From Reduplication to Ablaut:
The Class VII Strong Verbs of Northwest Germanic

§ 1. One of the most notorious problems in Germanic comparative grammar is that of the creation in Northwest Germanic of the ablauting strong verbs of "class VII" from earlier reduplicating verbs like those found in Gothic (cf. OHG heizan, pret. hizaz(un) < hésan), ptep. -heizan 'call, command', OE hætan, hēt(um), hæten, ON heita, hēt(u), heitinn vs. Go. haitan, haihaitan, haitans). Almost every aspect of this topic is to some degree controversial – even the assumption, implicit in our title, that ablaut developed from reduplication. Yet there has been progress. Germanistik and Indogermanistik are cumulative fields, and the countless studies devoted to class VII since the Neogrammarians period have clarified, if not yet solved, the problem. Many ideas considered important fifty or a hundred years ago, such as the view that the Northwest Germanic forms were never reduplicated, have been virtually discarded, giving way to newer proposals, such as the various elaborations of the "infix" approach currently under discussion (cf. below). To employ a gastronomical metaphor, our explanatory "kitchen" is by now exceedingly well-stocked, if not overstocked, with the potential ingredients for a solution. The task is to find a recipe for combining them into a palatable whole.

§ 2. The Indo-European (IE) background to the problem is well known. The Proto-IE (PIE) perfect originally had stative meaning, which still survives in preterito-presents of the type Go. ga-dars 'dares' (= Vedic Sanskrit pf. dadhāṛṣa 'is bold') and Go. ma-n 'thinks' (= Gk. pf. μηθορεῖ 'intends'). For the most part, however, the perfect became a simple preterite in Germanic. There was nothing especially noteworthy about this development, which is also attested in Italic, Celtic and elsewhere. But unlike the other IE languages where the perfect evolved

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into a preterite, the late PIE dialect ancestral to Germanic lost the old imperfect and aorist and specialized the perfect as its only past tense.² The perfect thus became highly productive in Germanic. Virtually every non-derived present stem was provided with a perfect-based (“strong”) preterite, even in cases where the underlying root is known to have been praeverbal tantum in the parent language.³

The reconstruction of the PIE perfect was one of the most durable achievements of nineteenth century comparative linguistics. The “active” perfect of a normal root was characterized by a) reduplication with *-e-; b) *o: zero ablaut, with accent on the root in the singular and on the endings in the dual and plural; and c) special desinences, partly recalling those of the middle. Despite a certain hesitancy on this point in the older literature, there was nothing optional or “facultative” about reduplication in the perfect; the only unreduplicated perfect in the parent language was *woid-/*wid- ‘know’ (cf. Go. waidu: witen, Ved. veda: widna, Gk. ὁδε: ὁδευε, etc.), which was exceptional in other respects as well. In principle, therefore, all Germanic strong pretenses were once reduplicated.¹ A typical strong verb like *bitan ‘bite’ originally formed a 3 sg. preterite *bebarti, as if from PIE *bheh-bhid-ë, and a 3 pl. *beburan, as if from PIE *bheh-bhid-ë; similarly, *bindan ‘bind’ formed a 3 sg. *bebrad, as if from PIE *bheh-bhôndh-ë, and a 3 pl. *bebundan, as if from PIE *bheh-bhôdhd-ë.⁶ Reduplication was also characteristic of the

² This statement is not vitiated by the small number of cases in which a form of non-perfect origin, such as the historical 1 sg. imperfect *dedòā ‘I did’ (+ OHG iôt, etc.), has been incorporated into the perfect paradigm. Even the weak preterite, assuming it rests on a paradigm with the verb “to do,” is probably of perfect origin.

³ There were many such roots, including such satwords of the II and Germanic vocabulary as *hêd- ‘eat’ (Go. itan), *bheh- ‘beat’ (Go. biuran), and *scêd- (− Scôd-) ‘drive’ (ON aðr).

