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PROTO-INDO-EUROPEAN *sk- IN SLAVIC

This paper offers an extensive analysis of the reflexes of the Proto-Indo-European word-initial cluster *sk- in Proto-Slavic. It is argued that the regular reflex of this cluster is the Proto-Slavic *x-, but that *sk- was analogously re-introduced in a great number of cases under the influence of prefixed forms and cases where forms with and without the so-called “s-mobile” co-existed in Slavic. This conclusion is in accordance with the fact that *x- < *sk- is far more common in derivationally isolated words that do not occur with prefixes.

Introduction¹

It is almost universally assumed that PIE *sk was preserved in Proto-Slavic (Vaillant 1950: 74–76, Bräuer 1961, I: 172–3, Shevelov 1964: 135, Stang 1966: 92f.). However, as we shall see below, there are also instances where word-initial *sk- appears to be reflected as PSl. *x-. This thesis was first proposed long time ago by Brückner (1923), but it is not widely accepted, since there are examples where *sk- seems to be preserved and since there are several other possible sources of Proto-Slavic *x-.

The origin of Proto-Slavic *x- is a notoriously difficult, and still unresolved problem (Carlton 1991: 96, Townsend & Janda 1996: 42–45).² The only uncontested development is from PIE *ks to PSl. *x-, as in PIE *ksewd- ‘small’ >

¹ Many ideas expressed in this article were developed in conversations I had with Tijmen Pronk on questions of Slavic historical phonology and etymology. I would like to thank him for his advice and criticism.

² For the older references see Shevelov 1964.

OCS *xudъ*, Russ. *xudój* ‘thin, meagre’, Croat. *hûd* ‘ugly’ vs. Skr. *kšudrá-* ‘small’, or PIE *(k)swék’s > OCS *šestъ*, Russ. *šest’*, Croat. *šêst* vs. Av. *xvaš*, PIE *ksol- > Croat. *ò-hol* ‘haughty’, Russ. *xólit* ‘take care of someone’, Skr. *kšāláyati* ‘cleanse’, PIE *ksweyb- ‘hit, sweep’ > Russ. *šibát* ‘throw, swing’, Slovak *šibat* ‘beat’, Croat. *šìbati* ‘flog’ vs. OE *swāpan* ‘swep, swing’.

There are also instances where Proto-Slavic *x- appears to come from *s- (e.g. *xodъ < *sodo-, cf. Gr. *hodós* ‘path, way’). Some of these may represent forms generalized after prefixes ending in *u or *i, or rather generalized sandhi-variants used after preceding words ending in *u and *i, while others may be loanwords from Iranian (e.g. Russ. *xvóryj* ‘sick’, cf. Av. *xvāra-* ‘wound’).³ The purpose of this paper is not to elucidate the origin of all instances of Proto-Slavic *x, but just to discuss the possibility that it regularly develops from Balto-Slavic *sk- word-initially.

Relative chronology

1. *k’ was depalatalized after *s in Balto-Slavic (perhaps already in PIE).

This is best confirmed by PSI. *iskati < *h₂is-sk’- ‘ask’ (Skr. *icchāti*, OIr. *escaid* ‘louse’) Lith. *ieškau*, *ieškóti* ‘ask’ testifies that the development was probably from *-sk’- to -šk- and then to *-šk- in Lithuanian and *-sk- in Slavic (and Latvian, cf. Latv. *iēškāt* ‘to louse’), Stang 1966: 92f., Vaillant 1950–77 I: 38, Villanueva-Svensson 2009.⁴ There is no evidence for the different treatment of *sk’, *sk, and *sk^w in Slavic, and, likewise, no sound evidence for the thesis that *s- followed by voiced velars was treated differently than *s- followed by voiceless velars.⁵

2. *sk- (from *sk’-, *sk^w-, and *sk-) was preserved in Balto-Slavic.

This reflex is preserved in Lithuanian, without exception, cf. Lith. *skerdžiù*, *skeršti* ‘cut’ < *skerd^h- (LIV 505, OIr. *sceirtid* ‘scratch’), Lith. *skrembù*, *skrèbti* ‘become dry’ (LIV 504, OHG *rimpfan*, MHG *schrimpfen* ‘shrink’), Lith. *skeliù*,

³ It is, however, methodologically unsound to treat all Slavic words with initial *x- and otherwise unclear etymology as Iranianisms, as, e.g., suggested by Gołab (1990: 313–320). I believe we should only assume that a word was borrowed from Iranian when a plausible source is attested in Iranian languages.

