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## PROTO-BALTIC?

**Abstract.** There is little or no evidence for a period of common West and East Baltic innovations after the period of common Balto-Slavic developments before the separation of Slavic from the Baltic languages. The terms “Proto-Baltic” and “Proto-Balto-Slavic” refer to the same thing, and Slavic may alternatively be called “South Baltic”. The opposite view is taken by Miguel Villanueva Svensson (2014) and Eugen Hill (2016). Here I specify the differences which underlie the disagreement.

**Keywords:** Proto-Baltic; Slavic.

0. On various occasions I have argued that there is little or no evidence for a period of common West and East Baltic innovations after the period of common Balto-Slavic developments before the separation of Slavic from the Baltic languages (e.g. Kortlandt 1977; 2008). If this is correct, the terms “Proto-Baltic” and “Proto-Balto-Slavic” refer to the same thing, and Slavic may alternatively be called “South Baltic”. The opposite view is taken by Miguel Villanueva Svensson (2014) and Eugen Hill (2016). It is therefore appropriate to specify the differences which underlie the disagreement. Here I shall follow the order of Villanueva’s exposition, omitting the specific Baltic vocabulary items.

1. According to Villanueva (2014, 173), the “most serious problem for Baltic unity is the apparent existence of non-trivial isoglosses between East Baltic and Slavic (e.g. thematic genitive singular, “nine”, “third”, etc.)”. He opposes gen. sg. Lith. *vilko* and OCS *vlbka* < \*-*ād* to OPr. *deiwās* (2014, 163). In fact, the ending Lith. -*o*, Slavic -*a* represents \*-*ōd* and can be identified with the Latin ablative ending -*ōd*, not \*-*ād*, for which there is no evidence whatever. The Lithuanian reflex is -*o* because the ending was unstressed in all accent classes (cf. Kortlandt 2009, 6, 46). Prussian added an analogical -*s* to the Balto-Slavic ending in accordance with the other flexion types, all of

which had a genitive in *-s* (cf. Vaillant 1958, 30; Kortlandt 2009, 192). The original ending was preserved in the Old Prussian proverb *Deues does dantes, Deues does geitka* ‘God give teeth, God give bread’ (cf. Sjöberg 1969) and in the Basel epigram *nykoyte pēnega doyte* ‘you do not want to give money’, where an emendation to *-an* or *-as* is unsatisfactory (cf. Kortlandt 2009, 215f.). There is no ancient isogloss between East Baltic and Slavic here.

The words for ‘nine’ and ‘third’ indeed support the view that Balto-Slavic split into three identifiable branches, with East Baltic as an intermediate dialect between West Baltic and Slavic. OPr. *newīnts* ‘ninth’ shows that the substitution of *de-* for *ne-* in Lith. *deviñtas* and OCS *devetv* belongs to the dialectal Balto-Slavic period. The same holds for the subsequent development of *\*eu* to *\*iou* before consonants in East Baltic and Slavic (cf. Kortlandt 2009, 45f.; Derksen 2010). Similarly, OPr. *tīrts* ‘third’, acc. *tīrtian, tirtien*, Vedic *ṛtīyas* for earlier *\*triyo-*, is archaic in comparison with Lith. *trėčias* and OCS *tretii*, which have *tre-* from *\*treies* ‘three’. Another common development of East Baltic and Slavic not shared by West Baltic is the elimination of *-s-* in the pronominal dat. sg. and loc. sg. forms Lith. *tāmui, tamè, tái, tojè*, OCS *tomu, tomь, toi*, OPr. *stesmu, stessiei*, Vedic *tásmai, tásmin, tásyai, tásyām* (cf. Kortlandt 2009, 139f.).

