Slavic *ljury ‘love’ < *lewbʰ-ōs and the heterogeneity of the

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inflectional class

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§1. It has been intermittently noted in individual studies, though not sufficiently appreciated either in Slavicist or IE-ist literature, that PSl. feminine nouns in *-y, *-ve are not universally old uh-stems (*bry *brvve ‘eyebrow’ < *bh₂bruh-, Gr. ὀφρος; *svekry *svekrvve ‘mother-in-law’ < *swekrh-, Ved. śvaśrū-) but may have other PIE sources too.† A number of nouns appear to have developed a NOM.SG in *-y from a different phonologically regular source and subsequently innovated a full paradigm in *-y *-ve, by analogy to examples like *svekry *svekrve.²

§2. Cf. *gilh₂-ōs ‘husband’s sister’ (Lat. glōs, Gr. θυλος) yielding PSl. *zbyly,³ which then developed a full paradigm with OBL *zbylv- (rather than **zblas- or **zbles-) analogically. (Witzcak 1998).⁴

§3. A conspicuous group of PSl. words in *-y, *-ve are adjectival abstracts, conventionally analyzed as *-u-h-. However, there is no correlation with PSl. u-stem adjectives, and the type is generally poorly documented in IE [isolated examples: Gr. ἰδίς ‘straight’ → ἰδίς (f.) ‘direction’, Ved. tanū- ‘thin’ → tanū- (f.) ‘body’].

§4. In the present study, it is suggested that such PSl. abstracts may at least partly originate from PIE s-stems as well. Thus, the familiar PSl. *ljuby *ljubvve ‘love’ (source of the word for ‘love’ in a number of modern Sl. languages, cf. Ru. ljuböva, B/C/S ljübab) can be derived from an amphibikinic s-stem abstract *lewbʰ-ōs. The existence of the latter can be surmised based on the following observations:

- In the closely related Balt., the only trace of the root *lewbʰ- ‘please, infatuate’ is Lith. liaupsé ‘praise’ (and derivatives). This isolated word can now be interpreted as a derivative of the very s-stem that is continued directly in Sl. (via *lewbʰ-siyo- etc.).
- In the ancient IE languages,⁵ the (rare) abstract type in *-ōs correlates with the semantics of emotion/mental state. The clearest examples are Ved. bhıyās- ‘fear’, Gr. αἰδός αἰδῶς ‘awe’, ἔρως ἔρωτος (earlier *ēpohos²) ‘desire’.
- Furthermore, these abstracts seem to correlate with root middles and other ‘stative-intransitive’ formations (bhıyate ‘fear’, αἰδοῦμαι ‘be ashamed’, ἔρημαι ‘to love’). This sort of alignment can be suspected for the root *lewbʰ- as well (Majer 2015).

† Loanwords from Germanic etc. are not considered here.
² Such developments have good parallels in Slavic; cf. the old r(n)-stems *voda ‘water’, *doba ‘(right) time’, which got (almost) completely integrated into the á-stem paradigm and feminine gender after acquiring a NOM.SG in *a < *-or. See Ackermann 2014.
³ Phonological development known from inflectional morphology, such as *nōs ‘us’ > PSl. *ny etc.
⁴ For certain other proposed cases see Snoj 1994: 505–506, Repanšek 2016.
⁵ Excluding Lat., where the type in -ōs-or, -ōris became very productive.
References