¹ The formal category known as the perfect active was originally a kind of middle, functionally paired with the middle in other tense-aspect categories. By late PIE times, however, certain roots had acquired a new, formally renewed perfect middle, which contrasted with the older, now unambiguously “active” form (cf. perf. act. *dêdêr-ë ‘sees’ vs. mid. *Mâdêr-ë ‘is visible.’ (cf. Jasanoff 2003: 43, 228 ff.)

⁴ So correctly Bammesberger (1994). As I have argued elsewhere (Jasanoff 2003: 168 f.), the present was originally a species of reduplicated present; to say that its reduplication was only “optional” is somewhat like saying that reduplication was optional in the PIE present ancestral to Gk. têma and Ved. têdahiti. For the special status of *weak, *wid- etymologically not a true perfect at all – see ibid., 228 ff.

⁵ Here and throughout, I follow the practice of writing *b, *d, and *g in Proto-Germanic reconstructions, even in environments (e.g., intervocally) where these phonemes were realized as fricatives. Similarly, I adopt the convention, where no confusion would result, of writing *bitan for more correct *bitanad, *bebrad for more correct *bebrate, etc.

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§ 3. Sometime before the breakup of Proto-Germanic, the majority of strong pretenses gave up their reduplication. Like all such changes, the process must have been gradual and accompanied by considerable sociohistorical variation. The loss of reduplication may have begun in forms with multiple preverbs, as in Old Irish;⁷ or it may simply have been an effect of fast speech. But wherever and however it began, the passage of time would have favored the reduplicated variants, which tended to become more frequent and, other things being equal, to replace the longer forms. The qualification “other things being equal,” however, is important. In verbs where the vocalism of the present contrasted with that of the preterite – in effect, in the standard six classes of strong verbs – the loss of reduplication was complete. But in verbs where the present and the preterite (or at least the singular of the preterite) had the same vocalism – thus, in cases of the type *stauzan : *stesetn or *spôn : *spêsop – the reduplicated variants were disfavored by their similarity to the present, and the longer forms prevailed. In “reduplicating-ablauting” verbs like *stên : *lelôt and verb para like *sênan : *sêzô ‘sow’, the retention of reduplication was analogous. The verb para in *-ê- (*sêna) followed the lead of the verb para in *-ô- (*spon : *spêsop) which kept their reduplication because they had the same vowel in the preterite as in the present. Thus the type *lelôt: *lelôt the maintenance of reduplication was due to the com-

² The “as it’s” reflect the anachronistic character of many of the reconstructions we use to illustrate the structure of later Germanic forms. In fact, it is highly unlikely that the roots *bheh- ‘beate’ and *bhôndh- ‘bind’ formed perfects as early as the period of the parent language; if they did, their 3 pl. forms would have had ending in *-êr or *-îr, not *-ûr.

⁷ Considerable obscurity surrounds the question of whether o-grade presents (the so-called “modi-type”); cf. Jasanoff, op cit., ch. 3) were originally paired with “normal” or longthenthal-grade perfects. The question is relevant because, while both *stesetn- and *stesetn- would have given *stesetn- in Germanic, the former would have had a plural stem *stesetn- (Gmc. *stesetn-), while the latter would have had a plural stem *stesetn- or *stesetn- (Gmc. *stesetn-). See further note 51.

⁸ As described for the reduplicated future by Thurneysen (1946: 409).

⁹ With *-ê- by Verner’s Law; see below.

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bined influence of the verb para and the non-ablauting types *slēpan : *sēlēp 'sleep' and *wōjān : *wēwēp 'cry'.

A formal division thus arose between ablauting strong verbs, which (mostly) lacked reduplication, and reproducing strong verbs, which (mostly) lacked ablaut. We must now follow the treatment of this dichotomy in the individual Germanic daughter languages, where the reflexes of the reduplicated forms present a varied picture.

