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Ossetic Etymologies

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Ossetic etymologies

It has long been recognized that Ossetic, a modern East Iranian language spoken in the Northern Caucasus, has preserved many archaic traits. Particularly in the vocabulary there are numerous forms of Indo-Iranian origin and also early borrowings that attest to ancient contacts between the ancestors of the Ossetians and several European tribes. In some instances Ossetic has even preserved ancient forms that have been lost in other Iranian languages. A good example is *ærwæz* 'herd of deer', cognate with Sanskrit *vrajá*- 'enclosure, stall', from **uraza-*, which has left no apparent traces in Iranian. In his great Russian written *Historical-etymological Dictionary of the Ossetic Language* the late Ossetian scholar Vasilij Ivanovič Abaev has collected a vast range of etymologies that it is only fit to say that the completion of this *opus magnum* is indeed an "occasion for joy and gratitude!", as commented on by Mayrhofer in *Die Sprache* (1989-1990 (34): 435). On the other hand, the *Dictionary* is not without flaws, which can only be expected for such a huge work spanning over several decades. Many reconstructions and etymologies need to be revised or even rejected in light of recent findings and discoveries. This article addresses a handful of these etymologies. For easy reference, not only the volume and page are indicated, but also the format of the entry and the Russian meaning(s) given by Abaev are followed throughout. The corresponding English translation of the Russian meaning(s) is given in square brackets. The Iron and corresponding Digoron forms are separated by | or /, whereas the present and corresponding past stem are separated by : .

(Abaev I: 92-93)

axsyn: *axst* | *axæssun:* *axæsst* 'ловить', 'захватывать', 'занимать', 'арестовывать' ['to catch; to conquer, occupy; to arrest']

The verb *axsyn* / *axsun* is a common verb in Ossetic, with a well-defined meaning. For instance, I. *bæxgæsmæ ærc-axsta wy bæxtæn se'gasæj x_oyzdær* 'at the horsekeeper's he caught from all those horses the best' (Munkácsi: 20), D. *axæssuncæ tæxgæ c'ew* 'they catch the bird in flight.' (Besati: 60). A nominal derivative is also attested: *axsæn* 'trap, snare'. As for the origin, the reconstruction (and accompanying etymology) that has been suggested by Abaev, **ā-hag-s-> *ā-haxš-> āxæss-> axs-*, cf. Av. *haz-*, Skt. *sah-* 'to conquer, overcome', is phonologically impossible. The highly unusual loss of -æ- in the I. forms has not been explained: merely citing similar examples, viz. *nyxæsyn* : *nyxæst* / *nixæssun* : *nixæst* vs *nyxsyn* : *nyxst* / *næxsun* : *næxst* 'to be attached, glued, stuck', D. *ræxæssun* : *ræxæst* vs *ræxsyn* : *ræxsad* / *ræxsun* : *ræxsad* 'to stitch, sew, tack', is far from satisfactory. In fact, looking at these Oss. forms it rather suggests some kind of paradigmatic levelling that must have taken place in I. and D. in different ways. They may ultimately derive from POss. **axæssun* : *axst* or **axssun* : *axæst*.

Since we do have the old, independently used past participle *axæst* 'prisoner, arrested', the original paradigm may have been **axssun* : *axæst*. Another peculiar feature is the double consonant -ss-, which Abaev has left unmentioned. Normally such a gemination is the result of assimilation of a consonant **s_i* or **š_i*.

(also, in Iron, -ns-, -rs-sim.). A different etymology is preferable. The Oss. forms are perhaps connected to the 'imprison' forms: **ā-kāš-ja-*, CSogd. *ptqyš-* 'to imprison, confine', Chor. *P'rk'sY-* 'to imprison' (YAv. *kāš-* 'to hold, grasp?'). The double consonant -ss- would then be the result of assimilation of **i-* to the preceding sibilant. The loss of -æ- in the (trisyllabic) form **axssun* is due to syncope, cf. Cheung 2002: 75 ff. The fricativisation of the velar is not without parallel, being attested in *xæssyn/xærsun*, *xæssun* 'to last, be kept' as well (< POss. **xærss-* < Plr. **k(a)ršja-*), which possibly reflects a fricative assimilation.

