

THE GERMANIC THIRD CLASS OF WEAK VERBS

1. More than half a century after Flasdieck's comprehensive study (1935), consensus has not been reached on the origin of the third weak class of Germanic (cf. most recently Bammesberger 1987). It appears that the majority of scholars nowadays agree on the reconstruction of an *ai/ja*-paradigm of the Old English type for Proto-Germanic (cf. especially Dishington 1978). This reconstruction leaves several questions unanswered. Firstly, we find evidence for an *ai/a*-paradigm in Old High German, Old Norse, and Gothic. Secondly, the expected gemination of palatals is lacking in ON *segia* 'say', *þegia* 'be silent', OSw. *sighia*, *þighia*. Thirdly, the Proto-Indo-European origin of the *ai/ja*-paradigm remains to be clarified.

2. Dishington has convincingly argued that the *ai/a*-paradigm of Old Norse and the corresponding forms in Old High German arose under the influence of the thematic inflection (1978). He does not discuss the Gothic paradigm, which cannot easily be dismissed because of its early attestation and in view of the generally archaic character of this language. I shall return to the Gothic evidence below.

3. There is evidence for an *ai/ēja*-paradigm in Old English, e.g. *lifgan* 'live', *feccan* 'fetch' (Flasdieck 1935:106). Cowgill has shown that this is the result of a recent innovation which did not even reach Old Saxon and Old Frisian (1959:14). Since the lack of gemination in ON *segia* and *þegia* requires the earlier presence of a

vowel before *\*-ja-* (cf. already Mahlow 1879:24), Dishington proposes a similar restructuring for Old Norse (1978:312). This seems improbable to me, not only because the Old English innovation is rather specific, but especially because it was apparently evoked by a similar restructuring of the *ō*-inflection to an *ō/ōja*-paradigm in Old English, Old Frisian, and Old Saxon, a development for which there is no evidence in Old Norse. It seems better to connect the lack of gemination in *segia* and *þegia* with the same phenomenon in the causatives and intensives *vekia* 'wake up', *þekia* 'thatch', *rekia* 'stretch', OSw. *vrækia* 'drive'.

4. In an earlier article (1986a) I argued that the first weak class of Germanic comprises two inflection types, a *jel/ja*-paradigm and an *eje/eja*-paradigm, and that the distinction between these two was preserved after short verb stems up to a recent stage. The lack of gemination in ON *vekia*, *þekia*, *rekia*, OSw. *vrækia* suggests that the gemination of velars before *j* was anterior to the loss of the distinction between the two inflection types, so that the operation of the rule was limited to the *jel/ja*-paradigm, e.g. ON *hyggia* 'think', *byggia* 'marry'. The gemination in *leggia* 'lay' can easily be analogical, either on the basis of *liggia* 'lie', or under the influence of *hyggia* and *byggia*. It now follows from the lack of gemination in *segia* and *þegia* that the *ai/ja*-paradigm which was reconstructed on the basis of the West Germanic evidence must be derived from an *ai/ija*- or *ai/eja*-paradigm in order to accommodate the North Germanic material.

5. We now turn to the prehistory of the paradigm which has been reconstructed for North and West Germanic. I agree with Jasanoff (1978:60-67) that all theories which operate with athematic forms or with an apophonic alternation in the suffix must be rejected. Incidentally, the reconstruction of an *ēi/i̯*-paradigm for Balto-Slavic is incompatible with the accentual evidence from that branch of Indo-

European. Furthermore, I agree with Dishington (1978) and Bammesberger (1987) that Jasanoff's own theory, which is basically a modification of Collitz's (1891:51-2), cannot be maintained. We must therefore look for an invariable thematic suffix which yields the correct output in a phonetically regular way. If the final part of the *ai/ija-* or *ai/eja-* suffix represents the thematic vowel, the initial part must be derived from a vowel which was low before *-i-* and front before *-a-*, i.e. from a low front vowel *\*æ*, which leads to the reconstruction of an *æi/æja*-paradigm. Since West Saxon and Old West Low Franconian *ǣ* is the most archaic reflex of Indo-European *\*ē* in Germanic (cf. Kortlandt 1986b:440, with ref.), we arrive at the reconstruction of a pre-Germanic *ēje/ējo*-paradigm on the basis of the internal evidence from North and West Germanic alone. Jasanoff's objection that *\*-ēje-* should give *\*-ē-* because *\*-āje-* yielded *\*-ō-* (1978:62) does not hold if *\*ē* was low while *\*ā* and *\*e* were mid vowels at the time of contraction. Similarly, his conjecture that *\*-ējo-* should give *\*-ē-* because *\*-ājo-* yielded *\*-ō-* is unfounded because *\*ē* was a front vowel while *\*ā* and *\*o* were not. His assertion that the first vowel of Go. *þahta*, OHG *dāhta* 'thought' was nasalized at the stage under consideration is spurious. The transfer of Go. *þeihan*, OE *þēon*, OHG *dīhan* 'thrive' from the third to the first strong class in all Germanic languages rather suggests that this type of long vowel was denasalized at an early stage. We must therefore consider the possibility that Go. *haba*, *habam*, *haband* 'have' represent *-ā*, *-ām*, *-ānd* (cf. already Brugmann 1904:527).