§ 4. Gothic is the only Germanic language where reduplication remains a synchronically transparent process. The reduplicating class in Gothic includes all non-ablauting strong verbs – those with roots or quasi-roots in -ai (e.g. baiain : haiain, -au (e.g. awain : aiwain 'increase'), -ar (as a syllabically liquid or nasal (e.g. faijan : faijøl 'fold'), -ar (e.g. sēlan : saisle (sil), and -ar (e.g. haljan : haljøp 'boast') – as well as a small number of reduplicating-ablauting verbs (e.g. bōjan : bōjol, bōsain : bōsø). Indeed, the distribution of reduplication in Gothic matches its reconstructed distribution in Proto-Germanic so closely that it is easy to make the mistake of thinking that Gothic preserves the Proto-Germanic situation unchanged. This is not at all the case. The Gothic treatment of reduplicated preterites reveals at least three innovations vis-à-vis Proto-Germanic: a) the near-total elimination of Verber's Law effects (cf. Go. saisen beside ON sera < *sæði < *sæ-sæði); b) the elimination of differences between 'strong' (singular) and 'weak' (plural) stem forms (cf. Go. laulan : laulan for expected laulan (cf. OE (Angl.) leorhton < *le-þhord-); and c) the analogical generalization of *-aī (e.g. PGMc. *-i in 'breaking' environments) at the expense of *-ā (< *-ā in other environments) as the reduplication vowel. Point b) in particular will prove crucial to an understanding of the ablaut patterns of class VII.

§ 5. Other reflexes of reduplicated preterites, no longer synchronically analyzable as such, are found in Old Norse, Old English, and Old High German. The Old Norse forms are built exclusively to verbs para: rėna:

10 In citing forms from Gothic and the other early Germanic languages, I do not attach an asterisk to forms which, while not actually attested, can be predicted with complete certainty from attested forms based on the same stem. A more fastidious practice might have noted that the infinitives faijan and slējan happen not to occur in the Gothic corpus, and that the preterite aiwain is always preceded by the preverb an-.
11 Two examples of sēlēp, alongside three of sālēp, are all that remain of Verber's Law in the Gothic reduplicated preterite.}

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pret. rēra, -ir, -i, etc. 'row', grōba : grēra 'grow, sprout', sā (< *sēdan) : sera 'sow', smiūa : snera 'wind', gnūa : gnera 'rub', and bōna : bnera 'id.' The background of these forms is clear. rēra (< *rēr) and sera (< *sēr) are still transparently reduplicated. So too, at bottom, is gnera (< *gēr[a]r) with the typical Northwest Germanic – and distinctly un-Gothic – simplification of the repeated cluster at its second appearance in the reduplicated form. snera has must have started out as *snefæfnar, with alteration of the final vowel to *-ør under the influence of the other verbs para. gnera (< *gnīa) and the barely attested bnera (< *bnīa) are rhyme forms to snera (< *sni). 14

The reduplicated preterites of Old English are all poetical and/or Anglican. 15 The best attested is heht (hētan), which still survives in the Modern English archaisms high. The others are reor (rēadan 'advise'), on-dréord (< on-drēdan 'dread'), leort (< lētan 'let'), leole (< lētan 'play'), boeft (< bētan 'beat'), and speoft (< spētan 'spit'). It is noteworthy that on-dréord (< *dron-r) shows the same treatment of the initial cluster as ON grēra, snera. The salience of the diphthong -eο-, which appears in six of the seven forms, is partly analogical: breaking was regular in reor, -dour, and leort (dissimilated from *le) but secondary in leole, boeft, and speoft. 16 Likewise a diffused feature, common to all seven forms but historically "correct" in only two of them, is their shared monosyllabicity. reor and leort (or rather, the plural forms reordan and leorto) are inherited, going back to the zero-grade weak stems PIE *re-rĥd̂h- and *le-lh-ð-. 17 But no pre-OE syncope rule could have produced forms like le(o)le(o)n or bo(e)(f)to(n) from preforms of the type *lelaiikt*lēlikun, *bebau*bēbautu, etc. The apparent syncope in leole, boeft, heht, -dour, and speoft is, like the apparent breaking in leole, etc., analogical. 18

