaibones* (Mamertinus), remains unconvincing.

also ‘frog’, Modern Dutch *kwab*, *kwabbe* ‘designation of various fish species’, further ‘lump, bump, lobe, jowl; soft mass of water plants’, East Dutch *quabbe* ‘ling, gudgeon; frog’, Middle Low German *quebbe*, *queb*, *quobbe*, *quöbbe* ‘marsh, swamp’, *quappe* ‘fresh-water fish, ling’, Old High German (11<sup>th</sup> cent.) *quappa* ‘fish with a broad head; ling, gudgeon’, German *Quappe* ‘ling’, besides ‘larvae of various amphibia’, especially ‘tadpole’ (*EWAhd* VII: cc. 10–13; Kroonen 2013: 314 convincingly explains the geminate through Lex Kluge via levelling the paradigm of the primary *n*-stem: *\*kwabō*, gen. *\*kwappaz*; his projection of the root-vowel *\*a* into the syllabic realization of the laryngeal *\*h<sub>1</sub>* is implicitly supported only by Slavic *\*žāba* ‘frog’ < *\*g<sup>u</sup>ēb<sup>h</sup>ā*).

- Baltic: Old Prussian *gabawo* ‘toad’ < West Baltic *\*gabaūā* < Proto-Baltic *\*gabeūā* (Mažiulis 2013: 201) < *\*g<sup>u</sup>ob<sup>h</sup>-*.

- Proto-Slavic *\*žāba* ‘frog’, East Slavic ‘toad’ > Old Church Slavonic *žaba* & *žēba* (both Ps.Sin.), Bulgarian *žāba*, Macedonian *žaba*, Serbo-Croatian *žāba*, Slovenian *žāba*, Slovak *žaba*, Czech *žāba*, Upper Sorbian, Lower Sorbian *žaba*, Polabian *zobó*, Pomerian Slovincian *žaba*, Polish *žaba*, Polish dial. *ziaba*, Belarusian *žāba*, dial. *žjāba*, *žēba*, Ukrainian, Russian *žāba* (Janyšková, *ESJS* 19: 1144; Derksen 2008: 553 reconstructs the pre-Slavic protoform as *\*g<sup>u</sup>eb-eh<sub>2</sub>-* with the automatic lengthening of the vowel before *\*-b-* in agreement with the law of Winter & Kortlandt. But it should also operate in the Baltic languages, while the root-vowel of Old Prussian *gabawo* does not undoubtedly reflect any long root-vowel).

- The Balto-Slavic designation of ‘frog’ or ‘toad’ was probably derived from their milieu, swamp or marsh, via the suffixal extension in Baltic and as the *urddhi*-formation in Slavic.

## 5. DISCUSSION OF THE *l*- SUFFIX

It remains to determine the *l*-suffix. According to the survey of Brugmann (1906: 369–370, 374), there are three suffixal extensions in Indo-European, which can be taken in account:

5.1. *\*Rolo-/-ā* < *\*Ro-lo-/-eh<sub>2</sub>-* (R = root).

Gothic *slahals* ‘bully’ vs. *slahan* ‘to strike’, etc. (Brugmann 1906: 367); Lithuanian *draūgalas* ‘companion; adulterer’, *draugala* ‘bride, concubine’ vs. *draūgas* ‘partner, friend, ally’ (Smoczyński 2018: 242; Otrębski 1965: 111); Slavic *\*vbrxolb* ‘top, peak’ vs. *\*vbrxb* ‘hill’ or *\*gvrbolb* ‘bulge’ vs. *\*gvrbb* ‘hump’ (Sławski 1974: 109).

5.2. *\*Rālo-/-ā* < *\*Reh<sub>2</sub>-lo-/-eh<sub>2</sub>-*.

Greek σιγηλός, Doric σιγαλός ‘silent, mute’ vs. σιγή, Doric σιγά ‘silence’; Latin *animālis* ‘living, animate’ vs. *anima* ‘breath’, *vītālis* ‘of life, life-giving’ vs. *vīta* ‘life’, etc. (Brugmann 1906: 369).

### 5.3. \*Rōlo-/-ā.

Greek φειδωλός ‘sparing, thrifty, niggard’, φειδωλή ‘a sparing’ vs. φειδω ‘sparingness, thrift, parsimony’ (Brugmann 1906: 370) < \**b<sup>h</sup>eidōj*.

Apparently, only the alternatives 5.1. and 5.2. are compatible in the morphological perspective, since they represent the *l*-extensions of the *o*- and *ā*- (= *eh<sub>2</sub>*-)stems.

## 6. FATE OF THE CLUSTER

### *mediae* + *mediae aspiratae*

The root \**g<sup>u</sup>eb<sup>h</sup>*- extended by the *l*-suffix would be reduced to \**g<sup>u</sup>b<sup>h</sup>*-, which should be further deaspirated in \**g<sup>u</sup>b*- and simplified in \**b*- in agreement with Alexander Lubotsky. Let us verify the behavior of such a cluster. In the Indo-European languages the cluster of *mediae* + *mediae aspiratae* of various series has been preserved in inlaut in various ways. First of all, it is necessary to analyze in detail the branches where *mediae* and *mediae aspiratae* are transparently differentiated:

- Vedic instr. pl. *padb<sup>h</sup>is*, dat. pl. *padb<sup>h</sup>yās*, abl. -instr. du. *padb<sup>h</sup>yām*, from *pād*- ‘foot’; cf. Young Avestan instr. pl. *pad<sup>o</sup>biiias-ca*. Vedic 2 pl. med. aug. *áyugdhvam* from the verbal root *yuj-* ‘to join’ (Macdonell 2000: 51, 410).