Alternatively, it could have appeared “automatically” in front of another consonant (which would have occurred after syncope), thus recalling the PIr. development $*k > *x / -C$.

(Abaev I: 93)

²*laxsyn* : *axst* I. ‘створаживать,-ся’, ‘свертываться’ (про молоко), ‘запекаться’ (про кровь) [‘to curdle’, ‘to clot’ (of milk, blood)]

This I. verb is usually connected with curds making: I. *Kæsy, æmæ iw ran iw us cyxt axsy* ‘He sees that at a place a woman is curdling milk’ (NK: 219).¹ According to Abaev, this verb is identical to *laxsyn* ‘to catch’ (see above), the meaning would be a specialisation of *laxsyn*: ‘to get the curds out of the milky whey’ (“вылавливать творог из молочной сыворотки”). Although the explanation is theoretically possible, it sounds rather contrived with no convincing parallels elsewhere. One is more inclined to look for a new etymology. Since *axsyn* is primarily employed in connection with dairy, it is perhaps worth considering Skt. *sac* ‘to cease to flow, dry out’ as a possible cognate. Mayrhofer *EWAia* II: 687 f. cites several Ir. connections, which are all nominal: YAv. *araska* ‘making run dry’, MSogd. *škw-* ‘dry’, Khot. *škala* ‘dry places’. The Skt. forms often refer to the production of milk (or rather, the lack of it). Examples are RV 1.117.20 *ádhenum dasrā staryām viṣ aktām ápinvatam śayáve aśvinā gām* ‘for Śayu your masters the Aśvins the cow, which did not give milk, barren, dried. 8.51.7 *kadā canā starīr asi néndra saścasi dāśúṣe* ‘never are you a barren cow, oh Indra, never do you dry up for the faithful one’, Bhāraṇi, *Kirāt*. 4.31 ... *asaktam ūdhām si payaḥ kṣaranti* ‘without drying up the udders drip milk’ (cited from Thieme 1994: 327). The Oss. form would go back to an inchoative formation $*ā-hax-sa$ -or $*ā-sx-sa$ -(with dissimilation of the first $*-s-$) ‘to cease to flow, *tarir*, *stocken*’.

(Abaev I: 557)

ivyn : *ivd* I (*æjj*(*evun* : *æjj*)*ivd* ‘менять’, ‘меняться’, ‘линять’ [‘to (ex)change; to fade away (of colour)’]

1- Unfortunately, I have not found an example with blood. Neither Abaev nor Miller (*ORNS*) has given any instances of *axsyn* involving blood. The usage with blood is secondary? Abaev also cited a Digoron passage *tog nixxæstæj* ‘the blood clotted, stuck together (*SOPam*. II: 20), but this form is probably unconnected.

The verbal forms are well-attested, which include several nominal derivatives: *ivæg/æjjevæg* 'exchanging, fading; translator, money exchanger', *ivæn/(æj)jevæn* 'change(able), fading', *ivccag/æjjevccag* '(object of) exchange, exchanging; instead'.