10 We also find rēra, grēra, etc., with -aumlaut from the plural endings -un, -ud, -u, and conversely, rērum, -ud, -ur, with the -e of the singular imported into the plural. Cf. Norcaen (1923: 70, 340).
11 Another rhyme form, obviously unoriginial, is sēra beside slē (sli < *sēlan 'strike'). The relationship of the hapax bōna (< Go. bōnain 'crystal') to the synonymous gnīa is unclear. Different prefixes (*bī- and *gō-) are sometimes assumed; Vennemann (1997: 301) operates with a sound change of bōn- to gn-.
12 Falling outside this generalization, of course, is dyde, -on 'did', the special durability of which was presumably due to its frequency and resemblance to a weak preterite.
14 Go. 3 pl. ratrodan, laulan are based, of course, on the analogically extended strong stems *re-rĥd̂h- *le-lh-ð- (cf. § 4).
15 One as has only to think, e.g., of the retention of the medial *-i in class I weak preterites of the type nere, nerede, astelde (North), etc. The facts are completely

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§ 6. The most peculiar West Germanic reduplicated preterites are the so-called "r-preterites" of Old High German. These are primarily associated with four verbs: 

blūzan 'sacrifice' (WGmc. *blōtan); 3 pl. pleruzzan, 3 sg. opt. capleruzzu, as if from *blerōt-, dissimilated from *blelōt-. The normal preterite is weak (Bav. plōtā).

(ana-)steztan 'strike' (WGmc. *stautan); 3 sg. ana-steroz, pl. ana-sterzzan, as if from *stezaut-. The normal preterite is class VII (stōc). 19

(gi-)scrōtan 'cut' (WGmc. *skraudan); 3 sg. ki-scerot, as if from *skreraud or *skreaud. The normal preterite is class VII (screot).

bīan 'dwell' (WGmc. bīan); 3 pl. biruun, 2 sg. opt. biruuis, from birū-, for earlier *bībū-, with substitution of -r- for -b-. The normal preterite is weak (bītā).

Despite their startling appearance, the first three of these forms present nothing new. pleruzzan < *blerōt < *blelōt illustrates the same treatment of the obstructant + liquid cluster as ON grēra < *gre-r- and OE <dreor < *dē-r-; the dissimilation of */i/ to */i/ is exactly as in OE leerōt < *lelēt. In sterzo < stezant, the internal s-cluster shows the same reduction as in pre-ON *snea. -scenterot is, so to speak, overdetermined; whether it exemplifies the x-cluster rule or the obstructant + liquid rule depends on the unpredictable question of whether the immediate source was *skreaud or *skreaud (cf. § 21).

There remain the more puzzling biruun and biruuis. The apparent substitution of birū- (probable 3 sg. *biru) for *bībū- < *bebū presupposes the existence of a period when r- was productive as a perterite marker. Real productivity, however, could never have arisen on the basis of the anomalous pleruzzan, sterzo and -scenterot, which in any case barely resemble biruun at all. In fact, birū- most strongly recalls not the other Old High German r-preterites, but ON rera, gerra, serra, and snera, with their incipiently productive r-element. Although the verbs pura are all weak in attested Old High German (cf. sēn: pret. sāna 'sow', ir-kriēn: kētā 'recognize', spōen: spuōa 'thrive', grōen: grōota 'grow', etc.), it is clear from Gothic and Old Norse that they originally belonged to the reduplicating class. If pre-Old High German once formed preterites of the type *serōr 'sowed', *gerēr 'grew', sperō (< *spērō) 'thived', etc. in these cases, it would be easy to see how the pattern pres. *grōan, *spōan: pret. *gerōr, *sperō could have led the inherited preterite *bebūr (pres. *bēan; see note 74) to be remade as *beri (> OHG *biri). In the absence of any actual evidence for forms of the type *gerēr in Old High German, of course, this can only be a guess. 20