- Greek ἐπίφθην vs. τρίβω or ἐλέχθην vs. λέγω, while Mycenaean *po-pi* reflects \**ποπφι* < \**ποδφι* (Lejeune 1972: 69, § 56).

- Latin *affero* < \**ad-fer<sup>o</sup>* vs. *fero* ‘I bring, carry’, besides *adhibeo* ‘I hold toward’ vs. *habeo* ‘I hold, keep, possess’; Umbrian **ařfertur** < \**ad-fertor* ‘Darbringer’ < \**ad-b<sup>h</sup>er-*, Oscan *adfast* 3 sg. fut. II < \**ad-b<sup>h</sup>uh<sub>2</sub>*- (Untermann 2000: 48–49, 248).

- Gothic *waurhta*, Runic *wor<sup>a</sup>hto*, Old English *worhte*, Old Saxon, Old High German *wor(a)hta* ‘I worked’ (Antonsen 1975: 45) < Common Germanic \**wurhtō* (cf. Ringe 2006: 268) < Proto-Germanic \**wurk-dōm* < Late IE \**urǵ<sup>h</sup>-d<sup>h</sup>ōm* (cf. Sverdrup 1929: 94–95).

It is apparent that if the second member of the cluster was the aspirated voiced stop, it would be preserved even in the case of elimination of the first (unaspirated voiced) stop in the initial position.<sup>9</sup> The only exception is

<sup>9</sup> This conclusion excludes any possibility of the Indo-Aryan continuant of the hypothetical formation \**g<sup>u</sup>b<sup>h</sup>ǵ<sup>h</sup>*, which should develop into \**bǵ<sup>h</sup>*. The same conclusion is valid for Vedic

Germanic where the expected cluster *\*-kđ-* was shifted to *\*-ht-*. This cluster cannot exist in the initial position and would be simplified as *\*t-*. Applying the same mechanism to the cluster *\*g<sup>u</sup>b<sup>h</sup>-*, the result should be Common Germanic *\*hup* simplified in the initial position as *\*p-*.

## 7. CONCLUSION

Summing up, Baltic *\*balā*; Celtic *\*bolā*; ?Dacian *\*bal-*; Slavic *\*ǫ-bvlv* can really be analyzed as the *l*-extensions of the synonym *\*g<sup>u</sup>eb<sup>h</sup>-*, since the voiced and voiced aspirated stops merge in these branches. In Germanic, where they are differentiated, the specific development of their cluster probably leads to *p-*. On the other hand, for the series of traditionally accepted cognates as Vedic *bāla-* n. ‘strength’, *bālīyān* ‘stronger’, *bāliṣṭha-* ‘strongest’; Greek *βελτίων* & *βέλτερον* ‘better’, *βέλτιστος* & *βέλτατος* ‘best’; Latin *dē-bilis* ‘weak; crippled’; Old Church Slavonic *bol’ii* ‘bigger’, *bolje* ‘more’ (see § 4), any analogical scenario proposed by Lubotsky, operating with the development *\*db<sup>h</sup>- > \*db- > \*b-*, cannot be accepted, with exception of Slavic (see fn. 9). Naturally, the alternative with the primary *\*b-* remains in a play and offers two etymons<sup>10</sup> whose word-formation is more transparent than in the case of the hypothetical initial clusters *\*g<sup>u</sup>b<sup>h</sup>-* & *\*db<sup>h</sup>-*.

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*bāla-* n. ‘strength’, and further for Greek *βελτίων* ‘better’, *βέλτιστος* ‘best’; Latin *dē-bilis* ‘weak’: they cannot be derived from the primary protoform in *\*db<sup>h</sup>-*, since the aspirate should be preserved in Sanskrit, Greek and Italic. Only Old Church Slavonic *bol’ii* ‘bigger’, *bolje* ‘more’, quoted above, can be derived from hypothetical *\*db<sup>h</sup>ol-*, since the voiced stops and voiced aspirated stops merged in Slavic (and also Baltic, Celtic and some other branches).

<sup>10</sup> The primary *\*b-* also returns in the play Sanskrit *jambāla-* ‘mud, clay, marsh’, discussed in § 2.2.2.

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## Baltų *\*balā* ‘purvas, liūnas, pelkė’ indoeuropiečių kalbų kontekste

### SANTRAUKA

Straipsnyje aptariami artimiausi giminiški žodžiai baltiškam terminui *\*balā* ‘purvas, liūnas, pelkė’, kurie yra traktuojami kaip sinonimai vakarų germanų *\*pōla-* ir *\*pali-*, islandų *pula*, keltų *\*bolā* ir dakų kalbos toponimui Βάλασσον. Šios formos jau anksčiau buvo laikomos baltiškajai formai giminiškais žodžiais. Straipsnyje įvedamas ir slaviškas terminas *\*ǫb(ǝ)lb* ‘versmė, šaltinis; šulinys’, kuris čia analizuojamas kaip *\*ǫ-bʰ* ‘nepurvinas’ = ‘skaidrus (vanduo)’. Germaniška žodžio pradžios *\*p-* nurodo retą ide. *\*b-*. Straipsnyje analizuojama, ar šis etimonas galėtų būti nulinio balsių kaitos laipsnio šaknį *\*gʷebʰ-* ‘liūnas, pelkė’ praplečiančio elemento *-l-* pavyzdys, remiantis Aleksandro Lubotskio idėja apie progresyvinę asimiliaciją žodžio pradžios junginyje, šiuo atveju *\*gʷbʰ-* > *\*gʷb-* > *\*b-*. Atsakymas yra „taip“, tačiau sąlygos yra tokios sudėtingos, kad tradicinė rekonstrukcija su žodžio pradžios *\*b-* ir pailgėjusiu *ǫrddhi* dariniu germanų kalbose atrodo priimtinesnė versija.

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