⁴ Cf. also such pairs as Lith. *pyškėti*: OCS *piskati*, Lith. *pleškėti*: Russ. *pleskát’*.

⁵ The opposite opinion of Illič-Svityč (1961) is not accepted by the majority of Indo-Europeanists.

skēlti ‘divide’ < *skel- ‘divide’ (LIV 500, Hitt. *iskallari*, Gr. *skállō*), Lith. *skantù*, *skàsti* ‘jump’ < *skat- or *skeHt- (LIV 498, Lat. *scatō*), Lith. *skobiù*, *skōbti* ‘plane’ < *skeHb^h- (OHG *scaban*, Lat. *scabō* ‘scratch’), Lith. *skubėti* ‘hurry’ < *skub^h- (LIV 507, OHG *scioban* ‘move’). There is no evidence for the development *sk’- > *šk- > *šk- word-initially in Lithuanian.

3. *sk- > *sx- (> *x-) in Proto-Slavic; alternatively *sk- > *ks- > *x-.

This development is found in the following examples:

PSl. *xabiti, *xabati ‘get spoiled, tear’ (Russ. *po-xabit’* ‘destroy’, Cz. *o-chabit* ‘get weak’, Croat. *hàbati* ‘tear’, ESSJa 8, 7-8, Skok I, 645 f.) < *skeh₂b^h- ‘spoil’, cf. Lith. *skóbas* ‘sour’, Latv. *skābs* (Smoczyński 565).

PSl. *xladъ ‘rod, stake’ (Russ. CSl. *xladъ*, Pol. *chłed* ‘stalk’, Cz. dial. *chloud* ‘stake, pole’, Croat. Čak. *hlūd* ‘rod’) < *sklond^h- (Lith. *sklañdas*, *sklandà* ‘pale, stick (in a fence)’ (ESSJa 8, 37, Snoj 206).

PSl. *xleǃbъ ‘threshold’ (OCS *xleǃbъ* ‘threshold, waterfall’, Croat. (old) *hleb*, Russ. (old) *xljabъ* ‘deep’, ESSJa 8, 32) < *sklemb^h- (Lith. *sklem̃bti* ‘slip, slide’).

PSl. *xorbrъ ‘brave’ (OCS *xrabъrъ*, Slov. *hráber*, Russ. *xoróbryj*, Pol. *chrobry*, ESSJa 8, 81) < *skorb^h-, cf. *skerb^h- ‘be sharp’ (LIV 504) > Latv. *skarbs*, *šķerbs*, OE *sceorfan*, *scearp*.

PSl. *xorǃpavъ ‘rough, rugged’ (Croat. *hrǃpav*, sln. *hrǃpav*, Cz. dial. *rapavý*, *chrapatý*) < *(s)kor(H)po-, cf. Ukr. *koropávyj* ‘rough, rugged’, Lith. *kárpa* ‘wart, mole’, perhaps from the root *(s)ker(H)- as in *kora, *skora ‘skin, bark’, see below. For the initial *sk- cf. OPol. (1567.) *skropawy*, ULus. *škropawy* ‘rugged’ (ESSJa 8, 82-3).

PSl. *xředěti ‘wither’ (Russ. dial. *xřjadět’* ‘wither, languish’, Cz. *chřadnout*, ESSJa 8, 93-4) < *skrend- (Lith. *skręsti*, preterite *skrendaũ* ‘tear, wear out’, OHG *scrintan* ‘to crack’, Norw. dial. *skrinta* ‘to wrinkle’).

PSl. *xrupěti, *xrupati ‘creak, grunt’ (Russ. *xrupět’*, Cz. *chroupat*, Pol. *chrupać*, Croat. dial. *hrúpati* ‘grunt’) < *skrewp- ‘creak’, cf. Lith. *skriupsėti* ‘creak’, Lith. *skrupsėti* ‘crackle’ (ESSJa 8, 106, Snoj 213).

PSl. *xřbъbъ ‘ridge’ (OCS *xřbъbъ*, Slov. *hr̃bet*, Russ. *xřebét*, Pol. *chrzebiet*, Skok I, 685, ESSJa 8, 107f.) < *skrib^h- ‘to carve’ (Latv. *skrīpāt* ‘scratch, scribble’, Lith. *skriēbti* ‘carve’, Lat. *scrībō*, Oic. *hrifa* ‘scratch’); probably from the same root we have PSl. *xřibъ ‘ridge’ (CSl. *xřibъ*, Russ. *xřip*, Cz. *chřib*, Croat. (old) *hr̃ib* < *skreyb^ho-). This etymology is proposed here for the first time, as far as I am aware. For the semantic development cf. PSl. *grebti ‘scratch’ (Croat. *grēpsti*) and *greby ‘crest, mountain ridge’ (Croat. *grēben*).

