

Andrey Tikhomirov

The Baltic peoples

Indo-European Migrations

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The book tells about the ancient migration movements of the Baltic peoples after they left their Indo-European ancestral homeland — the region of the steppes of the Southern Urals — the Black Sea. Historical and linguistic sources of different times are involved. Brief grammars of the Latvian and Lithuanian languages are given.

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The formation of the Baltic community

The Baltic peoples (Baltic, Baltic) begin to form approximately at the end of the 1st millennium BC, after falling away from the Slavic-Baltic community, before that they were part of the ancient Indo-Europeans who formed within the Great Steppe – from the Southern Urals to the Black Sea. Most likely, the word “Baltic, Baltic” comes from the word “white” – in Latvian *balts*, in Lithuanian *balta*. As a scientific term, it was proposed in 1845 by the German linguist Georg Nesselmann, a professor at the University of Königsberg, instead of the term *Leto-Lithuanians*.

In ancient times, colors meant not only color, but also abstract concepts. And now the expressions “red maiden”, “red square” mean “beautiful girl”, “beautiful square”. Of course, there are explanations of colors in the name of peoples by the color of clothes, the color of the hair or eyes of people. For example, the name of Belarusians (from “White Russia”) when compared with the term “Black Russia”, which in the 13th century. designated part of the territory of Western Belarus, previously captured by the Lithuanian princes, means “free” Russia. The concept of “white”, that is, “light” (holy, in Serbian – “light” – holy, light; in Bulgarian – “holy” – the world, the universe; Saints or Svetovit – the god of the ancient Slavs) forms the concept of “free” from the darkness. The concept of “black” in antiquity meant a state of dependence, oppression, the opposite of the concept of “white”. It is possible that the name “White Russia” consolidated in the 13th century. beyond those parts of modern Belarus that were not conquered by the Mongol-Tatars and were not under the rule of Lithuanian princes. Compare. Black people – in Russian sources of the 14–17th centuries. the term by which the black-sown peasants were designated; black people were also called the entire population of the *posad*, who paid state taxes, unlike the “White people” who, although they lived in the *posad*, depended on secular and spiritual feudal lords and did not pay taxes to the state. Black lands is a term in Russian sources of the 14–17th centuries, which denoted lands that were the property of the feudal state and were in use by the peasant and township communities. Black lands are opposed to the “white” land ownership of secular and spiritual feudal lords, who possessed tax and judicial immunity privileges.

Latvians (self-name – *latviešu*), perhaps the name comes from the Latgalian tribes. Latgals [self-name – *Latgali* (hence *Latgale*), Old Russian – flying] – one of the ancient Latvian tribes, which, together with other ethnic groups, became part of the Latvian nationality. Latgals occupied the territory north of the Daugava River and bordered on the *zemgale* in the southwest, on the *Livs* and *Ests* in the north, and on the East Slavic tribes in the east.

Lithuanians (self-name – *lietuviai*), perhaps the name comes from the ancient name *Neman* (*Nemunas*) – *Leyta*, or *Lieta*, which, in turn, goes back to the Lithuanian verb *litis* – to flow.

The Baltic (Baltic) languages include modern Latvian, Lithuanian, as well as extinct: Prussian, *Yatvyazh*, *Curonian*, *Selonian* and some others, were in ancient kinship with Slavic languages. The Baltics (Baltic tribes), settled in the 1st millennium AD, the territory from the south-west of the Baltic states to the upper Dnieper and the Oka River basin (*ropes*), at the turn of the 1st – 2nd millenniums became part of the Old Russian nationality. Western Balts (*Zemait*, *Zemgale*, *Curonian*, *Latgale*) are the ancestors of modern Latvians and Lithuanians.

Prussians – a group of Baltic tribes (*lat. Pruzzi, Prutheni*), related to the Slavs, mentioned from the 9th century. *Borusse* – playfully for the Prussian, *Borussia* – a female image as a symbol of Prussia, late *Late Ruthenia* – Russia. In Latin, “Russian” is *Rossicus* or *Russicus*.