Examples are I. *k̆ ȳrcydi ardæm, k̆ raivta mæ qamatæ* 'Who came here, who switched my dagger' (Munkácsi: 114), *k̆yd iw ȳræm goræty? -mard ægasæj k̆ ivy?* 'How shall we say in the town? -Who exchanges dead for living?' (Munkácsi: 152). A peculiar feature is the appearance of initial *æjj°* in the Digoron verb. This *æjj°* cannot be explained as secondary. On the contrary, the absence in I. *ivyn* and also in Dig. *evun* (the synonymous variant of *æjjevun*) is most likely a recent development. The simplex forms could easily have been abstracted from the prefixed formations such as *a-ivyn/ra-j(j)evun* 'to change, transfer', *ba-ivyn/ba-jjevun* 'to replace, repay, move places', in which *æ°* could disappear through elision or contraction with the preceding vowel. Although Abaev stated that the origin is unclear, he did suggest a possible etymology, *ivyn/evun* might be from **uaipa*-(Skt.*vep*- 'to shake, tremble, excite', Av.*vaēp*- 'to engage in pederasty'). This is formally possible, but semantically implausible. In fact there may be an Ir. etymology at hand, which was cited by Bailey, DKS: 310: *ivyn/(æjj) evun* can be connected to Khot. *byūh*- 'to change; translate' and CSogd. *pcywfs*- 'to be changed; to translate'.¹ Bailey assumed an umlaut to explain the vocalism: *-āui->-ē-*. This kind of umlaut is unknown in Ossetic, nor would the vocalism *-y/-i-* in the past stem be explained. The Oss. forms rather go back to originally **abi-iaupa*-that has been subjected to the following, attested sound changes. An early development **i̇u > *i̇i*² in the past stem may have affected the ablaut series: **aβi-iaupβ-*: **aβi-i̇iβd-*. The zero grade past stem **-i̇i-* would then have caused a quality change of the full grade of the present stem (paradigmatic levelling): **-au-> *ai-*. The other profound development is the dissimilation of labials, **aβi-iaipβ-> *aii-iaipβ-*. This dissimilation has parallels in Ossetic, e.g. *ivajyn/ivajun* 'to

1- Further cognates are uncertain, cf. Cheung 2007: 218, s.v. **iaup*. Bailey also refers to Skt. *yop* 'to confuse', which is semantically implausible. His IE etymology can be discarded on morphological grounds.

2- As in *mix / mex* 'stake, pole' < **maṭuxa, wænyg / iwonyg* 'young bull' < **iuyan°*, Cheung 2002: 75, 90f.

pale' < **ui-bā-ia*-(Cheung 2002: 93), but the most precise parallel is *æjjafyn* /*æjjafun* 'to reach, attain', which almost certainly reflects the **abi*-formation of **Hap*- 'to reach, attain' (well attested in Ir., e.g. YAv. *auui ap-*, Khot. *byev-*, MP *ayāftan*, NP *yāftan*). Subsequently, the segment *ii-i* of **aii-iaif*-would no doubt have been simplified further (or **-i*-could have been syncopated, Cheung, l.c.: 77ff.). According to Gershevitch *apud* Emmerick, SGS: 106 Khot. *byūh-* derives from **ui-iauf-ia-*, but **abi-iauf-ia-*, reconstructed by Bailey, l.c., is certainly conceivable though. The latter preform is preferable as it would tie in nicely with the Ossetic formation.

(Abaev III: 22-23)

sajnæg (D.) встречается только в сочетании *sajnæg st'alu* 'сияющая (?) звезда' [is encountered only in the expression *sajnæg st'alu* 'shining (?) star']

Sajnæg is attested in two stories, although Abaev cited in this short entry only the passage from the Nartic episode dedicated to *Æxsæ-Budaj*, which was narrated by Kertibij in 1903 (collected in *SOPam*. II: 58f.). *Æxsæ-Budaj*, the son of *Nokar*, was a fearful and invincible ruffian, who made plans to attack the Narts. Being in the lands of the Narts, he made life unbearable for the Narts by endlessly slaughtering the cows and molesting the womenfolk. It is for this reason that *Satana*, who is respectfully referred to as *Æxsijnæ* ('Mistress'), resorted to a trick. In the relevant passage we read (adapted according to the current romanized transliteration):

Æxsijnæ eci boni ærajsta Oræzmægi furti Ajsanaj; gædin sag in iskodta, rale ʒgæ kud adtajdæ, otæ; nikki ba ma jin Æxsijnæ æ ew farsi xodgæ (cogæ) xor, je 'nnæ farsi ba cogæ mæjroxs iskodta, æ wonti astæw ba – sajnæg æst'alu 'ma 'j wotemæj rarvista Wærppi bunmæ;

A literal English translation may run as follows: 'That day, *Satana* took *Ajsana*, the son of *Oræzmæg*; she made a wooden deer, running as if it were alive, moreover, *Satana* made on one side a smiling (moving) sun, but on the other side she made a running moon beam, between the shoulder blades a *sajnæg* star, and, from there, she sent it to the foot(hill) of the *Elbrus*'. The deer served as the bait by which *Ajsana* seduced the wife of *Æxsæ-Budaj* into revealing the only way of killing *Æxsæ-Budaj*.