2. In the verbal system, Villanueva adduces the generalization of the 3rd sg. form in the plural and dual, the generalization of the thematic vowel *\*-o-*, and the 3rd person zero endings (2014, 166–168). In fact, I have argued (Kortlandt 2009, 277–280) that the difference between 3rd sg. and 3rd pl. forms was preserved in Old Prussian

3rd sg. *tu(r)rei* 9× beside *turri* 18×, also  
 2nd sg. *turei* 6× beside *turri* 14×, versus  
 3rd pl. *turri* 10× beside *turei* 1×, also  
 1st pl. *turrimai* 20× and 2nd pl. *turriti* 3×,

with generalization of the plural form taking place before our eyes, and similarly in the *ina-*flexion

3rd sg. *-inai* 4×, *-inne(i)* 2× beside *-i(n)na* 13×, also  
 2nd sg. *-inai* 1×, *-inei* 1×, versus  
 3rd pl. *-i(n)na* 5× beside *-inai* 1×, and  
 1st pl. *-innimai* 6×,

again with generalization of the plural form. In East Baltic and Slavic, the singular and plural forms gave rise to different paradigms, e.g. causatives, iteratives and denominatives in Lith. *-inti*, Latvian *-inât*, which are closely related to the verbs in Lith. *-yti*, Latvian *-ît* (cf. Stang 1966, 371; Kortlandt 2009, 174). These verbs evidently represent a single East Baltic paradigm with 3rd sg. *\*-inâ(ti)* preserved in Latvian and 3rd pl. *\*-in(ti)* thematicized in Lithuanian. Both forms are apparently built on the 3rd pl. form of a Balto-Slavic paradigm with 3rd sg. *\*-eiti* and 3rd pl. *\*-inti* reflected in Old Prussian 3rd sg. *turei*, 3rd pl. *turri*, remodeled on the analogy of the Vedic type *jānāti*, *jānānti* ‘know’.

The existence of a Balto-Slavic paradigm with 3rd sg. *\*-eiti* and 3rd pl. *\*-inti* immediately explains the difference between the zero grade in the East Baltic *i*-present and the full grade in the Slavic *i*-present, which has a long  $\bar{i}$  < *\*-ei-*. Moreover, the  $\bar{a}$ -present of East Baltic verbs in *-îti* corresponds to such Serbo-Croatian verbs as *hódati*, *nósati*, *vódati*, *vózati* beside *hòditi*, *nòsiti*, *vòditi*, *vòziti*, also Latvian *vadât* ‘lead about’ beside *vadît* ‘lead’. I have argued (Kortlandt 2009, 175) that the underlying Balto-Slavic paradigm with 3rd sg. *\*-âti* and 3rd pl. *\*-inti* was built on the model of *\*stastâti*, *\*stastinti* ‘put’ from Proto-Indo-European *\*stisteH<sub>2</sub>ti*, *\*stestH<sub>2</sub>nti*, reflected in Lith. *statýti*, OPr. *prestattinnimai* ‘we put before’, and Latvian *stâstît* ‘to tell’ (cf. English *to state*). My theory receives strong support from the existence of a class of iterative verbs with a  $\bar{st}\bar{a}$ -present and an *o*-grade root vowel: “Da die  $\bar{st}\bar{a}$ -Verba vielfach klare Iterativa sind und da sie grundsätzlich dieselbe Ablautstufe aufweisen, wie die primitiven Iterativa auf  $\bar{i}$ -ti, sind sie kaum unabhängig von diesen zu erklären” (Stang 1966, 327). It also offers an explanation for the rise of causative verbs in Lith. *-dyti*, *-dinti*, Latv. *-dît*, *-dinât*: these verbs apparently adopted the *-d-* of 3rd pl. *\*dedinti*, *\*dōdinti* and the  $\bar{a}$ -flexion of *\*stastâti*. As a result, *-d-* could be used as a hiatus filler in these classes, cf. Lith. *baidýti* ‘frighten’, where the circumflex of *baïdo* points to loss of the root-final laryngeal and addition of *-d-* from *\*dedinti*, but Latv. *baïdît*, where the stretched tone cannot have been taken from *bîtiês* ‘fear’ and may reflect the acute of *\*dōdinti* added to the same form of the root. The original formation was preserved in OPr. *pobaiint*. The presence of the acute tone in *\*dōdinti* and its absence from *\*dedinti* account for the coexistence of *d*-causatives with and without metatony, e.g. Lith. *gim̃do*, *gimdo* ‘gives birth’, *ram̃do*, *ramdo* ‘soothes’ (cf. Būga 1924, 274). The  $\bar{a}$ -present of  $\bar{i}$ -verbs is

reflected in Old Prussian *lāiku*, *laikūt* ‘hold’, *perbānda* ‘tempts’, *perbandāsnan* ‘temptation’, *maysotan* ‘mixed’, Lith. *laikýti*, *bandýti*, *maišýti*.