At the beginning of the 1st millennium A.D. the ancient Baltic tribes begin to differentiate; *pralatysk* and *pralit* communities are created. And from the 5th – 7th centuries. tribal associations of future Latvians and Lithuanians are being formed. In the 5th – 6th centuries the ancestors of Latvians began to actively move north, occupying territories previously inhabited by the Baltic-Finnish tribes. Initially, *Letts* (future Latvians) were only one of the East Baltic tribes. Together with

them, Latvia was inhabited by zemgals, villages and curonian, as well as the united Baltic people of the Livs. All these tribes were gradually assimilated by the Letts linguistically, and their languages left their mark in the Latvian dialects. The modern Lithuanian language belongs to the Baltic group of the Indo-European family of languages, together with the modern Latvian language, the dead Old Prussian and Yatvyaz languages.

The first written records of tribes living in the territories adjacent to the southern coast of the Venedic (now Baltic) Sea are found in the essay “On the Origin of the Germans and the Location of Germany” by the Roman historian Publius Cornelius Tacitus (98), where they are called Estias (Latin aestiorum gentes) Estonians and Baltic tribes called Estami (aestui, aestii) Estonians and Baltic tribes, and then the Scandinavians. It is believed that this name comes from the Baltic languages, which meant “inhabitants by the water.” In addition, Herodotus mentions the people of Boudin, who lived in the upper Don between the Volga and the Dnieper. Later, these Estonian tribes were described under different names in the writings of the Roman-Ostrogothic historian Kassiodor, the Gothic historian Jordan, the Anglo-Saxon traveler Wulfstan, the North German chronicler Archbishop Adam of Bremen.

By the 4th-2nd millennia BC Neolithic sites of fishermen and hunters in the territory of modern Lithuania and Latvia belong. The population lived by clan groups, which are at the stage of the maternal clan. In the 2nd millennium BC tribes familiar with cattle breeding and agriculture appeared on the territory of Latvia. Most likely, these were the ancestors of the Baltic tribes, who moved here from more southern regions, while the local population then consisted of the ancestors of the Finno-Ugric tribes. Aliens are characterized by burialless burials with cord ceramics, battle stone axes and the remains of pet bones. Further development of cattle breeding in this era led to the addition of the paternal clan. In the 1st millennium BC Summer-Lithuanian (Baltic) tribes stand out from a number of other Baltic tribes. Monuments of this era are burial mounds and ancient settlements. About 5 BC the first iron products appear. However, the development of local iron ores began only in the first centuries of our era. In the 1st half of the 1st millennium AD on the territory of Lithuania there were tribal associations (ememites, aukshtayts, yatvyagi). Material culture reached significant development at this time, as evidenced by numerous bronze, iron, silver and other items found during excavations. Lithuanian tribes maintained close trade relations with the Slavs.

According to archaeological data, the oldest ancient settlements in the territory of Latvia, the “pilskalns”, were built up with chopped wooden buildings and surrounded by a picket fence or log wall. For centuries, there was a folk peasant wooden architecture, similar in type and form to the folk architecture of the Lithuanians, Slavs and Karelian tribes (chopped buildings, covered with straw and shingles).

The oldest architectural type in Lithuania is the so-called Numas – a wooden housing and construction building, rectangular in plan, with a four-slope thatched roof. Of great interest are the stands, which are often decorated with a kind of carving. The oldest monuments of stone architecture – castles, fortresses – belong to the 14th century. Their remains are preserved in the cities. Kaunas, Vilnius, Trakai, etc. With the growth of cities, the stone architecture of residential and religious buildings developed. In the 15—16 centuries. churches were built in gothic. style (the churches in Zapiskis near Kaunas, Bernardinsky and Anna in Vilnius, the pediment of the House of Perkunas in Kaunas, etc.) were preserved.