The other story in which *sajnæg st'alu* is attested was also narrated by Kertibij (*SOPam. II: 16ff.*). It is a tale of the Nartic hero Soslan and the son of Totraz, Alibeg. In this passage (p. 18), Alibeg's farm labourer returned to Urunduk, the mother of Alibeg, without mules and a message from Soslan. Soslan had just killed her son Alibeg and confiscated the mules. The labourer had to pass on the message that it was Alibeg who had killed Soslan and that the pack animals were under his son's care. Urunduk now asked the farmer to describe him.

Je ba in zaġta: «Wontæbærzond, særgubur, k'uppætærnix, xaradzast, æ ew wonæbæl kiwnugfinst, e 'nnebæl -dziwaræ; æ wonti astæw sajnæg æst'alu, urux qæstæ læg, mink'ij bor alasabæl badtæj»

'And he said to her: "With high shoulder-blades, sloping head, protruding forehead, penetrating look, on one shoulder-blade of him a written book, on the other a cross [i.e. broad-shouldered], between his shoulder-blades a *sajnæg* star, a wide-bellied man, he sat on a small yellow gelding'. Only then did Urunduk realise that her son Alibeg was killed by Soslan, since the description was that of Soslan himself.

Both stories have now been republished by Kibirov -Skodtaev 2005: 86-88, 202-203. The Russian translation given in the second part of *SOPam. II: 14, 54* for *sajnæg st'alu* is 'черную звезду' (= 'black star'). This meaning has thus entered the standard Ossetic-Russian dictionaries, although with the marking фолькл (i.e. in *folklore*). Since Satana made two *shining* celestial objects on the flanks of the deer, also the third one, the star, would have, logically speaking, given light or, at least, be shiny. It is for this reason apparently that Abaev suggested the meaning 'shining' ('сияющую') for *sajnæg*, connecting it to Skt. *chāyā*-(f.) 'shadow', Av. *asāya*-, Sogd. *sy'k*, NP *sāya*, Bal. *saig* 'id.'. This has been adopted in the Russian translation of *Narty*. However, the connection is problematic. Abaev was apparently in the belief that 'shadow' and 'shine' in IE are etymologically related, which is far from evident, cf. Mayrhofer (*EWAia I: 559-560*): "Das 'Etymon' des Wortes [i.e. *chāyā*-] für 'Schatten', die Zuordnung von **skēH* (...), bleibt offen; eine Verbindung von 'Schatten' mit 'leuchten, schimmern' (nhd. *scheinen* usw.) ist nicht zwingend", on which see also below, fn. 2. Anyhow, within Indo-Iranian there is no evidence for a semantic shift from 'shadow' to 'shine'.

In the second tale the appearance of Soslan is also quite distinctive. It is possible that the "star" between his shoulder-blades is a kind of (shining) amulet, but in view of the context and also of the previous tale, this is perhaps less obvious: it must be something that is instantly recognizable and part of the body as well. It would suggest a blaze or whiteish birth mark in the shape of a star. *Sajnæg* would just refer to the fact that this "star" is not genuine, i.e. *fake, deceptive, pseudo-*. The formation now appears as a nominal derivative of the verb *sajyn* (see below).¹ No doubt, *sajnæg st'alu* is symbolic and stands for the trickery of Satana and Soslan respectively.

