

LINGUISTICS | ANTHROPOLOGY

Series: *Studies in Slavic, Baltic, and Eastern European Languages and Cultures*

Series Editor: *Andrii Danylenko, Pace University*

"*Foundations of Old Prussian: Philology and Linguistics* is the most comprehensive reference work ever published on Old Prussian, the only Western Baltic language known to us by written texts. Closely related to Lithuanian and Latvian, Old Prussian was spoken until the seventeenth century in East Prussia, around the city of Königsberg, and survives through a small number of texts. This book provides authoritative treatment of the language and its cultural environment by leading Balticist Pietro U. Dini, throwing light on its main linguistic structures and outlining the specific features of its written documentation."

—**Daniel Petit**, Ecole Normale Supérieure & Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes; author of *Untersuchungen zu den baltischen Sprachen*

"Building on the achievements of earlier research, *Foundations of Old Prussian: Philology and Linguistics* offers an up-to-date and comprehensive overview of Old Prussian, the most enigmatic of the Baltic languages. The novelty of the author's approach consists in a masterly combination of strictly philological and grammatical information with extra-linguistic (historical and cultural) background."

—**Wojciech Smoczyński**, Jagiellonian University; author of *Lexikon der altpreussischen Verben*

"Pietro U. Dini's monographic work provides a factual and uniquely detailed introduction to this extinct Baltic language—the Prussian written heritage of the thirteenth through sixteenth centuries—and through it, to the tragic linguistic transformation of the region."

—**Ilja Lemeškin**, Charles University; author of *Lituanica aliter*

The Old Prussian language has always puzzled linguists. While other Baltic languages, such as Lithuanian and Latvian, have remained in use to the present day, Old Prussian was extinguished at the beginning of eighteenth century, and the extant Old Prussian linguistic corpus is quite limited in scope. Drawing on two bilingual vocabularies and three Lutheran Catechisms, as well as onomastic evidence and several other minor texts, this work critically explores the linguistic and historiographical contours of Old Prussian.

Pietro U. Dini is professor of Baltic philology, Lithuanian language, general linguistics, and translation studies at the University of Pisa.



Lexington Books

An imprint of
Rowman & Littlefield

800-462-6420 • www.rowman.com



DINI
Foundations of Old Prussian

Foundations of Old Prussian



*Philology and
Linguistics*

PIETRO U. DINI

Foundations of Old Prussian

STUDIES IN SLAVIC, BALTIC, AND
EASTERN EUROPEAN LANGUAGES AND CULTURES

Series Editor: Andrii Danylenko, Pace University

Editorial Board: Jan Ivar Bjørnflaten (Department of Literature, Area Studies and European Languages, University of Oslo), Vít Boček (Institute of the Czech Language of the Czech Academy of Sciences, Brno), Pietro U. Dini (Department of Philology, Literature, and Linguistics, University of Pisa), Jan Fellerer (Wolfson College, University of Oxford), Marc L. Greenberg (Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures, University of Kansas), Johanna Laakso (Department of Finno-Ugric Studies, University of Vienna Institute of European and Comparative Linguistic and Literary Studies), Marek Stachowski (Institute of Slavic Philology, Jagiellonian University, Cracow), Paul Wexler (Tel-Aviv University), Björn Wiemer (Institute of Slavic, Turkic and Circum-Baltic Studies, Johannes Gutenberg University of Mainz)

The series *Studies in Slavic, Baltic, and Eastern European Languages and Cultures* focuses on Slavic and Baltic languages and cultures, as well as other Eastern European languages connected by common history and cultural processes. The series welcomes monographs, edited volumes and, where appropriate, doctoral dissertations devoted to the study of Slavic, Baltic, and Eastern European languages through multifarious prisms, including but not limited to areal-typological, historical, sociolinguistic, ethnolinguistic, comparative-philological, and cultural perspectives. Books in this series will bridge the linguistic and cultural interrelations in Old Rus'—reaching out to the Middle East and even further—via the sociolinguistic diversity in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania with the convergent changes occurring today in the Circum-Baltic zone. The series is a multidisciplinary forum for furthering our knowledge about integrative processes that have been taking place in languages and cultures of Eastern Europe from the pre-modern times onward.