3. Villanueva follows Cowgill’s view that the personal endings of the thematic present did not differ from those of the athematic present with the exception of the 1st sg. ending (2014, 167). A comparison of our reconstructions yields the following picture:

	PIE/MVS	PIE/FK	BSL./FK	OPr./FK
1st sg.	*-oH <sub>2</sub>	*-oH	*-oʔ	-a
2nd sg.	*-esi	*-eH <sub>1</sub> i	*-eʔi	-asi
3rd sg.	*-eti	*-e	*-e	-a
1st pl.	*-omos	*-omHom	*-omun	*-amai
2nd pl.	*-ete	*-etH <sub>1</sub> e	*-ete	-ati
3rd pl.	*-onti	*-o	*-o	-a

In Indo-Iranian, these endings were better preserved in the subjunctive than in the indicative (cf. Beekes 1981), and the same holds for Armenian. Cowgill’s reconstruction does not explain the following forms, for which he needs to introduce additional hypotheses (cf. Kortlandt 2015):

2nd sg. Vedic *-as* (with secondary *-s*), Greek *-εις* (with added *-s*), Umbrian *seste* ‘set up’, Old Irish *-bir*, *biri*, Tocharian AB *-t* (with enclitic *\*tu* after a zero ending), Lith. *-ì*, *-íe-*, OPr. *-s-ei*, Slavic *-s-i*.

3rd sg. Vedic *-at* (with added *-t*), Gathic *-at* (idem), Greek *-ει* (with added *-i*), Old Latin future *esed* ‘will be’ (with added *-d*), Umbrian *heri* ‘wants’ (with apocope), Old Irish *-beir*, relative *beres* (with enclitic *\*so*), Tocharian A *-ʃ*, B *-m̄* (enclitics after a zero ending), Old Russian and Ukrainian *-e*, Baltic *-a* < *\*-e* with retraction after *\*j*.

1st pl. Vedic *-āma* (with loss of the final nasal), Gathic *-āma* (idem), Armenian *-c‘uk‘* (with added *\*-s* from the athematic ending), Greek *-ομεν* (with *-e-* from the athematic ending *-μες*), Latin *-umus* (with *\*-s* from the athematic ending), Old Irish *-beram*, relative *bermae* < *\*-omos*, Slavic *-emь* with umlaut of *\*-o-* after *\*j*.

3rd pl. Vedic *-an* (with added *\*-nt*), Gathic *-an* (idem), Old Irish *-berat*, relative *bertae* < *\*-ont* (idem), Tocharian B *-em̄* (idem), A *-e* < *\*-o* before an umlauting clitic, Baltic *-a*, Slavic *-otь* (with added *\*-nti* from the athematic present).

Following Cowgill, Villanueva disregards the evidence from Indo-Iranian, Greek, Italic, Germanic, Slavic, Armenian and Tocharian and invokes an irregular loss of final *\*-i* in order to explain the Baltic and Celtic forms (cf. Kortlandt 2015, 9–14). Following Schmalstieg (1958), he points out correctly that *\*j* was lost between consonants and front vowels in Baltic, after which the thematic vowel *-a-* < *\*-o-* was generalized in the paradigm. This was a common development of West and East Baltic that yielded the merger of the thematic endings 3rd sg. *\*-e* and 3rd pl. *\*-o*. Like the development of the words for ‘nine’ and ‘third’ in East Baltic and Slavic, it can be dated to the dialectal Balto-Slavic period.

Villanueva unduly posits a final *\*-i* that was allegedly apocopated in Proto-Baltic times in the preterit Lith. *nēšė* and the future Lith. *duōs*, which originally had secondary endings, 3rd sg. *\*-t*, not *\*-ti* (cf. Kortlandt 2009, 187; 2014, 219). The forms 1st pl. *dúosme* and 2nd pl. *dúoste* are more archaic than *dúosime*, *dúosite*, Latvian *duōsim*, *duōsit* (cf. Kortlandt 2009, 16). The latter were based on the 3rd pl. form *\*duōsin(t)*, which apparently survived into the East Baltic period. The pronominal inst. sg. form OCS fem. *tojŏ* may be compared with Vedic loc. sg. *táśyām*, like OCS masc. *těmь* with Vedic *tásmin*. Contrary to Villanueva’s statement, OCS 1st sg. *berŏ* cannot be derived from *\*-ōmi* because the accent was retracted to the initial syllable in this form of the paradigm (cf. also Kortlandt 2009, 155f.).

