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Some words on the prosody of infinitives in Baltic and Slavic

Both in Slavic and in Baltic infinitives play an important role in the verbal form building, being the counterpart to presents (and the forms derived) and, where it applies, to preterits. Intonation groups or accent paradigms, that infinitives fall into, can be descriptively determined, which has been successfully done by many accentologists. Nevertheless Balto-Slavic accent laws (specifically in auslaut), postulated heretofore, do not tell much satisfying about how the Balto-Slavic picture could be projected onto its background. On the one hand not all intonation patterns, that infinitives exhibit, are explicable by means of right out deducible rules (thus intonation of most of the primary infinitival stems is not predictable, but could be at best accounted for posteriori by means of plausible prosodic developments). On the other hand it is obvious that accent groups cannot exist isolated from other form-marking means. Therefore they are to be related to their form-building type and particularly to the genetics of the latter.

Thus the tone genesis of infinitives in attested Slavic and modern Baltic will be here related to the diachronic development of their morphology. In this respect we will take in our focus stems, which served derivational bases to infinitives, and corresponding endings before applying visible accent shifts and metatonies. The impetus of this talk came out of the results of my investigating the origin of the infinitival stems in Slavic and Baltic (the purely morphological part of which I presented in the talk on the 1st IE Research Colloquium this March). Here I would like to address the prosodic aspect of the matter.