Foundation of Old Prussian: Philology and Linguistics, by Pietro U. Dini
Urban Multilingualism in East-Central Europe: The Polish Dialect of Late-Habsburg Lviv, by Jan Fellerer
The Development of the Bulgarian Literary Language: From Incunabula to First Grammars, Late Fifteenth–Early Seventeenth Century, by Ivan N. Petrov
Dialectology of the Montenegrin Language, by Adnan Čirgić

**Foundations of
Old Prussian
Philology and Linguistics**

Pietro U. Dini

LEXINGTON BOOKS
Lanham • Boulder • New York • London

Published by Lexington Books
An imprint of The Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group, Inc.
4501 Forbes Boulevard, Suite 200, Lanham, Maryland 20706
www.rowman.com

86–90 Paul Street, London, EC2A 4NE

Copyright © 2023 The Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group, Inc.

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced in any form or by any electronic or mechanical means, including information storage and retrieval systems, without written permission from the publisher, except by a reviewer who may quote passages in a review.

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Information Available

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Dini, Pietro U., author.

Title: Foundations of Old Prussian : philology and linguistics / Pietro U. Dini.

Description: Lanham : Lexington Books, [2023] | Series: Studies in Slavic, Baltic, and Eastern European languages and cultures | Includes bibliographical references and index. | Summary: “This book critically explores the linguistic features and historiography of Old Prussian, an extinct Baltic language”— Provided by publisher.


Identifiers: LCCN 2022060853 (print) | LCCN 2022060854 (ebook) | ISBN 9781666901900 (cloth ; alk. paper) | ISBN 9781666901917 (ebook)

Subjects: LCSH: Prussian language. | Prussian language—History. | Prussian language—Texts.

Classification: LCC PG8202 .D56 2023 (print) | LCC PG8202 (ebook) | DDC 491/.91—dc23/eng/20230309

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2022060853>

LC ebook record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2022060854>

 The paper used in this publication meets the minimum requirements of American National Standard for Information Sciences—Permanence of Paper for Printed Library Materials, ANSI/NISO Z39.48-1992.

»Aber stumm sind jene Ueberreste der einstigen Bewohner Preussens; stumm ihre Asche wie das Steingehäuge, das sie Jahrhunderte umschloß und gegen verwehende Stürme geschützt: nur der Geist, der sie einst belebte, redet noch in kaum vernehmlichen Tönen zu uns herüber und wenige Sprachreste sind der schwache Nachhall seines früheren Lebens, sind ein treuer Abdruck seiner damaligen Bildung, aber auch zugleich der wehmüthigste Schwanengefang eines dahinschwindenden Völkchens.«

—Peter von Bohlen,
Ueber die Sprache der alten Preussen, 1827



Contents

List of Figures	ix
List of Tables	xiii
Preface	xv
1 Old Prussian and the Prussians	1
2 Prelude to Prussian Linguistics (sixteenth–twentieth Centuries)	27
3 Old Prussian Corpus	63
4 An Outline of Old Prussian Grammar	85
5 The Old Prussian Lexicon	169
6 Old Prussian “Minor” Texts	181
7 Old Prussian Texts: The Vocabularies	193
8 Old Prussian Texts: The Traces	237
9 Old Prussian Texts: The Small Catechisms	255
10 Old Prussian Texts: The Enchiridion	267
11 Old Prussian Onomastics	287
12 Examples of Old Prussian Texts	311

viii	<i>Contents</i>	
Appendix		323
List of Abbreviations		329
Sources		339
Bibliography		351
Index		391
About the Author		403