4. Villanueva claims that the Baltic *ē*-preterit and nominal *ē*-stems lack cognates in other Indo-European languages (2014, 169f.). This is a big mistake (cf. Meillet 1906; Pedersen 1926; Vaillant 1966, 398–401; Schrijver 1991, 366–390; Kortlandt 2007, 81–85; 2009, 129–135, 185–187). Deverbal *ē*-stems are frequent in Latin, e.g. *caedēs*, *sēdēs*, *clādēs*, *vātēs*, *compāgēs*, *ambāgēs*, *prōlēs*, *subōlēs*, *struēs*, *luēs*. Both sigmatic and asigmatic nominatives are found in Vedic compounds of root nouns, e.g. *śraddhā* ‘trust’ < *\*-d<sup>h</sup>ē*, *śraddhās* ‘trustful’, Avestan *mazdā* < *\*-dās*, cf. Old English *wōð* ‘song’ and *wōd* ‘mad’ corresponding to Welsh *gwawd* ‘song’ and Irish *fáith* ‘poet’ (= Latin *vātēs*), reflecting a proterodynamic and a hysterdynamic flexion of the same word. Baltic compounds with *\*-d<sup>h</sup>ē* are frequent, e.g. Lith. *arklīdė*, *avīdė*, *alūdė*, *pelūdė*, also *žvaigždė* ‘star’, OCS *zvězda*, OPr. *umnode* ‘bakehouse’, with the circumflex tone of a monosyllable. Other *ē*-stems are Lith. *žvākė*, *meñtė*, *girė*, to be compared with Latin *facēs*, Vedic *mánthās*, *girís*, OCS *gora* (cf. Pedersen 1926, 60–67). It appears that *ē*-stems became

productive in Balto-Slavic by the creation of a nom. sg. form in  $*-\bar{e}$  on the basis of the oblique cases of consonant stems, e.g. Lith. *žėmė, ūpė, sáulė, gilė, mūsė, pelė, gėrvė, šlovė*, OPr. *semmē, ape, saule, gile, muso, peles, gerwe*. In Slavic,  $\bar{e}$ -stems are mostly continued as  $\bar{a}$ -stems, e.g. OCS *zvězda, gora*. Note that OCS *zemlja* is an original  $\bar{e}$ -stem, not a  $\bar{ja}$ -stem, because it belongs to accent paradigm (b) in Old Russian, Kajkavian and Old Slovene (cf. Kortlandt 2011, 64).

In his brilliant studies of the Elbing Vocabulary (1973; 1974), Jules Levin has shown that the nom. sg. ending of the proterodynamic and hysterodynamic  $iH$ -stems is  $-y/i$  / $\bar{i}$ / and  $-e$  / $\bar{e}$ /, respectively, e.g. *sansy* ‘goose’ versus *mealde* ‘lightning’, Lith. *patì* <  $*-i\bar{l}$  vs. *vilké* <  $*-i\bar{l}\bar{e}$ , OCS *bogynji* vs. *ml̃nii*. The accent was retracted in the hysterodynamic paradigm, yielding metatony in the preceding syllable and loss of the prevocalic  $*i$  at the end of the East Baltic period (cf. Kortlandt 2009, 7). The reflexes  $*-\bar{e}$  <  $*-i\bar{e}$  in East Baltic and  $-ii$  <  $*-i\bar{e}$  in Slavic presuppose a Balto-Slavic nom. sg. form in  $*-i\bar{l}\bar{e}$ , with full grade  $*-\bar{e}$  from the simple  $\bar{e}$ -stems (cf. Pedersen 1926, 58; Schrijver 1991, 387) and raising of the final  $*-\bar{e}$  to  $*-\bar{i}$  in Early Slavic, as in OCS *mati*, Lith. *mótė* (cf. Kortlandt 2011, 162). The nom. sg. form evidently adopted the circumflex ending of the earlier  $\bar{e}$ -stems, ultimately from monosyllabic  $*-d^h\bar{e}(s)$ . At that time, the hysterodynamic paradigm still had gen. sg.  $*-i\bar{l}es$  and acc. sg.  $*-ei\bar{l}m$ , preserved in OPr. *warein* (2×) ‘power’, with the same vocalism as in OCS acc. sg. *svekrovь* ‘mother-in-law’ <  $*-euHm$  (cf. Rozwadowski 1914, 14–18; Kortlandt 2009, 132–134). This is the origin of the hysterodynamic feminine adjectives in  $-\bar{e}$ , e.g. Lith. *didelė, gerėsnė, vidurinė, auksinė, mažūtė*, as opposed to the proterodynamic feminine paradigm of the  $u$ -stems, e.g. *lygi, brangi, plati*. Proterodynamic feminines were originally derived from athematic stems, e.g. OPr. *sansy*, Lith. *patì*, and hysterodynamic feminines from thematic stems, e.g. *vilké* from *vilkas* (cf. Fellner 2014, 70f.; Kortlandt 2017). The retraction of the accent from a prevocalic  $*i$  at the end of the East Baltic period did not yield a long vowel in the preceding syllable, as Larsson (2004) and Villanueva (2014, 170) would have it. They have not refuted Derksen’s argumentation (1996, 38, 52, 124f.). In particular, the absence of lengthening in *ragānius, vandēnis, auksinis, vasāris, beuodēgis, bemotēris, drapānis* shows that it was not a phonetic development. There is no evidence for a retraction of the accent in Prussian, where the  $*i$  was never lost, cf. acc. sg. I *tirtin*, II *tirtien*,