6. What is the expected reflex of an *ēje/ējo*-paradigm in Gothic? This question must be viewed in connection with the development of the *i-* and *u-*diphthongs in the Germanic languages. The Proto-Indo-European loc.sg. forms in *\*-ēi* and *\*-ēu* are reflected in the Germanic dat.sg. endings of the *i-* and *u-*stems. We find a low reflex in Gothic *anstai* 'favor', *sunau* 'son', Runic *winai* 'friend'

(A.D. 300), *faþai* 'master' (France, 6th cent.), *Hakuþo* (A.D. 450, cf. Antonsen 1975:34, 77, 55), OE *sunu*, OS *suno*, and a high reflex in Runic *Kunimu(n)diu* (A.D. 500), *magiu* 'son' (7th cent., ibidem: 79, 85), OHG *suniu*, *ensti*, *meri* 'sea', OS *ensti*, *wini*, ON *brúpe* 'bride'. It appears that the long diphthongs were originally low and were raised around the end of the 5th century. If the earlier Norse syncope can be dated to the 7th century, this fits in with the development of the *æi/æja*-paradigm advocated here. Interestingly, the gen.sg. ending of the *i*-stems *\*-ois* which is reflected in Go. *anstais* and ON *brúþar* appears to have merged with the reflex of *\*-ēi* in OHG and OS *ensti* while remaining distinct from the nom.pl. ending *\*-oi* and the dat.sg. ending *\*-ōi*, OHG *blinte* 'blind', *tage* 'day', OS *blinde*, *dage*. This suggests a development of *\*-ois* > *\*-aiz* > *\*-aij* > *\*-æi* with subsequent raising after its merger with *\*-æi* < *\*-ǣi* < *\*-ēi*, whereas *\*-āi* and *\*-ōi* were shortened to *\*-ai* and later monophthongized to *\*-ē*. The dat.sg. ending of OE *sunu* and OS *suno* shows that *\*-ǣu* merged with *\*au* rather than *\*eu* in these dialects, perhaps because it was shortened slightly earlier here than in OHG and ON.

7. Now we turn to the development of intervocalic *\*j* in Gothic. Elsewhere I have argued that the gen.pl. ending *-e* represents Proto-Indo-European *\*-eiom* (1978:291-2 and 1983:171-2). The lowering of *\*ei* to *\*ē* before *\*-an* < *\*-om*, as compared with its unconditioned raising to *\*ī*, has a parallel in the low reflex of Proto-Germanic *\*ǣ* from Indo-European *\*ē* in *saian* 'sow' and *waian* 'blow', as compared with its unconditioned reflex *\*ē*. The absence of raising suggests that intervocalic *\*j* was assimilated to the preceding vowel. This development can be dated after the loss of final *\*-e* (cf. Kortlandt 1986a:30). After the raising of *\*e* to *i*, the expected reflex of an *ēje/ējo*-paradigm is an *ǣi/ǣa*-paradigm in early Gothic. I think that the long vowel in the suffix was now shortened to *\*a* before the raising of *\*ǣ* to *\*ē*, as in *hvamma* 'to whom'

beside *hrammeh* 'to everyone'. This development can be compared with the reduction of *\*ōw* to *au* before vowels in *sauil* 'sun', *taui* 'deed', *staua* 'judge, judgment', *stauida* 'judged', cf. OE *stōw* 'place', *stōwian* 'restrain'. The preservation of *-j-* in Go. *stojan* < *\*stōwjan* shows that the loss of *\*w* was posterior to the elimination of intervocalic *\*j*. It seems probable to me that the root vowel of *saian*, *waian*, *taui*, *staua* was short. This hypothesis accounts not only for the automatic lowering in the latter words, but also for the absence of raising in the former. It has the additional advantage of accounting for the inflection of *haban*, which now turns out to be an *ai/ā*-paradigm of recent origin. While the *ō*-inflection is apparently of Proto-Germanic date, the development of the third weak class belongs largely to the separate languages. Such forms as *waiwoun* 'they blew' and the calque *armaio* 'mercy' are recent and must be considered analogical in any theory.