In the Bronze Age and the Early Iron Age, cattle breeding and agriculture were further developed (end of the 2nd – 1st millennium BC). The population is growing numerically. In the east of the Baltic states, Western Finnish formed, and in the south – the Baltic tribes. In the north of Latvia by this time stone mounds with burials belong, in the south-west – mounds with burnt urns, and in the southern part of the territory – mounds with mass graves, the most characteristic of which is the burial ground in Reznas (on the banks of the Daugava River). Excavations of one mound revealed more than 300 burials of different times. The first fortified settlements arose (Klandju-kalns settlement, also on

the banks of the Daugava), which indicates inter-tribal clashes. In the south-west of modern Latvia, archaeological excavations of soil burial grounds such as Mazkatuži, which belong to the ancestors of the Curonian, or Chickens, have been carried out. In the middle and eastern territory of Latvia there are barrows with collective burials of the ancestors of Latgals and Zemgals. In the north of Latvia, there are stone cemeteries with stone fences belonging to the ancestors of the Livonian-Estonian tribes (cemetery in Saulieshi). In their culture, the Latgals were close to the ancient Prussians and Lithuanians, as well as to the neighboring Slavs. The material of archaeological research suggests that since the beginning of the 1st millennium BC Latgals were engaged in agriculture, as well as cattle breeding, hunting, and fishing. In the 11—12 centuries. they had a triple field.

In ancient Paleolithic times, similar cultures existed in Altai, the North Caucasus, Siberia, in the foothills of the Urals (on the Chusovaya River, according to one version, the birthplace of Zarathustra), the Irtysh River and others. An ancient peculiar Paleolithic culture, traces of which were found throughout the whole of North Asia, originated somewhere in the center of Asia, most likely in northern Mongolia, where its remains are most found, and then spread from there southeast to the Yellow River, north to Yakutia and west to the Urals, and towards the top Yam Irtysh. It is possible to assume that towards the ancient tribes of Asia, gradually moving in separate groups from east to west, other groups were moving, maybe even ahead of them on the shores of Lake Baikal at the end of Solutrean and at the beginning of the Madeleine time.

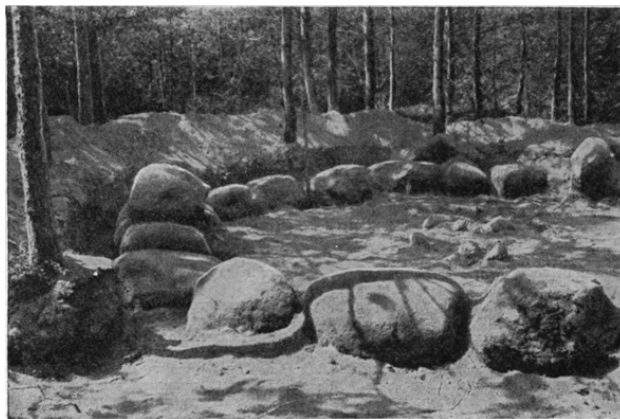
The Baltic nations knew the use of bronze and iron before the beginning of our era. But metals have not yet played a big role in their daily lives. Although during excavations they find individual tools made of bronze and iron and molds for casting bronze, the vast majority of the tools were still made of stone, bone and wood. Primitive metal things came mainly from the tribes of the South-West and the Middle Dnieper. These were bronze and iron axes, bronze spearheads, iron sickle-shaped knives. Agriculture was still underdeveloped. The main source of subsistence was cattle breeding, which had already overshadowed hunting, fishing, and animal flight. Needing first of all good pastures for cattle, the population of the Baltic states at the end of the first millennium don. e. mastered only river valleys. Here archaeologists find mounds made of stone and earth above burial urns located in several tiers or stone boxes standing on the ground. Members of the same clan were buried in these mounds. Entire tribal communities lived in settlements surrounded by earthen ramparts and log fences. Dwellings with woven branches and clay-clad round walls and conical roofs held on pillars were placed inside a space surrounded by a rampart, which was supposed to serve as protection during clashes between clans and tribes that arose due to the possession of cattle and pastures.