§ 7. Apart from the special cases just discussed, the reduplicating verbs of Proto-Germanic are represented in North and West Germanic by the ablauting strong verbs of class VII. To call this aggregation a "class" is misleading, since the members of class VII show far more variety, both within each language and between languages, than those of classes I-VI. To do justice to the data, even the most cursory overview must distinguish five structurally defined subclasses:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>subclass</th>
<th>infinitive</th>
<th>ON</th>
<th>OHG</th>
<th>OS</th>
<th>OE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VII a.</td>
<td>*haitan 'call'</td>
<td>her</td>
<td>hiz</td>
<td>kēt</td>
<td>hēt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII b.</td>
<td>*hlaupan 'run'</td>
<td>hījōp</td>
<td>hīlof</td>
<td>hūop</td>
<td>hīlop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII c.</td>
<td>*halan 'hold'</td>
<td>hēlt</td>
<td>hīlt</td>
<td>hōld</td>
<td>hōlaws</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII d.</td>
<td>*rēdan 'advise'</td>
<td>rēd</td>
<td>rīat</td>
<td>rōd</td>
<td>rōd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII e.</td>
<td>*volpjan 'cry'</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

20 One of the main things to be said for such guesses is that they provide a "floor" for other speculations. The availability of a typologically reasonable interpretation along the lines of the Old Norse forms in -r in makes it unnecessary to ponder laryngeal constructions like Lehmann's "bērskōw" (1952: 59). The apparent use of -r as a hiatus-breaker in OHG 3 pl. pret. scrūan (scrinu 'shoot') is not closely related to our problem, if at all; cf. Braune-Reiffenstein (277). The latter contamination of scrūan with *spīwōn 'spit' (spīwōn: perspīrōn) was a development internal to Old High German.

21 The form given for each language is the 3 sg. pret.; the stem of the plural is identical except as otherwise noted.

22 Alongside scōtā.

23 3 pl. hījō, hījēgu < *hewunum.

24 3 pl. finns, fenes.

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The facts can be summarized as follows. Verbs with *-ai- (VII a) in the present form their preterites in ON *-₄, OHG *-i₄-, OS *-₄, OE *-₄ – the vowel traditionally reconstructed as PGmc. and NWGmc. *-₄-. Verbs with roots in *-ar- (VII b) form their preterites in *-eu- (cf. § 30). Verbs with *-₄-, followed by a tautosyllabic liquid or nasal (VII c) show fluctuation, with apparent reflexes of *-₄- (OHG, OE (in part)), *-₄- (ON, OS, OE (in part)), and *-eu- (OE (in part)). Verbs with *-₄- (i.e., *-₄-, or *-₄-), VII d show *-₄-. Verbs with *-₄- (VII e) show *-eu- in West Germanic and *-₄- in North Germanic (where, however, blét is the only example). The near-consensus view is that at the Northwest Germanic stage types VII a (*-ai-) and VII d (*-₄-) had preterites in *-₄-, while types VII b (*-ar-) and VII e (*-₄-) had preterites in *-eu-. There is no consensus regarding VII c (*-ar-); the leading contenders are *-₄- and *-₄-.

§ 8. Where did these forms come from? Many attempts have been made to answer this question; a short but useful overview, with references to the older literature, is given by Fulk (1987). By any reckoning, the first “cut” in any classification of attempted solutions must be between theories that try to derive class VII preterites like *he₄₂, *heu₄p, etc. from earlier reduplicated forms, and those that treat class VII ablaut and reduplication as largely independent phenomena. To a modern sensibility the latter would seem an exceedingly unpromising approach – a gross violation of the principle of Occam’s Razor, if nothing else. But to the Neogrammarians, with their fondness for phonological explanations and disdain of analogy, the absence of a direct phonetic pathway between ε reconstruction like PGmc. *he₄₂ and the attested ON hé₂t, OHG hiz₂t, OE hêt₂t, etc. made the invention of a new PIE preform – in this case a long-diphthongal “heavy base” *k₁ē₂d₂ – an acceptable recourse. Such structures, with attendant special assumptions about the later treatment of the diphthongs *ět₂ and *ē₂t, lie at the heart of the “Brugmann-Wood” theory, which was independently propounded by its German and American co-inventors in 1895. The approach had influential supporters for a time, notably including Prokosch (1939: 176 ff.). With the advent of the laryngeal theory and other revisions in the Neogrammariam model of the protolanguage, however, its Indo-European basis disappeared.¹³