8. The *ēje/ējo*-paradigm which has been reconstructed for pre-Germanic is not of Proto-Indo-European origin. It represents a *je/jo*-derivative of a preterital *ē*-stem, to be compared with Slavic *iměti*, *iměje*- rather than Lith. *turėti*, *tūri* 'have'. One may wonder if Germanic has preserved any traces of the original present tense inflection which was ousted by the *ēje/ējo*-paradigm. On the basis of the Balto-Slavic evidence we can reconstruct an *ei/i*-paradigm, which is still preserved in Prussian *turei*, *turri* 'has, have' (cf. Kortlandt 1987). I think that this inflection can actually be recovered in Germanic, but not in the third class of weak verbs.

9. It has often been observed that the absence of the verbs for 'sit' and 'lie' from the third weak class is remarkable. Gothic *sitan* and *ligan* belong to the simple thematic inflection, whereas their North and West Germanic cognates have a *je/jo*-paradigm. Though it is usually assumed that the Gothic inflection is secondary, the motivation for such a morphological transfer of two extremely common

verbs is quite unclear. It seems much more probable to me that these verbs represent an original *i*-inflection which was brought into line with the *i/a*-paradigm in Gothic and the *i/ja*-paradigm in the North and the West. The inflection which can be reconstructed for Proto-Germanic is the same as we find in Lith. *sėdėti*, *sėdi* 'sit'. The Gothic development has a perfect analogue in Old Irish *saidid*, *-said* 'sits', *laigid* 'lies', 3rd pl. *sedait*, *-legat* (cf. Thurneysen 1946:354).

10. The reconstruction of a Proto-Germanic *i*-inflection also offers an explanation for OHG *stān*, *stēn* 'stand', *gān*, *gēn* 'go', OE *gān*, 3rd sg. *gæþ*, pl. *gāþ*. Mahlow already reconstructed *\*staji-*, *\*staja-* (1879:138), which should yield an *ai/ā*-paradigm in view of Go. *aiz* 'brass', *maiza* 'greater', OE *ār*, *māra*, OHG *ēr*, *mēro*. There are two problems with this reconstruction. On the one hand, the vowel of OHG *stēn* and *gēn* is not the unconditioned *ei* of *stein* 'stone' but the lowered variant *ē* which is found word-finally in *wē* 'woe' and *sē* 'behold', as if it were followed by a hiatus. The reflex *ei* in Otfrid 3rd sg. *steit*, *geit* represents *-ē-i-*, cf. *duit* 'does' from *-uo-i-*, similarly OE *gæþ* from *-ā-i-*. On the other hand, the vowel of OE *gān*, *gāþ* is not the retracted variant *ō* which could be expected as a reflex of *\*ā* before a nasal but the unconditioned reflex *ā* of *\*ai*, as in *stān* 'stone'. These problems disappear if we start from an athematic *i*-inflection *\*stai-*, which could be restructured either as *\*sta-i/a-*, which is reflected in OHG *stān*, or as *\*stai-i/a-*, which is suggested by OHG *stēn*. As to the etymology of the verb 'to go', I am inclined to return to Kluge's derivation of the word from *ga-* plus *\*eimi*, in spite of Streitberg's objection that the meaning is durative (1896:319). If this is correct, we can reconstruct a disyllabic stem *\*ga-i-* with an athematic paradigm for Proto-Germanic, and the OE reflex *gān* is regular. The difference between durative *\*stai-*, *\*seti-*, *\*legi-*, preterite *\*-ē-*, and inchoative *\*stand-*, *\*sent-*, *\*leng-*, preterite 3rd sg. *\*stōþ*, *\*sat(e)*, *\*lag(e)*

was apparently lost in Proto-Germanic times. The same can be assumed for *\*(ga-)i-*, *\*(ga-)eaj(e)*, which yielded OE *gā-*, *\*eoe*, OHG *gē-*, *\*ee*. The nasal present of Go. *gaggan*, OE OHG *gangan* may have been created on the analogy of *\*stai-*, *\*stōþ*, *\*stōdun*, *standan* (OHG *stantan*), *\*gai-*, *\*gegai*, *\*gegijun* if the incorporation of *ga-* was sufficiently early.

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