E *tīrtian* ‘third’, with restoration of the ending *-an*. It is clear that original root nouns are continued not only as *i*-stems (thus Larsson 2004, 314) but also as *o*- and *ā*-stems (cf. Kortlandt 2009, 55) and as *ē*-stems, as has been pointed out above.

5. Contrary to Villanueva’s assertions (2014, 169f.), the *ē*-preterit Lith. *vėdė*, OPr. *weddē* ‘led’ cannot be separated from the OCS imperfect *vedě-aše* (e.g. Kortlandt 2009, 186f.). The long root vowel of *ē*-preterits such as Lith. *lėkė* ‘flew’, *srėbė* ‘sipped’, *bėrė* ‘strewed’, *pėrė* ‘thrashed’ originated in the sigmatic aorist, which was generally replaced by the *ē*-preterit (cf. Kortlandt 2009, 52f., 85). Herman Kōlln has shown that Slavic root verbs originally had a sigmatic aorist if they were both transitive and non-terminative but a thematic aorist if they were either intransitive or terminative, or both (1961, 269). The type of Lith. *tekėti*, *tėka* ‘flow’ belongs to a category of intransitive verbs denoting non-terminative dynamic processes that had an *ē*-preterit going back to Balto-Slavic times (cf. Kortlandt 2009, 186). The *ē*-preterit was evidently taken from the Indo-European type of stative verbs with an *i*-present denoting a state of being, e.g. Lith. *budėti* ‘be awake’, *judėti* ‘be in movement’, OCS *mьněti* ‘be in thought’, *dьržati* ‘be in control’, Vedic *búdhya-*, *yúdhya-*, *mánya-*, *dṛghya-*, which were semantically close enough to supply a new imperfect to present stems of non-terminative intransitive verbs when the earlier imperfect developed into an aorist. At the same time, transitive verbs denoting terminative dynamic actions such as OCS *berě-* ‘gather’, *žene-* < *\*gene-* ‘hunt’, *ište-* < *\*iske-* ‘search’, *mete-* ‘throw’, *tvče-* < *\*tvke-* ‘weave’, *kove-* ‘forge’, *zove-* ‘call’ developed an *ā*-preterit (cf. Kōlln 1961, 275), which was probably taken from an Indo-European type of verbs denoting determinate movement (cf. Kortlandt 2007, 71, 153). This was clearly a Balto-Slavic innovation because the East Baltic transitive root verbs with a thematic present and an *ā*-preterit belong to the same semantic class, e.g. Lith. *reñka*, *riñko* ‘gather’, *siūva*, *siūvo* ‘sew’, *sūka*, *sūko* ‘twist’ (cf. Stang 1966, 385). Later the *ā*-preterit replaced the thematic aorist in East Baltic, where it was subsequently generalized as the preterit of intransitive verbs par excellence. On the other hand, the sigmatic aorist of transitive root verbs was replaced by an *ē*-preterit, which then became the characteristic preterit of transitive verbs in East Baltic. Thus, I agree with Stang that “sowohl der intransitive Charakter des *ā*-Prät. als der transitive Charakter des *ē*-Prät. sekundär ist” (1966, 388). In Prussian we find the intransitive *ē*-preterit