PSl. *xvoja ‘needles and branches of a conifer’ (Russ. *xvojá*, *xvója*, Cz. *chvoji*, Pol. *choja*, Croat. *hvòja* ‘sprout, twig’, Croat. dial. *hoja* ‘fir-tree’, Derksen 206, ESSJa 8, 125-6) < *skwoyeh₂ vs. Lith. *skujà* ‘fir-needle and cone’, Latv. *skuja* ‘needle of a fir-tree’ < *skuyeh₂ (OIr. *scé* ‘hawthorn’, EDPC, 339, Smoczyński 568).

PSl. *xъртъ ‘hound’ (Croat. *hřt*, Slov. *hřt*, Russ. *xórt*, Pol. *chart*) < *sker- ‘jump’ (Lith. *kùrti*, *kuriù* ‘run quickly’, Gr. *skairō* ‘jump’); other etymologies rather derive this word from *srto-, Latv. *sārts*, Lith. *sártas* ‘reddish’, which seems less likely to me; PSl. *xъртъ is by virtue of the attested meaning a hound-dog, a dog trained for hunting, so more probably originally a ‘jumper’ than ‘spot’. Equally unconvincing is the comparison with OE *ryðða* ‘large hound’ < PGerm. *hruþian (Shevelov 1964: 135), since the Slavic forms point to *(s)krto-, or *(s)kurto-, not *(s)kruto-.

These examples suffice to show that *sk- is indeed a possible source of PSl. *x-. There are two more reliable examples, in which *x- was subsequently palatalized to *š-, namely PSl. *šibъ and *šigъ (see below).⁶

In the following examples there either exist alternative etymologies, or word-initial *sk- cannot be established independently. However, in all of them the development *sk- > *x- is possible, and, in our opinion, more probable than the other etymologies proposed so far:

PSl. *xobotъ ‘tail’ (Russ. *xóbot*, Cz. *chobot*, Croat. *hòbotnica* ‘octopus’, ESSJa 8, 46-7) < *(s)kob- (Lith. *kabėti* ‘hang’). If the etymology is correct, the PSl. word is derived from the root with s-mobile. Perhaps these words are connected with Skr. *skabhñāti* ‘to consolidate, prop, *skambhá-* ‘prop, pillar’, Lat. *scamnum* ‘stool, bench’ < PIE *ske(m)b^h- ‘support, prop’ (LIV 497; in Balto-Slavic, we would have to assume the change of meaning from ‘support’ to ‘hang’).

PSl. *xormъ ‘hut’ (OCS *xramъ* ‘temple, house’, Slov. *hrâm* ‘temple’, Cz. *chrám* ‘id.’, Russ. dial. *xorómy* ‘large wooden building’, Skok I, 683, ESSJa 8, 74-5) < *skor(H)-mo- LIV 505, Lith. *skirti*, OIr. *scaraid* (Skr. *cárman* ‘skin’, Gr. *keírein* ‘cut’, Lat. *carō* ‘meat’).

PSl. *xridъ ‘cliff, steep rock’ (CSl. *xridъ*, Bulg. *xrid*, Croat. *hríd*, Skok I, 687); ESSJa (8, 97) plausibly derives this word from the root *skreyd- ‘break, cut’, attested in Germanic (Goth. *dis-skreitan*, Germ. dial. *schreissen*); for the

⁶ The comparison between Proto-Slav. *xrakati ‘hawk, cough’ (Russ. *xrákat*, Croat. *hràkati*) and Lat. *scraceō* ‘hawk, cough’ adduced by Rejzek (1998: 236) is very dubious, as the existence of the Latin verb is uncertain. OLD adduces only *screeō* ‘clear one’s throat, cough’ which is a *hapax* in Plautus and thus uncertain (*scraceō* is probably a mistaken reading of this verb).

semantic development cf. Lat. *rumpō* ‘break’ and *rupēs* ‘cliff’. Since this word is only preserved in South Slavic, it is also possible that it is a loanword from some unknown substratum. However, in this case one would expect it to be attested in toponyms in sources earlier than the Slavic settlement of the Balkans, but such toponyms do not seem to exist.