(Abaev III: 23-25)

sajyn : sajd / sajun : sajd 1. 'обманывать', 'нарушать слово' ...; 2. 'помутить рассудок' (о действии нечистой силы); 3. 'влечь', 'увлекать', 'отвлекать', 'завлекать', 'заманивать', 'приманивать' [1. 'to deceive, to break one's word', 2. 'to confuse one's mind' (by an evil force); 3. 'to draw', 'to carry away', 'to distract', 'to entice', 'to lure away', 'to allure']

This verb is attested with the following preverbs as cited in *ORNS* II: 1031:

a-sajyn 'обмануть, заманить обманом, отвлечь, повлечь' / 'verlocken, verleiten, ablenken' ['to deceive, tempt, distract'];

ærba-sajyn 'приманить, заманить, обманить' / 'anlocken, betrügen' ['to lure to, deceive'];

ba-sajyn 'обмануть, заманить' / 'betrügen, verlocken' ['to deceive, entice'];

ra-sajyn 'выманить, сманить' / 'ablocken, weglocken, betrügen' ['to lure away, entice'];

1- It is probably identical to the name *Sajnæg*, a character found in the epic of the Narts. *Sajnæg Ældar* ('Lord Sajnæg') frequently appears as foe of the Narts, notably of the heroes Soslan, Xæmyc and Batraz. Similar to Loki in Nordic mythology, he is known for the dubious role he plays in the recurrent family feuds of the Narts, as he easily switches from one side to another. Abaev suggested a Mongolian origin for *Sajnæg-Ældar*, being connected to *Sain-Xan*, the honorific title of the (in)famous khan Batu (killed in 1255). According to Abaev III: 21f., the ambivalent role of *Sajnæg-Ældar* is comparable to the role played by the Golden Horde in internal political affairs of the conquered subjects, since the Mongols often applied the tactic of *divide et impera*.

s-sajyn 'сманить' / 'verlocken, verleiten, abspenstig machen' ['to entice, lure away'];

fæ-sajyn 'обмануть' / 'betrügen' ['to deceive'];

From *sajyn* several nominal formations are derived:

sajag / sajagæ 'обманщик' / 'geschickter Betrüger' ['deceiver'];

sajæg 'обманывающий, лукавый' / 'betrügerisch, tückisch, listig, verschlagen' ['deceitful, treacherous, cunning, sly'];

sajægoj 'обманщик, черт' / 'Betrüger, Teufel' ['deceiver, devil'];

sajinag / sajujnag 'которого следует, можно обмануть провести, кто должен, обмануть' / 'der betrogen werden muss, kann, der betrügen muss' [who can/must be deceived, who must deceive];

sajæg, Sajæg Ældar (see above).

According to Abaev, *sajyn* goes back to **sāia-*, Av. *a-saiia-* 'shadowless', MP *sāyāg*, Skt. *chāyā-* 'shadow', etc.¹ This would account for the meaning 'to deceive, confuse', cf. Russ. *морочить* 'to cheat' ~ *морoka* 'darkness', Dutch *verduisteren* 'to darken'; to embezzle (money)', but not the other meanings. Semantically, it is more likely that the meaning 'to deceive' develops from 'to draw, carry away, etc.', rather than the other way round. In certain situations a physical movement is still detectable, e.g. in *syvællony dwarmæ asaj* 'lure the child to the door' (*Seka*: 12), *talyng k'æymæ jæ basajdta* 'he lured him to a dark corner' (*Nafi*: 189). It is much more natural to assume the following semantic development 'to draw (away), lure' > 'to confuse' > 'to deceive'. An additional difficulty which does not favour the etymology of Abaev is that the assumed literal meaning of 'to darken' is simply not attested. The etymology which best accounts for the meanings *sajyn* is actually quite straightforward: *sajyn* may rather be connected to Av. *√sri-*, pres. *srinao-*, caus. *srāraia-* (with secondary *-r-*) 'to lean, assign to', *sraiaana-* 'being leaned to', OP impf. 1sg. *niy-a-čārayam* 'I rebuilt, restored', Chor. *bs'rj-* 'to decline',

1-Abaev also cited the IE connections: OCS *sijati*, Goth. *skeinan*, German *scheinen* 'to shine', next to Toch. B *skiyo*, Alb. *hije*, Gr. *skiá* 'shadow'. It is doubtful whether the IE forms for 'to shine' are related to the forms for 'shadow'. It is telling that the meaning of the IE reflexes are sharply defined: there is no overlapping in the meanings for 'shadow' and 'to shine'.