in *ismigē* ‘entschlief’, OCS *mbžati* < \**migē-*, and the transitive *ē*-preterit in *weddē* ‘brachte’ and *pertraūki* ‘verschloss’, Lith. *vėdė*, *tráukė*. The transitive *ā*-preterit was largely generalized in Prussian, as is clear from I *bela*, II *byla*, E *billā* ‘sprach’, I, II *prowela* ‘verriet’, I *lima*, II *lymu* ‘brach’, E *poglabū* ‘herzte’, and especially *endeirā* ‘sah an’ and *teikū* ‘schuf’ because these have the *e*-grade root vowel of the present tense, as distinct from the zero grade root vowel in the infinitives *endyrītwei* ‘ansehen’ and *tickint* ‘machen’. Note that Villanueva’s derivation of Lith. *lėkė* from \**lekā* by a “curious adoption of \**-i-*” from the present *lėkia* is impossible because (1) there is no evidence for a form \**lekā*, (2) the \**-i-* was not stressed and there was no retraction of the accent, so (3) the lengthening of the root vowel remains unexplained, and (4) the derivation of an *ā*-preterit from a *ja*-present would yield a form in *-jo*, as in *jójo* ‘rode’.

6. Eugen Hill proposes two Balto-Slavic developments that were not shared by Slavic, viz. shortening of unstressed Proto-Balto-Slavic \**ĩ* and contraction in Proto-Balto-Slavic \**ia* and \**iā*. He assumes Balto-Slavic \**ĩ* < \**eie* in the dat. sg. ending \**-eiei* and in the *i*-present stem \**-eie-* (Hill 2016, 215–217). In fact, the short dat. sg. ending *-i* in Lithuanian dialects may be the original loc. sg. ending of the consonant stems while the corresponding long ending *-ei* may be the result of haplology. For the Balto-Slavic *i*-presents see above. It is unfortunate that Hill refers to Andersen and Jasanoff (2016, 216f.) because these authors have completely lost track of the data (cf. Kortlandt 2016; 2007, 144–146; 2009, 81–86; 2010, 337–339). The Balto-Slavic retraction of the stress from open medial syllables to the preceding syllable, which Hill wrongly attributes to Jasanoff (2016, 217), was actually proposed by Saussure (1896) and Pedersen (1933) and discussed throughout the years by all serious authors (cf. Collinge 1985, 147f.; Olander 2009, 17–23 and *passim*; Kortlandt 2009, 103–108 and *passim*; 2010, 337–357; 2011, 159–166 and *passim*). For the retraction of the accent from a prevocalic \**i* and the alleged contraction with a following vowel (Hill 2016, 222f.) see above. Note that the long *-ĩ-* in Lith. *ožỹs* ‘he-goat’ and *lokỹs* ‘he-bear’ is recent in view of Estonian *takijas* ‘burdock’ from Lith. *dagỹs*, Latvian *dadzis*. There was no Proto-Baltic shortening of unstressed \**ĩ* and no Proto-Baltic contraction of prevocalic \**i* with a following vowel.



## BALTŲ PROKALBĖ?

### *Santrauka*

Nėra beveik jokių įrodymų, kad būta bendrų vakarų ir rytų baltų kalbinių inovacijų laikotarpio, trukusio vėliau už bendrų baltų-slavų pakitimų laikotarpį prieš slavų kalboms atsiskiriant nuo baltų kalbų. Terminai „baltų prokalbė“ ir „baltų-slavų prokalbė“ žymi tą patį dalyką, o slavų kalbos gali būti vadinamos ir „pietų baltų“ kalbomis. Priešingą nuomonę yra išreiškę Miguelis Villanueva Svenssonas (2014) ir Eugenias Hillas (2016). Straipsnyje išryškunami šį nesutarimą lemiantys skirtumai.

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