PSl. *xromъ ‘lame’ (ORuss. *xromyj*, Russ. *xromój*, Pol. (old) *chromy*, Croat. *hròm*, Slov. *hròm*) < if from *skromó- ‘cut’ (MHG *schram(me)* ‘a cut, scratch’, ONord. *skráma*, perhaps W *cramen* ‘cicatrix’), cf. ESSJa 8: 102ff. That this word originally had the cluster *sk- is confirmed by Pol. *poskromić* ‘to tame’ (originally ‘to clip a bird’s wings’, cf. Rejzek 1998: 238). A different etymology relates this word to Skr. *srāmá-* ‘lame’, which is also possible, but involves the unclear development of *s- > Slav. *x-, see above (Skok I, 689).

PSl. *xvala ‘praise, thanks’ (Slov. *hvála*, Cz. *chvála*, Russ. *xvalá*, ESSJa 8, 118) < *skwel(H)- (ONord. *skvala* ‘shout’); perhaps from the same root as *xula ‘curse’ (Croat. *húla*, Russ. *xulít*, Cz. *chúlost* ‘shame’). It is also possible that these words are related to the following etymon (the meaning development would have been from ‘to bend’ to ‘to curse’, and then, perhaps, to ‘praise’, though this is, admittedly, difficult).

PSl. *xuliti se ‘bend’ (Slov. *húliti se*, Cz. *choulit se*, Pol. dial. *chulić się*, ESSJa 8, 116) < *skowl- vs. Pol. *kulić się* ‘bend’, Ukr. *kúlytysja* (ESSJa 13: 97-8), perhaps also Croat. Čak. *kujìt se* ‘sneak’ (Borys 2007: 140). Possibly from the same root we have PSl. *xylъ ‘weak, wilted’ (Russ. *xilyj*, Cz. Croat. *hìljav* ‘one-eyed’); for word-initial *s- cf. Croat. *škiljav* ‘blinking, one-eyed’.

PSl. *xvatati (OCS *xvatati*, Russ. *xvatát*, Cz. *chvátati*, Croat. *hvätati* ESSJa 8, 123) < *(s)kweh₂-t- ‘to acquire’, cf. Gr. (Dor.) *pépāmai*, OPr. *quoi* ‘I want’, Lith. *kviēsti*, *kviečiù* ‘to invite, ask’, Lat. *quaerō*, *quaesō* ‘seek, request’, OAlb. *kaa* ‘he has’. This is a rather speculative etymology, driven by the hopelessness of other proposals offered so far for the origin of PSl. *xvatati. We must assume the basic verbal root *kweh₂-, preserved in Greek and Albanian, and various extensions: *-i- in Baltic, *-i- and *-es- in Latin (de Vaan, 503), and *-t- in Slavic; it is possible that the Slavic paradigm is formed as a denominative from the noun (or participle) *kweh₂-to- ‘desire’ (cf. OPr. *quāits* ‘desire’ < *kweh₂-i-to-). The same root is probably also attested in *xъtěti ‘want’ (Croat. *hijěti*), which may have been built on the nasal present stem *(s)kuH-n-t- (for the nasal cf. Pol. *chęć* ‘desire’, which may be deverbal, and for the development of *unt > *ъt cf. PIE *k^wmtom ‘100’ > OCS *svto*). PSl. *xotěti ‘want’ (Russ. *xotét*, etc.) is derived from *xvotěti, cf. Russ. dial. *oxvóta* ‘want, desire’ besides *oxóta* ‘seeking, desire, hunt’.

PSl. *xvostъ ‘tail’ (Croat. (old) *hvošt*, Slov. *hvôst* ‘grape’, Russ. *xvôst*, Cz. *chvošt*, Slovin. *vùost* ‘water plant’, ESSJa 8: 134); with a different ablaut we have Croat. (Čak.) *hũst* ‘cannabis degener, frutex’, *hustôja* ‘dry grape on the vine’ (Borys 2007: 177). I propose to connect this word with PSl. *kystъ ‘twig, branch’ (Bulg. *kistcá*, Croat. *kĩst*, Slovak *kyst’*, Russ. *kist’*, Pol. *kiść*), which is itself related to *kyta ‘branch, bundle of twigs’ (Bulg. *kita*, Slovak *kita* ‘thigh’, Croat. *kĩta* (colloquially also ‘penis’)).

