Stang’s law in Baltic

It has long been recognized that in accusative singular form of the Indo-European words for ‘cow’ and ‘sky’, Vedic gām, dyām, Greek βῶν, Ζῆν, the phoneme *u was lost between a vowel and the following *-m, cf. Vedic nom. sg. gāus, dyāus. Christian Stang linked this loss, which has long been recognized as an inner-Proto-Indo-European development, with the length of the preceding vowel. The loss of *u would have caused compensatory lengthening of the preceding vowel. The same process was later argued to have taken place in the acc.sg. of the ā-stems as well: *-eh₂m > PIE *-ām on the strength of Skt. monosyllabic -ām, Greek -ην and Lith. non-acute -q (Rix 1992: 75). Stang’s law is widely, but not universally accepted, cf. Collinge’s (1995: 37f.) conclusion that “[o]ne would like to join the happy throng of believers in Stang II, but the way remains very cloudy”. During the talk, Stang’s law will be discussed, with a focus on the relevant Baltic data, to wit Latv. guovs and the acc.sg. ending of the ā-stems.

References