In the first centuries of our era, the picture is completely changing. Particularly fast is the development of the tribes of Southern Latvia and Lithuania, drawn into trade with the Roman Empire and the Slavs, who lived along the banks of the Dnieper and the Vistula. Roman merchants traveled through their territory, buying up Baltic amber, which was in great demand in Italy and the provinces. Daugava connected the Baltic states with the Slavs of the Dnieper. In her pool are found Roman metal and jewelry, Roman coins, enamelled items from the Middle Dnieper. At the same time, the import of iron is increasing, and at the same time the processing of local iron – bog ores. Iron products displace bone and stone. Specialist smiths appear. In the grave of a blacksmith found his tools – pincers, hammer, chisel. For the processing of wood, an iron bracket was already used.

Improvement of production tools allowed the development of agriculture, which is becoming the leading branch of the economy. Sickles, hoes, knives, and then braids appear in the burials of the first centuries of our era. By the beginning of our era, wooden plow was introduced into use. Agriculture is becoming arable, obviously, the draft force of cattle is beginning to be applied. Under arable land, forests are cleared. The cultures of rye, oats, barley, flax, turnips, and peas are being developed. The reinforced tribal settlements are replaced by settlements of large and then small families, which, thanks to the development of agriculture, have made it possible to settle in larger territories.

Thus, the decomposition of the clan takes place, and due to the development of the exchange, individual families, in particular clan elders, accumulate certain wealth. The tribes living south of the Daugava create a special material culture that covered the territory of modern Latvia, Lithuania and the Kaliningrad region. At that time, the Leto-Lithuanian tribes that were the ancestors of the Latvian and Lithuanian peoples were forming.

To the north of the Daugava, Estonian-Livian tribes take shape, somewhat lagging behind the southern tribes in their development. True, here too, at the beginning of our era, the number of imported and local products from bronze and iron is increasing, but the technique for processing the latter is much lower. Agriculture has become predominant here, but not arable, but slaughter system dominated. In addition to the hoe, only light wooden plow was used as the main agricultural tool, which people dragged themselves. Slash agriculture, which required considerable efforts of a large number of people, hindered the decomposition of the clan. In some places large patriarchal families stand out from the clan, but the separation of small families has not yet begun. For a long time, common burial grounds and fortified graying sites are preserved, which, with the development of productive forces and population growth, spread to an increasingly large territory.



Barrow burial ground Latgals II – V centuries. n e. Latvia. View after excavation. World History, T. II, M., Politizdat, ch. ed. EAT. Zhukov, 1956, p. 711—712.

Archaeological sites of the 9—12th centuries reflect the presence of the feudal system in Lithuania: rich burials of warrior warriors along with war horses, well-fortified hillforts (Apuole, Ipiltis, Medvegalis). This testifies to the process of unification of tribal unions and the formation of semi-feudal semi-patriarchal state associations – “lands”. By the 12th century a number of “lands” (principalities) were already known on the territory of Lithuania: ememaitija (Zh mud), Knetuva, Karshuva, Dyaltuva and others. They were headed by large landowners – princes (kunigasy).

Like the Mesolithic tribes in the north of Western Europe, the inhabitants of the Urals and neighboring areas at that time existed by hunting for wild animals and birds, as well as fishing in lakes and rivers. At the places of their settlements there were many implements of bone and horn that served the simple economic needs of hunters and fishermen. The shapes of these products are so similar to those found in northwestern Russia, in Karelia, partly in Finland, Estonia and Latvia, that there are no doubts about the presence of ties between the tribes that populated all this vast space from the Urals to the shores of the Baltic Sea.