PSl. *xutъ ‘handy, quick’, *xytati ‘move quickly’ (OCS *xytrъ*, Russ. *xĩtryj*, Cz. *chytrý*, Croat. *hĩtar*, *hĩtati*, Pol. *chytać*, Ukr. *hytaty*, ESSJa 8, 162-3); without s-mobile we have Lith. *kutrus* ‘handy, quick’, *kũsti*, *kuntũ* ‘recover’, *kutėti*, *kutũ* ‘thrive, prosper’, perhaps also in Lat. *quatiō* ‘shake, toss, hurry along’ (if from *(s)kuot-, see de Vaan 504). With initial s- we have *skytati (sę) ‘to wander’ (OCS *skytati sę*, Croat. *skĩtati se*, Cz. *skytati* ‘to offer’), cf. also ULus. *skićić* ‘reach’, Croat. (old) *poskisti*, OCz. *skysti* ‘offer’. The initial *s- is also attested in OHG *skutta* ‘make a quick move’ (Germ. *schütten*). In Slavic, *y is due to Balto-Slavic vrddhi, which is not unusual in verbs with intensive meaning. I believe this etymology is preferable to the alternative, relating *xytėti to *xvatati ‘catch’ (Croat. *hvātati*, etc.), which is itself without a reliable etymology (see above).

In two cases we find Slavic *x- corresponding to Lith. *š-*; this is possible – but impossible to prove – if the Slavic forms are derived from the root-forms with s-mobile:

PSl. *xoldъ ‘cold, coldness’ (Slov. *hlâd*, Russ. *xólod* ‘coldness’, Pol. *chlód*, ESSJa 8, 57). Lith. *šáltas* ‘cold’, *šálti* ‘get cold’ (Smoczyński 623-4) < PIE *k^helH- (Lith. *šálti* ‘get cold’, Av. *sarəta-* ‘cold’, Oic. *hēla*); the Slavic form may be from an old compound, with the with s-mobile (*sk^holH-d^ho-?). Since s-mobile is not expected in an adjective, PSl. *xoldъ could also be deverbal, cf. Lith. *šáldinti*, *šáldyti* ‘to freeze, make cold’.

PSl. *xolъ ‘boy, servant’ (Slov. *hlâpec*, OCS *xlapъ*, Russ. *xolóp*, Pol. *chłop*, ESSJa 8, 62-3). The same root is attested in Lith. *šėlpti* ‘help’ (Smoczyński 629), if the Slavic word is not borrowed from Germanic (Eng. *help*, Germ. *helfen*, etc., cf. Germ. dial. (Lower Rhine) *halfa* ‘small landholder’). PSl. *xolъ is derivable from *skolpo- < *sk^holpo- (with s-mobile).

Finally, there is a group of clearly onomatopoeic words exhibiting the alternation of *sk- and *x- within Slavic, mostly without parallels in Baltic or other Indo-European languages, and often poorly attested even in Slavic (Rejzek 1998: 237). Such examples cannot be used to prove anything, but they are nevertheless worth noting. These are:

PSl. *xamъrati ‘whimper’ (Pol. *chamrać*) vs. *skamъrati ‘whimper’ (Pol. *skamrać*, Cz. *škemrat*).

PSl. *xripati ‘cough, speak with a creaky voice’ (Croat. *hrípati*, LLus. *chripaś*, Russ. dial. *xripat* ‘be ill’, ESSJa 8, 97) < *skreyр-; the initial *sk- is preserved in PSl. *skripati ‘creak’ (OCS *skripati*, Pol. *skrzypać*, Russ. *skripát*).

PSl. *xrobotъ ‘rattle, roar’ (Pol. *chrobot*, Ukr. *chrobot*) vs. *skrobotъ ‘roar, rattle’ (OCS *skrobotъ*).

PSl. *xъrčьkъ ‘hamster’ (Croat. *hrčak*, Slovak *chrček*) vs. *skъrčьkъ (Slov. *skřček*, ESSJa 8, 146). This word is probably derived from the same root as PSl. *xъrkati ‘snore, cough’ (Croat. *hrkati*, Pol. *charkać*, Russ. dial. *xórkat*, ESSJa 8, 147-8).

