

OLD NORSE *TAKA*, GOTHIC *TEKAN*, GREEK *τεταγών*

In his analysis of this etymon, Karl-Heinz Mottausch lists the following Germanic verbs (1993:152):

- Gothic *tekan* 'touch' < \**tēkan-*;
- Old Norse *taka* and Middle Dutch *taken* 'take';
- Middle Low German *tacken* 'touch' < \**takkō-*;
- Old Frisian *tetsia* 'appropriate' < \**takjan*;
- Old High German *zascōn* 'rob' < \**tak-skō-*;
- Old English *þaccian* 'pat', Old Saxon *thakolon* 'stroke'.

The Gothic reduplicated preterit *taitok* can be identified with Latin *tetigi* < \**tetagai* 'touched' and Greek *τεταγών* 'having seized'. The problem is that neither the initial *t-* nor the vowel *-ē-* of Gothic *tekan* is compatible with the regular sound laws.

While the initial *t-* beside *p-* seems to be a Germanic problem, the long vowel is also found in the Tocharian B present *ceś-* 'touch' < \**tēk-*. Mottausch derives the long vowel from \**-ēH<sub>2</sub>-* and reconstructs a static root present with an alternation between sg. \**-tēH<sub>2</sub>g-* and pl. \**teH<sub>2</sub>g-* (1993:154f.). I am very unhappy about this traditional methodology of loosely postulating long vowels for the proto-language. What we need is a powerful theory which explains why clear instances of original lengthened grade are so very few and restrains our reconstructions accordingly. Such a theory has been available for over a hundred years now: it was put forward by Wackernagel in his Old Indic grammar (1896:66-68). The crucial element of his theory which is relevant in the present context is that he assumed lengthening in monosyllabic word forms, such as the 2nd and 3rd sg. forms of the sigmatic aorist injunctive. Since the sigmatic aorist is the prototypical static paradigm in the verbal inflection, it offers the possibility of testing the relative merits of the two theories, Wackernagel's lengthening in monosyllabic word forms versus a static paradigm with lengthened grade in the singular and full grade in the plural. As I

have pointed out elsewhere (1987), the evidence substantiates Wackernagel's view and forces us to reject the alternative because we find full, not lengthened grade in the 1st sg. form, e.g. Vedic *jeṣam* 'conquer', *stoṣam* 'praise'. It is therefore reasonable to assume that originally the static present also had lengthened grade in the 2nd and 3rd sg. forms of the injunctive and full grade elsewhere.

We now have to establish the nature of the static present, which is not a frequent type of inflection. I subscribe to Dr Alexander Lubotsky's unpublished theory that it must be derived from a reduplicated formation. A clear example is Vedic 3rd sg. *táṣṭi*, 3rd pl. *tákṣati* 'fashion', which cannot be separated from Greek *τέκτων* 'carpenter' < \**tetk-*. Another example is Vedic 3rd sg. *dáṣṭi* 'makes offering' beside *dákṣate* 'is able' < \**dedk-* (cf. Lubotsky 1994:204). I therefore think that Gothic *tekan* and Tocharian B *ceś-* represent a reduplicated paradigm which can be identified with Greek *τεταγών*.

It may be useful to have a look at the place of this formation in the original verbal system. Following a line of thought developed by Pedersen (1921:25f.) and Kuiper (1934:212), I reconstruct a hysterodynamic s-present, 3rd sg. \**tresti*, 3rd pl. \**trsentī*, beside a static s-subjunctive (injunctive), 3rd sg. \**tērst*, 3rd pl. \**tersnt*, the coexistence of which is perhaps best preserved in Tocharian (cf. already Kortlandt 1985:117, fn. 3), where we find B *täs-* < \**dhH<sub>1</sub>es-* beside A *tās-* < \**dhH<sub>1</sub>s-* in the present and B *tes-*, A *cas-* < \**dhēH<sub>1</sub>s* in the preterit of the verb *tā-* < \**dheH<sub>1</sub>-* 'put'. If the reduplicated formations followed a similar pattern, we may reconstruct a hysterodynamic reduplicated present, 3rd sg. \**wiwek<sup>w</sup>ti*, weak stem \**wiwk<sup>w</sup>-*, but with retracted stress in 3rd pl. \**wewk<sup>w</sup>nti*, cf. Vedic 3rd sg. *siṣakti*, 3rd pl. *sáscati* 'accompany' < \**sisek<sup>w</sup>ti*, \**sesk<sup>w</sup>nti*, beside a static reduplicated subjunctive (injunctive), 3rd sg. \**wēwk<sup>w</sup>t*, 3rd pl. \**wewk<sup>w</sup>nt*. This reconstruction actually explains the long \*-ē- in the reduplication syllable of original reduplicated aorists, as opposed to original presents and perfects, in Tocharian (cf. Kortlandt 1996a:173, and B *tätt-* 'put' < \**dhidhH<sub>1</sub>-*, \**dhedhH<sub>1</sub>-*). The rise of the static reduplicated paradigm may have been provoked by the raising of pretonic -e- to -i- in the reduplication syllable, which was probably earlier than Wackernagel's lengthening.

