

## FOUR-EIGHT

Skrt <i>catvāraḥ</i>	Skrt <i>aṣṭā, aṣṭāu</i> , Avest <i>ašta</i>
Gk <i>τέτταρες, τέσσαρες</i>	Gk <i>οκτω</i>
Lat <i>quattuor</i> , Osc <i>pettiur</i>	Lat <i>octō</i>
Goth <i>fidwōr</i> , OHG <i>fior</i> , OEng <i>fēower</i>	Goth <i>ahtau</i> , OHG <i>ahto</i> , OEng <i>eahta</i> , ONorse <i>ätta</i> ,
Toch A <i>štwar</i> , B <i>štwär</i>	Toch A <i>okt</i> , B <i>okät</i>
Arm <i>čork'</i>	Arm <i>ut'</i>
Lith <i>keturi</i>	Lith <i>aštuoni</i>
Slav <i>*četyre</i>	Slav <i>*osmĩ</i>
OIr <i>cethair</i>	OIr <i>ocht</i>

The “sum-total” is  $*kH_3^w ekH_2tōr$ , *-n*. This explains *-a-* in *quattuor* (it is usually guessed that it represents *schwa secundum*), and gives food for thought in the case of the loss of a dental in Old English. The ending points to the heteroclitic declension *-r/-n* (*-n* is attested in Balto-Slavic ‘eight’).  $H_3$  ( $H_3 + e = o$ ) keeps the first velar unpalatalized, while  $H_2$  regularly causes *s* in satem languages. The main thing is that the forms are perfectly symmetrical: the loss of one “laryngealized” consonant is accompanied by the preservation of the other. It is possible that the original root had been a perfect reduplicative, but then the laryngeals were dissimilated. A point to be resolved: only Latin *quattuor* reflects  $H_2$  in the word for ‘four’. Greek does not. The semantic connection between ‘four’ and ‘eight’ is natural, and can be supported by cross-linguistic examples.