Although not all etymologies are reliable, the examples presented above suffice to prove that there are, indeed, cases where PIE *sk- yielded *x- in Slavic. It is impossible to decide in a principled way whether the development was from *sk- to *sx-, and then to *x-, or whether there was a general metathesis of *s and *k word-initially (*sk- > *ks- > *x-). However, I suppose that the first development is more probable for the following reason: the operation of the RUKI-rule is Balto-Slavic, and, therefore, it presumably preceded the metathesis of word-initial *s and *k, which is found only in Slavic.⁷ Thus, unless RUKI continued to be operational, as a synchronic rule, in Slavic (for which there is no evidence),⁸ we would expect the development *sk- > **ks- > **s-, rather than *sk- > *ks- > *kš- > *x-.

4. *xe- > *še-, *xi- > *ši-, *xъ- > *šъ (first palatalization).

The first palatalization affected initial *x- from any source, including those cases in which *x- developed from *sk-. We see this development in the following examples:

PSl. *šipъkъ, *šipъ ‘thorn’ (Russ. *šip*, OCS *šipъkъ* ‘briar’, Cz. *šipek* ‘briar’, Croat. *šipak* ‘briar’, Slov. *šipek*) < *skeyр- ‘pole, stick’ (Lat. *scīpiō*, Gr. *skīpōn* ‘staff, stick’,⁹ perhaps OHG *scivaro* ‘splinter’, Oic. *skīfa* ‘slice’, Eng. *shiver*, Chambers 998).

⁷ The fact that RUKI also operated in Indo-Iranian makes it probable that it is a dialectal PIE change, operating before the separation of Balto-Slavic from the rest of the Northeast Indo-European dialects.

⁸ The apparent non-operation of RUKI in Lith. *ausis* ‘ear’ vs. OCS *uxo* ‘id.’ does not imply that the rule was phonemicized after the break-up of Proto-Balto-Slavic; rather, RUKI originally operated without exception in Baltic as well as in Slavic, but its operation was partially obliterated by later changes (see Matasović 2006).

⁹ De Vaan (545) thinks that the Latin and the Greek words are isolated, perhaps loanwords from some non-IE source.

PSl. *šigrъ, *širokъ ‘broad’ (Russ. dial. *širój*) < *skey-ro- (Goth. *skeirs* ‘clear’, OHG *schīr* ‘clear’), cf. Russ. *ščiryj* ‘true, open’, Cz. *čiré pole* ‘open field’, which testifies that the original root-form was *skey-.

5. *sk- is re-introduced in some forms by analogy with forms having prefixes.

This development can be observed in the following cases:

PSl. *skočiti ‘jump’ (Russ. *skočit’*, Cz. *skočit*, Slov. *skočiti*, Snj 662) < PIE *skek- ‘jump, move quickly’ (OIr. *scuichid* ‘moves’, OHG *gi-skehah* ‘happen’, LIV 449). This verb is attested with many prefixes (cf. Croat. *pri-skočiti*, *do-skočiti*, *po-skočiti*, *za-skočiti*, etc.), so the analogical development could have been, e.g., from *xočiti: *pri-skočiti to *skočiti: *pri-skočiti.

PSl. *skorda ‘harrow’ (Russ. dial. *skorodá* ‘harrow’), Lith. *skardýti* ‘dig up, crush’, Latv. *skārdīt* ‘pound, crush’, Derksen 452; the Russian word might be a loanword from Baltic. A prefixed form from the same root is found in PSl. *obskъrdъ ‘pointed hammer, axe’ (Russ. *oskórd*, Cz. *oškrť* ‘ron tool for whetting’, Pol. *oskard* ‘pickaxe’, Slov. *oskrd* ‘pointed hammer’). If our explanation is correct, we assume the analogy *sxorda: *obskъrda > *skorda: *obskъrda.

PSl. *skuba, *skubti ‘pluck, pull’ (Slov. *skúbsti*, Croat. *skúpsti*, Russ. dial. *skubstí*, Cz. *škubat*), perhaps related to Lith. *skubėti* ‘hurry’ (Smoczyński 568). The verb is well-attested with prefixes, cf. PSl. *obskubati (se), (Cz. *oskubati*, Pol. *oskubać*, Ukr. *oskubati*, ESSJa 190, *obskubti (se) (CS *oskusti*, Croat. (old) *oskústi*, OPol. *oskuść*, ESSJa 191).

PSl. *skъrbъ ‘sorrow’, *skъrběti ‘be sorry’ (Croat. *skrb*, Russ. *skórb’*, Cz. *skrbný*), Lith. *skuřbė* ‘sorrow’ < *(s)kerb^h- (OIr. *cerb* ‘sharp’, OE *sceorfan* ‘gnaw’, Germ. *scharf* ‘sharp’). The verb is well-attested with prefixes, cf. PSl. *obъskъrbiti (se) (OCS *oskrъbiti*, ORuss. *oskrъbiti*, ESSJa 192).