A scholar who tried to retain the advantages of an ablaut-based approach without committing himself to the specific claims of the Brugmann-Wood theory was van Coetsen (1956). Van Coetsen viewed the ablaut patterns of class VII as an inner-Germanic surrogate for reduplication. Unlike most of his contemporaries, he saw *-₄- rather than *-₄- as the original vocalism of the preterite in verbs of type VII c; the *-₄-: *-e- alternation in *h₁ad₂₂ : *h₁e₂p (VII b). He then went a step further, arguing that since the preterites *h₁ad₂ and *h₁e₂p represented “neo-e-grade” alterations of *h₁ad₂ and *h₁e₂p, respectively, a preterite like *h₂l₂₂ (VII a) could be seen as a neo-e-grade form of *h₁a₂₂. This, unfortunately, entailed the claim that PIE *ei could give *₄i₂ as well as *i₂ in Germanic – a position that proved virtually impossible to defend in the face of overwhelming evidence that the change of *ei to *i was unconditioned. Nor was van Coetsen able to explain how the putative *a : *e ablaut pattern could have arisen in the first place.²⁰ Yet despite the failure of his overall scheme, his structural arguments for a short vowel in type VII c (*h₁d₂₂) were an important and constructive contribution.

§ 9. The majority of class VII theories have assumed that *k₁ē₂d₂, *heu₂p, etc. were formally based on reduplicated forms – either directly, via some regular phonological process, or indirectly, by analogy to forms that were regularly descended from reduplicated prototypes. In the pre-Neogrammariam period, the favored phonological mechanism was contraction – a preference rendered seductively attractive by the early-established practice of using the k-initial verb *h₄₂₂ and its supposed preterite *h₄₂₂ as the all-purpose exemplar of the class. Later, with the discovery of Verner’s Law and the principle of regularity of sound change, the contraction approach lost some of its luster. It was much harder to derive *k₁ē₂d₂ (or *h₁ē₂t) from *he₂₂ (or *he₂₂t) in the constrained

¹³ One of the major contributions of the laryngeal theory was to simplify the theory of PIE ablaut. As a result, it is no longer useful or possible to distinguish a special class of “heavy” or “long-diphthongal” roots with distinctive vocalization patterns. The e-grade of the hypothetical root form *k₁ē₂d₂ would not have been an appropriate vocalism for the perfect, root sorit, or any other PIE category likely to have yielded a preterite in Germanic.

The presentation below will assume a standard three-laryngeal, five-vowel model of PIE phonology, along the lines of Ruhmer (1980). There is no comparably authoritative guide to PIE morphology, but Fortson (2004) gives a good overview of the framework adopted here.

²⁰ The mechanism he proposed was based on a kind of reverse analogy: since verbs of the “e-series” (i.e., with e-grade present) had preterites in *-e- (< *-IE *e-), verbs of the “o-series” were provided with preterites in *-e-. It was not an intuitively plausible idea, and no parallels have ever been found.
world of Neogrammian sound change than it had been to derive it from *hehtait in the days of Jakob Grimm. 27

