

The shift from verb-based to noun-based in Balto-Slavic

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The prototypical lexical root in IE is essentially verbal, and the derivational morphology is well equipped to derive nouns from verbs but does much less of the reverse. Late PIE nouns denoting semantically basic concepts are often deverbal. In most daughter languages it is the other way around: nouns are most often synchronically basic, verbs derived. In the Slavic branch the shift of lexical type took place recently enough that it is still underway in the first written documents. It involves abandonment of causativizing morphology, increased derivation of deverbal nouns, and productive derivation of transitive verbs from those nouns. In Baltic the causative morphology is still productive, and there is less reliance on deverbal nouns as bases for new verbs. This paper is intended to draw the attention of Indo-Europeanists to the typological and historical implications of the Slavic and Balto-Slavic shifts.