PSl. *ščelъ (Russ. *ščel’* ‘trough’, Pol. *szczelina*) < *skelH- (Lith. *skėlti*, *skeliù* ‘break in two, split’, ONord. *skilja*, Smoczyński 558-559). The root might also be attested with *x-, cf. Russ. dial. *xolít’* ‘cut (one’s hair) short’), but ESSJa (8, 61) relates this Russian word to a synonymous *xoliti ‘take care of someone’ (Croat. *hóliti*, *òhol*, etc., see above).

PSl. *ščitъ < *skitъ (OCS *ščitъ*, Russ. *ščit*, Croat. *štít*, Pol. *szczyt* ‘top, summit’) < *skeyto- (Lith. *skiētas*, *skietas* ‘reed in a loom, part of a harrow’, Latv. *šķiets*, OIr. *sciath*, Lat. *scūtum*), cf. Derksen 486, Smoczyński 562. The derivatives from the same root are well attested with prefixes, cf. PSl. *obščitъ, *obščita (Russ. dial. *oščíta*, Cz. *oščíta*, ESSJa 30, 154), *obščititi (ORuss. *oščítiti*, Slov. *oščítiti*, ESSJa 30, 155).

6. *sk- was also re-introduced in forms where words with *k- (without s-mobile) co-existed.

This development can be observed, e.g., in *sxora: *kora ‘bark, skin’ > *skora : *kora (Cz. dial. *skora*, Pol. *skóra* ‘skin’, vs. Croat. *kōra*), *kopiti: *skopiti ‘castrate’ (OCS *skopiti*, Russ. *skopít’*, Cz. *skopít*) < *skeh₂p- ‘cut’ (Lat. *cāpō*, Alb. *kep*); perhaps from the same root we have *skapъ ‘dear, expensive’ (Croat. *skúp*, Russ. *skupój*, Cz. *skoupý*), with the nasal from the present stem of the verb (Snoj, 662). Furthermore PSI. *kovyкъ : *skovyкъ ‘owl’ (Slov. *skovik*, Serb. *kovikuša*, Russ. *skovyтát’*, Cz. *skuvikat*, etc.) (cf. also Croat. *skvičati* : *cvičati*), *(s)četina ‘rough hair’ (Slov. *šetina*, Russ. *šetina*, Cz. *štětina* vs. Croat. *četina*, Pol. *szczegól’* ‘particular’, Serb. CS *scěglъ* ‘only’, Cz. *štíhly* ‘thin’ vs. Croat. *cìgli* ‘only’), PSI. *ščene ‘young dog, pup’ (Russ. *ščénók*, Cz. *štěně*, Pol. *szczenie*, Slov. *ščeně*) < *(s)keno- (Gr. *kainós*, ‘new’, OIr. *cano* ‘pup’), by analogy with *ken- in OCS *po-četi* ‘begin’, *čedo* ‘child’, etc.?, cf. Derksen 486).

PSI. *skorъ ‘quick’ (CSl. *skorъ*, Russ. *skóryj*, Cz. *skoro* ‘almost’, Slov. *skōraj* ‘almost’, Croat. *skōro* ‘almost’, Snój 663) appears quite isolated in Slavic (it is not attested with many prefixes). The etymology of this Slavic word is not quite clear, but it may be related to MHG *scērn* ‘hurry’, MLG *scheren* ‘run’ (Snoj, 663). If so, we may be dealing with the PIE root *(s)ker- ‘jump’ (Gr. *skairō* ‘jump, dance’, W *cerddaf* ‘walk’, LIV 502), and the reflex *sk- may be due to the influence of the forms without s-mobile (unfortunately, there is no evidence for such forms in Slavic).

PSI. *skropiti ‘sprinkle, drop’ (Slov. *škropiti*, Croat. *škròpiti*, *skropiti*, Pol. *skropić*, Bezlaj IV, 75) is certainly derived from the same root as PSI. *kropiti ‘sprinkle’ (Slov. *kropiti*, Russ. *kropít’*, Cz. *kropit*), from the root *(s)krep- (Lith. *skreplėnti* ‘cough intensively’, Latv. *krepēt* ‘spit’). A trace of the form with initial *x- is preserved in LLus. *chropis* ‘dripple, make wet’. Apparently, word-initial *sk- was re-introduced in most Slavic dialects, with just a few residual forms like the the adduced Lower Sorbian form and, perhaps, the reflexes of PSI. *xropotъ ‘creaking sound’ (ESSJa 8, 103), Croat. *hropot*, OCz. *chropot*, Slov. *hròpsti* ‘creak’, Croat. *hròpiti*, *hròptati* ‘breathe heavily’ (Skok I, 682), etc. (if they are from the same root).