Skt. *śray-* 'to lean; attain; resort to; direct to', etc.¹ The meaning 'to lean over, direct' can easily develop to 'to divert, etc', as found in German *ablenken* 'to divert', *lenken* 'to steer, direct, navigate; to manipulate'.

(Abaev II: 40-41)

¹*satæg* 'тень', 'прохлада', 'тенистый', 'прохладный' ['shadow', 'coolness', 'shady', 'cool']

The form *satæg* has several meanings. It means 'shadow, shady' in the phrase with *ran* 'place', cf. Xariton (*Kadæg*: 16) *iw sæ bæxtý satæg rany bæxbæddæntyl rævz abasta* 'he quickly tethered one of his horses to the hobbles in a shady place' (*MD* 1956: 44). *Satæg* in the expression *satæg saw* 'pitch-black' is apparently emphatic, which is also found in D. *satæg ors* 'dazzling white'. More often, it has rather the meaning of 'cool(ness)', e.g. D. *nuri wængæ ægiriddær næ fæwwidton wæxæn kast: xoræj roxsdær, arvæj irddær, særddon satæg, zujmon xor* 'until now I have never seen such a view: more radiant than the sun, clearer than the sky, ... (much like) a summer cold, a winter sun'. This is even more explicit in compounded verbs with *kæny* / *kænun* 'to do, make' or *wyn* / *un* 'to be': *satægý kæny* / *satægý kænun* 'to freshen up [transitive], cool off', *satægý wyn* / *satægý un* 'to freshen up [intransitive], be cooled off'.

Abaev derived *satæg* from Ir. **sāθaka-* or **sātaka-*, IE **skótoko-*, for which he cited the well-known IE correspondences of 'shadow, darkness', i.e. Goth. *skadus*, OHG *scato*, OIrish *scáth* 'shadow', Gr. *skótos* 'darkness'. The etymology is fraught with problems though. In the first place, the reconstructed formation is not supported by Indo-Iranian cognates, nor can it scarcely be the result of an internal Ossetic derivation.

As to the meaning, although it is conceivable that 'cool(ness)' has developed secondarily from 'shadow, shady', the shift is not convincing (a parallel in other languages is difficult to find). In fact, the meaning 'shadow, shady' is far less well attested than 'cool(ness)': the meaning 'shadow, shady' is arguably found in one instance only,

1-The implication is that the insertion of an additional *-r-*, which is found in Av., OP and Chor. (see Samadi l.c.: 25) should be considered as a *common* Iranian development, rather than a Plr. one.

viz. in combination with *ran* / *rawæn*.¹ In constructions with *kæryn* / *kænun* 'to do, make' or *wyn* / *un* 'to be' the meaning is fully absent. This all suggests that 'cool(ness)' is the original meaning. A better etymology that would take this into account seems to me if *sataæg* would derive from the root $\sqrt{*sjaH}$ - 'to freeze, coagulate' (=Skt. $\sqrt{śyā}$ -). *Sataæg* can be analysed as the abstract θHa -derivative of the causative-present stem $*sja\bar{a}(ja)$ -: $*sjaH-\theta Ha$ -, to which the common suffix **-ka*- has been added.

The expression with *ran* should have originally meant 'the place to cool down', denoting a place covered, in the *shadow*. The passages in which the expression is found concern shelter of domestic animals point to this semantic development.

Abaev does not mention yet another meaning of *sataæg* is 'clear, transparent', as given in *ORNS* II: 1042 (... чисты, прозрачный, ... 'rein, durchsichtig') and attested in *a-sataæg kæryn* and in the derivative *sataëgad* 'coolness, transparency' (*IWD*: 259b). This meaning is either from **ice-like* or it may presuppose a different origin, cf. Sogd. (')*sy*- 'to show (oneself), appear'.

(Abaev III: 120)

sk'awyn : **sk'awd** / (**æ**)**skawun** : (**æ**)**sk'awd** 'щипать, чесать (например, лен)' ['to pinch, to comb (e.g. flax)'] < **us-kāua*-.