While the Tocharian B present *ceś-* < \**tēke*, subjunctive *tek-* < \**tēk* (with restored *t-*), and preterit *teks-* < \**tēks* (idem) all have original

long  $*\bar{e}$ -, short  $*e$ - is preserved in the optative *taśi* <  $*te(t)k\bar{i}$ . The loss of the laryngeal in the root  $-(t)k$ - <  $*tH_{\mathcal{L}}g$ - shows that the lengthened grade arose by analogy with the paradigm of biconsonantal roots. The long  $\bar{e}$ - of Gothic *tekan* cannot simply be derived from the same source because it is an isolated formation, and there is no indication that lengthened grade ever spread in the verb in Germanic. We therefore have to start from the stem  $*tetH_{\mathcal{L}}g$ - which is found in Greek and Latin, with a short vowel in the reduplication syllable. As interconsonantal laryngeals in medial syllables were lost in Germanic, the stem became  $*tetg$ -, assimilated to  $*tedg$ -, with restoration of the reduplication  $*dedg$ - (cf. already Mottausch 1993:158). The latter development has a perfect analogue in Latin *bibit* beside Vedic *pībati* and Old Irish *ibid* 'drinks' <  $*pibe$ -. This solves the problem of the initial  $t$ - beside  $p$ - in Old English *þaccian* 'pat' <  $*tH_{\mathcal{L}}g$ -, but not the problem of the long  $\bar{e}$ - of Gothic *tekan* 'touch', which requires a reconsideration of the Proto-Germanic consonantal system.

In a number of articles I have argued that the Indo-European unaspirated voiced plosives  $*b$ ,  $*d$ ,  $*g$ ,  $*g^w$  were actually preglottalized [b̥], [d̥], [g̥], [g̥<sup>w</sup>], and that the preglottalization was preserved after their devoicing to [p], [t], [k], [k<sup>w</sup>] in Germanic (cf. most recently Kortlandt 1996b and 1997). The preglottalization has partly been preserved in modern British English and western Danish and is reflected as preaspiration in West Norse and as gemination in all of North and West Germanic under various conditions. Theories which derive the western Danish glottalization from preaspiration or gemination, the West Norse preaspiration from gemination and the East Norse gemination from preaspiration, or the rise of glottalization, preaspiration and several layers of gemination from spontaneous local developments are all inadequate (cf. especially Kortlandt 1988). In addition to the arguments which I have adduced elsewhere, I may now add an irrefutable piece of evidence from Faroese, which has preserved preaspiration before intervocalic plosives after originally short vowels, e.g. *eta* [e:hta] 'eat', *opin* [o:hpin] 'open' (cf. Petersen et al. 1998:27; I am indebted to Dr Höskuldur Þráinsson for access to this unpublished volume). This preaspiration cannot possibly be derived from gemination because it remains distinct from the preaspiration before original intervocalic geminates, where a preceding short vowel was not lengthened. It must therefore be identified with the 'illogical'

gemination in Northumbrian, e.g. *eatta* (Lindisfarne Gospels, cf. Campbell 1959:27, Brunner 1965:189), and in Old High German, e.g. *ezzan*, *offan*. The Proto-Germanic preglottalization can be identified with the one in other Indo-European languages, e.g. Latvian *ēst* 'eat' < \*e'd-.

Against this background we have to assume that \**tetg-* [tet'g-] was assimilated to \**tedg-* [te'd'g-], with restored reduplication \**dedg-* [de'd'g-], and then simplified by the loss of dental articulation in the cluster \**-dg-*, which yielded a sequence of glottal stop ['] plus \**-g-* [g]. If \**H<sub>1</sub>* was still a glottal stop at the time, we can now write the stem as \**deH<sub>1</sub>g-*, which regularly developed into \**dēg-* [de:'g-], later \**tēk-* [te:'k-]. This explanation of the long *-ē-* in Gothic *tekan* is the same as has been proposed for the long *-ē-* in Greek *πεντήκοντα* '50', *ἑβδομήκοντα* '70', *ἑνενηήκοντα* '90' < \**H<sub>1</sub>kont-* < \**-dkomt-* (cf. Kortlandt 1983: 98f., Lubotsky 1994:203). It has the advantage of accounting for both the initial *t-* and the long *-ē-* of Gothic *tekan* on the basis of a single property of the stem formation, viz. a reduplication which is also attested in Greek and Latin.