Therefore, the assumption about what was happening at that time the resettlement of tribes from the Urals to the west – to Europe.

While the glaciers of the last glaciation slowly disappeared in the north of Europe and there was a successive change in the climatic stages, in the southern regions of Western Europe there were no such sharp fluctuations in natural conditions. The most significant event here was a change in the harsh climate of the end of the ice age, first relatively warmer and drier, and then humid forest climate.

In the Urals, Neolithic monuments of the 4th millennium BC were discovered, which belonged to the tribes of hunters and fishermen who began to develop pottery. Pile-type constructions are developing in the Urals, the remains of which are found everywhere – and in Northern Italy, Southern Germany, the Balkans, Northern Europe, Switzerland, northern Russia and other territories. The houses were located on stilts, cut down and pointed hundreds and thousands of trees driven into marshy soil. Let us recall Russian fairy tales, which tell about a hut on chicken legs – the figurative name of those wooden log cabins that, in the old days, to protect them from decay, were placed on stumps with chopped roots and fumigated with smoke from insects. One of the wooden churches in old Moscow, put on such stumps, in view of the marshiness of the place, was called “Nikola on Chicken Legs”. From the Slavic word “smoking”, which originally meant burning incense resin or mixture as a victim, as well as the incense mixture itself.

The steppe spaces between the rivers Dnieper and the Urals “in the first half of the III millennium were inhabited by tribes who were engaged in hunting and fishing and left mounds in the steppes along the Volga and Don, in left-bank Ukraine, on the Dnieper. Under these mounds burials are found in simple soil pits. Bones of domestic animals were found in the “pit” mounds of a later origin, the remains of the wagons – signs indicating the beginning of cattle breeding, as well as individual crafts from copper.

A new upsurge in the development of tribes living in the Russian south during the Eneolithic period is represented by the so-called catacomb mounds in the steppes between the Volga and the Dnieper. At that time, there lived tribes closely associated with the North Caucasus. They embraced the achievements of the Caucasian tribes in the metallurgy of copper, in agriculture and cattle breeding. These tribes, apparently, formed several associations, to a certain extent different from each other in the details of their culture. At the same time, it can be noted that catacomb burials are found in the east in a more ancient time than in the west.

The growth of the exchange of ancient Baltic tribes led to the strengthening of tribal ties, in particular with the Dnieper. Changes in the funeral rite (the replacement of collective burials with individual ones) indicate the collapse of the tribal system. According to the funerary inventory of burial grounds of the 2nd half of the 1st millennium AD e. and the presence of a significant number of precious metal products in individual graves can be judged on the property differentiation of the buried.

It can be argued that the tribes that left the catacomb burials spread from east to west during the third millennium BC. In the west, they clashed with Trypillian tribes, drove them away and the Middle Dnieper and penetrated into Poland, where they also find burials in which ceramics are found, similar to the ceramics characteristic of the catacomb mounds and the North Caucasus.

The reason for such a widespread resettlement of the tribes that left the kata-comb mounds should be sought in the nature of their economy. The process of development of cattle breeding began, the tribes became more mobile; agriculture in their lives played a lesser role. The needs of cattle breeding caused relocation in large spaces. Pastures caused military clashes. The domestication of animals and the protection of herds were the work of men. Therefore, the cattle belonged to a man and was not inherited by the mother, but by the sons of a man. The patriarchy came, in ancient beliefs it was reflected in the cult of God the Father, which subsequently entered all monotheistic religions as the main dogma. This gradually led to the concentration of property in individual families and ultimately split the clan community, which was now opposed by a large patriarchal family. It was composed of several generations of paternal direct relatives under the rule of the oldest. The growth of wealth and the emergence of wealth inequality entailed the emergence of slavery. This is marked by the frequent forced burial in the catacombs of slaves with a man. Cattle was the first form of wealth here that allowed them to accumulate significant surpluses.

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