§ 10. Modern contraction-based approaches start from the reduplicating verbs with vowel-initial roots — the one subgroup that can be confidently assumed to have contained underlying sequences of reduplication vowel + root vowel (*e-a-, *e-a-, etc.) at a stage when reduplication was still a living process. Fulk (1987: 162) counts six such items: *ałkan (Go. af-ałkan 'deny'), *ałban (Go. us-ałban 'grow old'), *arjan (OHG erian 'plough'), *auclan (OE pte. ǣtian, OE ǣdan 'grant-ed'), ON melism 'fated'), *aukan (Go. onuken, ON uka 'increase'), and *ausan (ON ussa 'pour'). This list, however, gives a misleading picture. *Auclan is nowhere attested as a verb, but is known only from its lexicalized past participle; *ałban is confined to Gothic as a finite verb and has no attested preterite. *Arjan has a rare class VII preterite iar in Old High German, but its structure is not that of a reduplicating verb, and its preterite in the other early Germanic languages is weak. 29 Of the three remaining examples, *ausan is found only in Old Norse (auza: pret. jök), while finite forms of *añkan are almost entirely confined to Gothic (af-añkan : af-añk). 29 The only vowel-initial reduplicating verb with anything approaching a robust profile in both East and Northwest Germanic is *aukan (Go. onuken : aukan, ON uka : jök), and even here West Germanic only has a lexicalized participle (OE ǣcen, OHG ouuhan). Fulk's six verbs, in short, are an unimpressive foundation on which to construct an analogical theory of class VII. 30

Nevertheless, such a theory is exactly what Fulk proposes. In his view, it was precisely the sequence *e-a- in *e-ak 'promised' (vel sim.) *e-a- in *e-ak 'increased', and *e-a- in *e-ar 'plowed' that furnished the analogical basis for the creation of forms like *h-e-a-it (> *hēt) from *heitan, *hl-e-a-up (> *hlæup) from *hlæuan, and *h-e-a-l (> *hēld) from *helden. Early spellings like heaz (heizan) and leaz (lazan) show, he says, that the contraction product envisaged by his theory was still diasyllabic in Old High German. This is a striking claim, but the orthographic evidence cited in support of it (167 ff.) is anything but clear. Old High German is a language of dialects, and the corpus, especially in the earlier period, is sufficiently sparse that each documentary source must be examined on its own terms. In the absence of any detailed philological analysis, I can see nothing in the orthographic statistics provided by Fulk to challenge the usual view that *e was an intermediate phonetic stage between archaic /i/ (i.e., e) and "classical" in, i.e, (cf. Braun-Reifenstein 38 ff.).

A particularly awkward set of facts for Fulk's account is the orthographic situation in the texts of the Old High German "Isidore group" (8th-9th c.). Here *e is normally represented by ea, both in class VII preterites (e.g., 3 sg. opt. fērleazisi) and elsewhere (e.g., hear 'here'), but the class VII preterites of the verbs gungan 'go', fēhān 'take', and hōhan 'hang' are written with -e (kenc, infenc, arhēc, etc.; cf. Braun-Reifenstein 289). The standard interpretation of these spellings is that they represent a short vowel. Yet if the -e- of kenc, infenc, etc. is short, it must either be original, which would be inconsistent with the contraction theory, or it must have been shortened. Arguing against shortening is the fact that Old High German freely tolerates sequences of long vowel (or diphthong) + nasal + stop; cf. the present participles in -ōnti, -ēnti, -ēnti, the preterite suont (stanstan 'stand'), and the common "regular" form feong, fēang itself. It is thus not clear whether kenc, infenc, etc. can be reconciled with the contraction theory at all — a point to which we will refer again in § 28. At the very least, these forms are an embarrassment for Fulk's theory of diasyllabic -e-, since if they are by some chance explainable as shortenings, the only forms they could have been shortened from would have been *gēng, *fēng, etc., with monophthongal *-ē. 31