The verb appears to be a mere variant of

sqawyn: **sqawd** / (**æ**)**sqawun** : (**æ**)**sqawd** 'ковырять', 'щерать', 'теребить', 'протира́ть (глаза)' ['to pick; to chip (off); to pluck; to rub (eye)'] (Abaev III: 140)

The appearance of ejective *k'* or even uvular *q* after *s* representing older *k* is generally attributed to Caucasian substrate influence and can be found in other inherited forms as well, e.g. D. *æsk'ærnæg* 'sparkle' (**skaran(a)-ka*-, YAv. *garəmə.skarana*- 'fire utensil (?)'), *lysk'* / *lisk'æ* 'nits' (**riškā*-, NP *rišk*, Skt. *likṣā*-(f.) 'nit'), D. *nik'æd* 'carve, cut' (**ni-kata*-, YAv. *nī-kan*- 'to dig in'), *wæxsk* / *usqæ*, *wæsqæ* 'shoulder' (**uaxšaka*-, Skt. *vākṣas*- 'chest, breast'). The slight

1- From the expression with *saw* we need not to infer the meaning 'shady, shadow'. Although Abaev considers the occurrence with Dig. *ors* 'white' being analogically coined after *sataæg saw*, the reverse direction of analogy is also possible, on which see further.

semantic and formal divergence between *sk'awyn* and *sqawyn* has probably developed from some kind of expressive use, cf. *quash* vs. *squash* or Middle English *scrat* and *cratch* 'scratch'.

From *sk'awyn* the prefixed form *ask'awyn* 'to pluck out; to gorge' (= 'расщипать, пожрать, проглотить') is derived (ORNS II: 1103). For *sqawyn* we can mention the prefixed forms (ORNS II: 1081) *asqawyn* 'to splinter' (= 'расщеплять'), *basqawyn* 'to pick, clean (teeth)' (= 'выкорыять, счистить (зубы)') and *fesqawyn* (< *fæ-æskawyn*) 'id.'.

While denying a connection with *sk'oŷyn* (q.v.) on formal grounds¹, Abaev proposed to derive *sk'awyn* from $\sqrt{*(s)k\bar{a}p-}$, which is phonologically implausible though. A presumed Oss. development *w* < **p* for which Abaev cited a few so-called "fully reliable" cases² cannot be upheld. The examples *cæw* 'he-goat' and *c'iw* / *c'ew* 'young bird, chick' are affectionate or onomatopoetic formations, while *xawyn* / *xawun* 'to fall' presupposes **xāya-*.³ A different etymology can be reached if we consider the initial (*æ*)*s-* not part of the root, but rather the reflex of preverb **us-*. We now obtain the root **kāya-*. The root is supported by several hitherto unconnected Eastern Iranian cognates:

-Chor. *k'w-* 'to scratch, rub(of skin, wound)' (< **kāya-* with query, Samadi 1986: 99), *prk'w-* 'to curry, groom (horse)' (< **pari-kāyaia-*, Samadi 1986: 153)

-Sh. *čāw-t*, R. *čēw-t*, B. *čēwd* : *čūd*, Sq. *čew-* : *čid*, Yzgh. *k'aw-d* : *kāw-* 'to comb, scratch', Ishk. *kow-* 'to pick, cleanse' (< **kāyaia-* with query, EVS: 28b).

It remains uncertain whether NP *kāftan*, *kāvīdan* 'to dig, break' belong here.

1- According to Abaev, we should rather expect zero grade for the past participle *†sk'oŷd* / *sk'ud*, which is not compelling though. The ablaut pattern *-aw-* : *-(o)y* / *-u-* is unproductive, as it is restricted to approximately eight cases. A shift to another, more productive ablaut pattern (i.e. *-a-* / *-a-*) may therefore easily explain *sk'awd*, cf. *dawyn* : *dawd* / *dawun* : *dawd* 'to smooth, pat' (**dāya-* : **duta-* 'to run'), *fawyn* : *fawd* / *fawun* : *fawd* 'to vilify' (**pāya-* : **puHa-* 'to stink').