List of Figures

1.1	The Baltic languages in prehistoric times.	2
1.2	Map of Prussia by the German historian and cartographer Caspar Hennenberger.	14
1.3	Beginning of the passage on Prussian in Piccolomini's <i>De Europa</i> .	19
2.1	Hartknoch on the Prussians.	38
2.2	Inscription on the 2nd OPr. Catechism in St. Petersburg.	46
2.3	Title page of Vater (1821).	50
2.4	Title page of Nesselmann (1845).	51
2.5	Title page of Bopp (1853).	52
2.6	Title page of Trautmann (1910).	53
2.7	Title page of Mažiulis' edition of the OPr linguistic monuments (1966).	58
3.1	[EV 340 Gropbrot] Sompifinis.	73
3.2	[GrG 6 Pferdt] kampnit.	73
3.3	Passage from the 1st OPr. Catechism.	74
3.4	Passage from the 2nd OPr. Catechism.	74
3.5	Passage from the Enchiridion.	74
3.6	TB pẽnega.	74

3.7	[EV 67 Menſch] Smonenawis̄.	75
3.8	[EV 321 Moelrat] Maluakelâ.	75
3.9	[EV 331 Bacofen] Vumpis̄.	75
3.10	[EV 398 Czappe] Winis̄.	75
3.11	[EV 428 Stechmeſſer] Stakamecczer’.	75
3.12	[EV 484 Sydenſlewir] Silkaſdrub’.	76
6.1	Incipit of the OPr. Lord’s Prayer.	183
6.2a	OPr. words in H. Megiser’s <i>Thesaurus Polyglottus</i> .	189
6.2b	OPr. words in H. Megiser’s <i>Thesaurus Polyglottus</i> .	189
6.3	Alleged OPr. sentence in Thurneysser’s <i>Onomasticon</i> (1583).	190
7.1	First page of the EV.	195
7.2	[EV 3 Hemel] Danguſ.	215
7.3	[EV 4 Gefirne] Lauxnos.	216
7.4	[EV 8 Monde] Menig.	216
7.5	[EV 654 Wiltpfert] Pauſtoçaica.	217
7.6a	[EV 49 Omese] Saugis.	217
7.6b	[EV 791 Reynen] Suge.	217
7.7	[EV 454 Weber] Tuckoris.	218
7.8	[GrG 97] Dirſos gintos.	226
7.9	[GrG 98] mangos Sones.	228
8.1	Trace of Basel.	239
8.2	Trace of Crete.	247
9.1	First OPr. Catechism, Vilnius.	256
9.2	Second OPr. Catechism, St. Petersburg.	257
10.1	Third OPr. Catechism, Berlin.	268
10.2	Paull Megott’s signature.	269

11.1a	Visigothic bezel, from about the 7th century and found in central Spain.	305
11.1b	Visigothic bezel, reverse, from about the 7th century and found in central Spain.	305
12.1a	Passage from the Lord's Prayer, 1st Catechism.	311
12.1b	Passage from the Lord's Prayer, 1st Catechism.	311
12.2a	Passage from the Lord's Prayer, 2nd Catechism.	312
12.2b	Passage from the Lord's Prayer, 2nd Catechism.	312
12.3	OPr. translation by Jānis Reiters.	312
12.4a	Passage from the Lord's Prayer Enchiridion. German and Old Prussian.	318
12.4b	Passage from the Lord's Prayer Enchiridion. German and Old Prussian.	318



List of Tables

1.1	Scheme of the phonetic developments of the Baltic languages (ca. fourteenth century).	5
1.2	Genetic classification within West and East Baltic.	5
1.3	Linguistic data for the period as late as the sixteenth–seventeenth centuries.	5
3.1	The making of the OPr. linguistic corpus.	65
3.2	The OPr. linguistic corpus at present.	66
3.3	The OPr. linguistic corpus: handwritten and printed texts.	67
4.1	Reflexes of Balt. * <i>ā</i> , * <i>ō</i> and * <i>ū</i> .	86
4.2	Reflexes of Balt. vocalism.	87
4.3	Reflexes of Balt. consonantism.	91
4.4	OPr. noun, * <i>-ō</i> , * <i>-ā</i> , * <i>-ē</i> stems, singular.	107
4.5	OPr. noun, * <i>-ō</i> , * <i>-ā</i> , * <i>-ē</i> stems, plural.	107
4.6	OPr. noun, * <i>-ī</i> , * <i>-jō</i> , * <i>-ū</i> , * <i>-C</i> stems, singular.	107
4.7	OPr. noun, * <i>-ī</i> , * <i>-jō</i> , * <i>-ū</i> , * <i>-C</i> stems, plural.	107
4.8	OPr. adjective, * <i>-ō</i> , * <i>-ā</i> , * <i>i/ijō</i> , * <i>-ū</i> , singular.	116
4.9	OPr. adjective, * <i>-ō</i> , * <i>-ā</i> , * <i>i/ijō</i> , * <i>-ū</i> , plural.	116
4.10	Scheme of OPr. suffixes.	117