Thus, we arrive at a Proto-Germanic aorist \**tēk-*, which gave rise to a Gothic 7th class verb *tekan*, a Scandinavian 6th class verb *taka*, and a variety of weak verb formations in West Germanic. Mottausch thinks that the Scandinavian verb is a 'Neubildung' for \**tāka* on the basis of the preterit *tōk*, which he derives from \**tetōk-* by loss of the reduplication syllable (1993:159). This seems improbable to me for a number of reasons. First of all, the converse development is attested in the case of *lāta* 'put', which has a secondary preterit *lót* beside *lét* on the basis of the unstressed variant *lata*, as Mottausch indicates himself. This verb belongs to the 7th class in all branches of Germanic. Secondly, the restructuring of the reduplicated preterit in North and West Germanic is based on the present stem, e.g. *lét* < \**leāēt*, not \*\**liót*, cf. *hlióp* 'leaped' < \**hleaup*, Gothic *lailot* 'let', *ai auk* 'added'. Thirdly, the 7th class was still productive in late Proto-Germanic, whereas the 6th class, which essentially reflects the root aorist (cf. Kortlandt 1994), was not. This is especially clear from the verb *arjan* 'plough', which is a perfect candidate for a 6th class preterit but has a 7th class preterit in Old High German and a weak preterit elsewhere (cf. Kortlandt 1992: 103). Fourthly, the West Germanic formations remain to be explained.

After the merger of \**ā* with \**ō* in late Proto-Germanic, there must

have been considerable pressure to change *\*tēk-* into *\*tōk-* so as to conform to the 6th class pattern, especially if there was a zero grade form with *-a-* in the paradigm. Gothic evidently created a (new) present tense by adding the regular present endings to the aorist stem *\*tēk-* and substituted a newly formed perfect stem *\*tetōk-* for the aorist stem in the preterit. There is no reason to assume that such forms ever existed in North and West Germanic, where they would probably have been preserved as a 7th class paradigm. Instead, we find *tak-* in Old Norse and Middle Dutch, with gemination in Middle Low German, with palatalization in Old Frisian, and with a *sk-* suffix in Old High German. This suggests either that there was no present tense of this verb at all in Proto-Germanic or that it was a suppletive formation. In either case the aorist stem *\*tēk-* must have survived long enough to give rise to the derivative formations.

The initial consonant of Old English *þaccian* 'pat' < *\*þakkō-* < *\*tagnā-* (cf. Kortlandt 1991), of which Old Saxon *thakolon* 'stroke' is evidently a derivative, shows that this is an ancient formation. It can be identified with Middle Low German *tacken* 'touch' < *\*takkō-* if the latter took its initial *t-* from the aorist stem *\*tēk-*. Though this is predominantly a denominal type of inflection, it is perfectly possible that we are dealing here with an original nasal present which joined the regular type. Note that Middle Low German has preserved the original meaning attested in Gothic, Latin and Tocharian. There is no reason to assume that it is an intensive formation (thus Mottausch 1993:152), especially because we cannot reconstruct another present tense for Proto-Germanic. Thus, I think that *\*þakkō-* < *\*tagnā-* and *\*tēk-* < *\*tetg-* originally belonged to the same paradigm, which can be directly compared with Latin *tangō, tetigī*, 'touch'.

The elimination of the suppletive paradigm was a gradual process. While Gothic simply added present endings to the aorist stem *\*tēk-*, this device was apparently no longer available when the process reached North and West Germanic. When Scandinavian substituted *tak-* for *\*þakkō-*, the suppletive paradigm was still preserved in West Germanic. Old Frisian created a *j*-present *\*takj-*, either on the analogy of 6th class verbs like Gothic *haffjan* 'raise' or as an intensive formation. The suppletive paradigm must still have existed at the time when Middle Low German adopted the initial *t-* of the preterit in *tacken* 'touch' < *\*takkō-*. The Middle Dutch verb *taken* is probably a

borrowing because it belongs to the weak inflection and has the same meaning as Middle English *taken* and Old Norse *taka*. Old High German has only preserved a derivative of a deverbal noun in *zascōn* 'rob' < 'make a grab', cf. *forscōn* 'ask' < 'put a question', *eiscōn* 'demand' < 'lay a claim'. It thus appears that the original paradigm was retained longer in the Ingvaenic and Low German territories than elsewhere.

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