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## **A history of East Baltic through language contact**

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### **Citation**

Jakob, A. (2023, July 6). *A history of East Baltic through language contact*. Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/3630131>

Version: Publisher's Version

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**Note:** To cite this publication please use the final published version (if applicable).

The background of the cover is a photograph of a forest. In the foreground, a long wooden bench with a slatted seat and a curved backrest is positioned on a path. The bench is made of weathered wood. The forest behind it consists of tall, thin trees, some with white bark (likely birches) and others with darker bark (likely pines or spruces). The ground is covered with dry leaves and grass. A semi-transparent purple rectangular box is overlaid on the middle of the image, containing the title text in a light blue, serif font.

a History of East Baltic  
through Language Contact

Anthony Jakob

The East Baltic languages, Lithuanian and Latvian, are well known for their conservative phonology with respect to Proto-Indo-European. This has led to a stereotype that these languages have developed in relative isolation without much contact with other languages. In this dissertation, I take a deep dive into the East Baltic lexicon, peeling away the layers of prehistoric borrowings in the process. As well as significant contact events with known languages, like the Russian dialect of Novgorod-Pskov, Gothic and the ancestors of modern Finnish, Sámi and Mordvin, the lexicon also reveals evidence of contact with unattested languages from which earlier populations must have shifted upon the arrival of the Balts in the Baltic region. The fragments obtained not only shed light on the linguistic features of these lost languages, but also provide a new perspective on the sociolinguistic scenario which led the earlier populations of the region to undergo language shift.