5.1	Semantic fields in the EV.	169
8.1	Text of the OPr. Trace of Basel.	238
8.2	English translation of the OPr. Trace of Basel.	242
8.3	Lithuanian translation of the OPr. Trace of Basel.	242
8.4	German translation of the OPr. Trace of Basel.	242
8.5	English translation of the OPr. Trace of Basel (according to I. Lemeškin).	246
9.1	The content of OPr. I and OPr. II.	258
10.1	The content of the Ench.	271
10.2	The OPr. Ench. in the making.	278
10.3	Phenomenology of the mistakes in the OPr. Catechisms.	280
12.1	The OPr. Lord's Prayer compared (a).	313
12.2	The OPr. Lord's Prayer compared (b).	313
12.3	The OPr. Lord's Prayer compared (c).	314
12.4	The OPr. Lord's Prayer compared (d).	315
12.5	The OPr. Lord's Prayer compared (e).	316
12.6	The OPr. Lord's Prayer compared (f).	317
12.7	The OPr. Lord's Prayer compared (g).	317

Preface

The purpose of this book is to critically reveal our knowledge about the Old Prussian language. It may be considered an introduction both for students and for scholars. Of course, the presentation reflects the author's own interests and preferences—which is to say his limits. It is therefore concerned not only with topics of linguistics but also of philology and linguistic historiography.

In the second half of the twentieth century, Old Prussian studies saw a noteworthy flourishing. One of the reasons for this lies perhaps in the fact that its linguistic monuments are the oldest within the Baltic group, preceding the earliest Lithuanian and Latvian texts by approximately two centuries.

Especially after the fundamental anastatic edition (*PKPI*), Old Prussian studies experienced a radical change. A lively and lasting discussion has ensued which began—at least for the present writer—at the Congress of Balticists held in Vilnius in 1985. Thereafter, the importance of close ties between philology and linguistics has become more and more clear in dealing with Old Prussian facts. It is precisely upon this interconnection that the present book is based (and the core of the author's personal contribution, which is the “hermeneutic method”).

Despite the already recognized appeal of Old Prussian within Baltic linguistics, there has previously been no general handbook available in English, except for the uncompleted posthumous book by Terje Mathiassen (2010) and, still earlier, the *Old Prussian Grammar* by William R. Schmalstieg (1974). This book attempts to fill this gap.

In the text, if not otherwise indicated, all translations into English are mine. The quoted texts are taken from *PKPI* and given according to the OPr. part.

I feel particularly indebted to Andrii Danylenko (Pace University, NY) for his encouragement to prepare this book. And for help with various of its aspects, I am grateful to many colleagues and friends: Diego Ardoino (Bern/

Vilnius), Grasilda Blažienė (Vilnius), Piero Bugiani (Sismel, Certosa del Galuzzo), Adriano Cerri (Pisa), Jolanta Gelumbeckaitė (Frankfurt am Main), †Reinhart Grunenberg (Tolkemita, Berlin), Werner Lehfeldt (Göttingen), Giovanni Mazzini (Pisa), Alessandro Parenti (Trento), Daniel Petit (Paris), Silvia Piccini (Pisa), Bonifacas Stundžia (Vilnius), Giedrius Subačius (Chicago). Finally, I very much thank Nicolas Jansens (Heidelberg/Prague) for his scrupulous reading of the manuscript.

Pisa, 2022 April.

P.U.D.