2- "...относится это слово к тем немногим, но вполне надежным случаям...".

3- Bielmeier (1979: 249-250) suggested a reconstruction **kāb-*. The postulated development **b-* > **β-* > *-w-* was attributed to Khotan-Sakan "dialectal" influence, i.e. borrowing from Khotan-Sakan.

(Abaev III: 126)

sk'oyjyn: **sk'oyd/(æ)sk'ujun:** (**æsk'ud**) 1. 'рваться', 'разрываться', 'лопаться', 'трескаться'; 2. 'обрываться', 'переводиться', 'оскудевать', 'сгинуть', 'вымирать' [1. 'to break, burst, crack'; 2. 'to be torn off; to be transferred', 'to grow scarce; to vanish; to die out']

This verb is the passive-intransitive correspondence of **sk'oyjyn:** **sk'oyd / (æ)sk'unun:** (**æ)sk'ud** 'to tear, break' (Abaev III: 127), which is the exact correspondence of Skt. $\sqrt{\text{skav-}}$, pres. *skunóti* 'picks, tears', pass. ptc. *skūyāmāna-* 'aufgeschürt werdend' (despite the slight reservation made by Mayrhofer, *EWAia* II:751).

Apart from three RV passages (1.33.3c, 6.47.16d, 8.6.41c), we find the most striking passage in which the verb $\sqrt{\text{skav-}}$ is used in the Atharva-Veda:

12.4.6 *yo ásyāḥ kārṇau ā-skunóti ā sa devéṣu vṛścate*
lákṣma kurva íti mányate kánīyah kṛṇute sváyam
 'Whoever punches the two ears of her,
 he falls under the wrath of the gods;
 if he thinks "I am making a mark", he makes his possession
 less'. (Translation J. Whitney)

Within Iranian, the technical use of $\sqrt{\text{skav-}}$ in this passage is mirrored in Choresmian. In the Muqaddimat of Zamaxšarī we find the passage (188.4) *mškwndd'h y' ywx y'sp'n* 'he made a slit in the ear of the sheep'. According to Samadi 1986: 194, the verb *m-škwnd-* (*m-* is the impf. marker) goes back to **fra-kunda-* or **fra-skunda-*, being the transitive correspondence of *m-šksy-* 'to be slit'. No further cognates were given, however. It can hardly be doubted that Chor. *škwnd-* is connected with Skt. $\sqrt{\text{skav-}}$ and Oss. **sk'oyjyn**. Moreover, the Choresmian correspondence of intransitive-passive Oss. **sk'oyjyn** is attested as well, viz. *škwnd-* 'to break, fall apart, be destroyed', which MacKenzie (1990: 122) analysed as **fra-kūta-*, with unknown root $\sqrt{*kū-}$. Final *-d* should be considered as intrusive¹: it probably points to influence of other verbs for hitting or destruction, e.g. *kwnd-* 'to knock, hit', *wbd-* 'to fall down', *npd-* 'to break down'.

1- Another verb with "intrusive" *-d* is *rynd-* 'to call' (cf. Av. *gar-*, pres. *garən-* 'to praise').

List of abbreviations: Alb. = Albanian, Av. = Avestan, B. = Bartangi, Bal. = Balochi, Chor. = Choresmian, CSogd. = Christian Sogdian, D(ig). = Digoron, f. = feminine, Goth. = Gothic, Gr. = Greek, I. = Iron, IE = Indo-European, impf. = imperfect, Ir. = Iranian, Ish. = Ishkashimi, Khot. = Khotanese, MP = Middle Persian, MSogd. = Manichaean Sogdian, NP = New Persian, OCS = Old Church Slavonic, OHG = Old High German, OIrish = Old Irish, OP = Old Persian, Plr. = Proto-Iranian, R. = Roshani, Skt. = Sanskrit, Oss. = Ossetic, POSS. = Proto-Ossetic, Russ. = Russian, RV = Rig-Veda, Sh. = Shughni, Sogd. = Sogdian, Sq. = Sargolli, Toch. = Tocharian, YAv. = Young Avestan, Yzgh. = Yazghulami.

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