An interesting case is presented by *skvozě ‘through’ (Russ. *skvoz’*, OCS *skvozě*, Slov. *skôzi*, Croat. (old) *skvozje*). This word is interpreted as a Loc. sg. of the noun *skvoga ‘hole (for watching, spying)’, from the root *(s)kewH- ‘watch’ (Snoj, 663), cf. Lat. *caveō* ‘take care, beware’, Croat. *čūti* ‘hear’, Skr. *kaví-* ‘poet, wise man’, Gr. *koéō* ‘perceive’, OHG *scouwōn* ‘to watch’.

Discussion

The evidence presented above shows that a good case can be made for the development *sk- > *x- in Slavic; however, in many cases we also find *sk- preserved. We tried to account for this by claiming that word-initial *sk- was re-introduced from prefixed words where it was not in the initial position, but it could also be claimed that the word-initial alternation between *sk- and *x- is random, and that it is just a consequence of irregular metathesis (*sk- > *ks- > x-). Is there a principled way to decide between these two alternatives?

In order to test the presented hypothesis, we state the following empirically testable prediction: *x- (from *sk-) will be attested chiefly in isolated words that do not enter into productive derivatives (with prefixes). The alternative to this proposal should be that *sk- irregularly alternated with *ks- > *x-, but in this case we would expect PSI. *x- equally in isolated words and in words entering productive word formation (with prefixes). As far as we are able to test it, our prediction is borne out by the evidence: derivationally isolated roots in our sample generally have word-initial *x-, while those roots that are well attested with prefixes either have *sk-, or alternate between *sk- and *x-. Thus, we find no prefixal derivatives formed from *xърътъ, *xvostъ, *xvoja, *xridъ, *xгъбътъ, *xobotъ and *šipъ, but there are plenty of derivatives of words such as *skočiti, *skъrběti, *ščiti, and *skubti (see above for examples). On the other hand, the converse does not hold: although derivationally isolated words in our sample generally have *x- rather than *sk-, there are several examples of roots with *x- (and *š-) having prefixes, e.g. we have *obxoldati (sę) (ESSJa 27, 76), *obxytiti (sę) (ESSJa 27, 92), *obšibati (sę) (ESSJa 30: 132), *obširiti (sę) (ESSJa 30: 135), *naxolditi sę (ESSJa 22: 87), *naxylyti sę (ESSJa 22: 92), etc. This is only to be expected, since prefixation continued to be a productive derivational process after one of the original alternants (*x- or *sk-) had been generalized in Proto-Slavic.

Conclusion

In this paper, we have presented a number of sound etymologies showing that *sk- was reflected as *x- in Proto-Slavic. Since we also find instances with Proto-Slavic initial *sk-, it is clear that both reflexes cannot be regular. If we take into account the fact that word-medially only PSI. *-sk- occurs, this points to the conclusion that PIE *sk- yielded PSI. *x- regularly, but that *sk- was sometimes re-introduced on the analogy with prefixed forms and instances where forms with and without s-mobile co-existed in Slavic. This conclusion is in

accordance with the fact that *x- < *sk- is far more common in derivationally isolated words that do not occur with prefixes.

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Praindoeuropsko *sk- u slavenskome

Sažetak

U ovom se radu razmatra odraz indoeuropske suglasničke skupine *sk- na početku riječi u praslavenskome. Opsežna analiza relevantnih primjera pokazuje da je pravilan odraz te skupine praslavenskom *x-, no da je *sk- u velikom broju slučajeva analoški obnovljeno pod utjecajem oblika s prefiksima i primjera kod kojih su oblici sa i bez tzv. „s-mobile“ supostojali u praslavenskome. Taj je zaključak u skladu s činjenicom da je odraz *x- < *sk- znatno češći u tvorbeno izoliranim riječima koje nemaju prefiksā.

Ključne riječi: suglasničke skupine, praslavenski, povijesna fonologija, indoeuropski, s-mobile

Key words: consonant clusters, Proto-Slavic, historical phonology, Indo-European, s-mobile