§ 11. More recent defenses of the contraction theory add little or nothing to the basic picture. d'Alquen (1997) argues that the *e- of Fulk's analogical forms *he-e-a-it (> *hēt), *hl-e-a-up (> *hlæup), and *he-e-a-l (> *hēld) (cf. above) was synchronically analyzed as an infix, thus making it possible, e.g., for speakers to create preterites like OE blēot (i.e., *bl-e-a-t) without the model of an inherited reduplicating verb in initial *ō. 32 This observation may or may not be valid as a technical improvement on Fulk's system. Technical improvements, however, are not what is needed. The fundamental problem with the contraction theory is that the handful of mostly rare and obsolescent verbs that are supposed to
have mediated the transition from reduplication to ablaut are utterly unsuited to the analogical role assigned to them. Kortlandt, another of the contraction theory’s post-Fulk defenders, admits as much when he says (1991: 98), “It is not evident that these forms [*eauk, etc. – JJ] sufficed to generate a wholesale restructuring of the reduplicated preterit. We may therefore have to look for a more powerful model, which can only have been supplied by a high frequency verb.” Unfortunately, Kortlandt’s “more powerful model” comes from OE ðæðe ‘went’, a form whose relevance to the problem of class VII does not emerge from his presentation.

§ 12. The main alternative to contraction, for those who reject this approach, is a mixture of syncope and compensatory lengthening. The modern tradition here can be said to have begun with Bech (1969), whose solution, greatly modernized and improved, is presented in a pair of overlapping publications by Vennemann (Vennemann 1994, 1997). The kernel of the Bech-Vennemann theory consists of three claims:

1) the synchronically opaque reduplicated forms *hegait [–γ] (*hægait), *sleþep (*sleþep), *fæbæll [–β] (*fæbæl) ‘fall’, *hæg ‘hæg’, etc. were reanalyzed as containing infix material (Bech: “infixes” *-eg-, *-az-, etc.; Vennemann: “apophthongs” *-egi-, *-az-, etc.).

2) the enormous variety of infixes (apophthongs) was reduced by analogically generalizing *-z- as the consonant in all cases: *hezait, *sleþep, *jezoll, *hæzep, etc.;

3) syncope brought the infixed *-z- (Bech) or its descendant *-R (Vennemann) into contact with the following consonant, where it was lost with compensatory lengthening and dialectally variable breaking or rounding effects (*heRai > *heRi > *hæi, *sleRep > *sleüp, *fæRæl > *fe(o)Ræl > *fi(o)ll, *hæRæp > *hæ(e)Ræp > *h(e)Ræp).

We will examine these claims below, taking Vennemann (1997) as our point of departure.

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13 Bech’s and Vennemann’s preforms differ in detail; for purposes of summarizing, I here follow the convention of citing reduplicated forms with the vocalism they had, or would have had, in Gothic. Vennemann’s specific reconstructions (*hegait for *hegait, *sleþep for *sleþep, etc.) will be discussed in § 16.

14 With breaking of *-e- to *-o-, according to Vennemann, in pre-Old English — hence OE ðæð but OHG ðal.

15 With break, according to Vennemann, in West Germanic only — hence OE ðæ-, OHG ða-, but ON ð-.

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16 Bech supposes a different but similar analogical sequence: *seaz led to *rez, whence in turn *rezø.

17 The same point is made by d’Alquen (op. cit. 78-9), from whom the latter two examples are taken.
to process at the beginning of the word, and harder to process in the middle, than its Proto-Germanic ancestor. This is what led, according to Bech and Vennemann, to the next major step in the evolution of class VII.

§ 14. It is not easy to be sure how mature native speakers of Northwest Germanic, who easily processed reduplicated forms of the type *lelōt, *rerōd, *wewōp, etc. 38 would have internalized more complex reduplicated structures like *slesen, *fēball, or *hēgōp (by now *hewōp). Vennemann, following Bech, supposes that new speakers, unable to master the true principle of reduplication, generalized *-z- as the internal consonant everywhere, producing forms of the type *fesai̯l, *hwezōp, *lezōt, *hezai̯t, and *hlezai̯p alongside "correct" *slesen. To this a skeptic might note that it is not obvious why *-z- would specifically have been selected for this purpose, since, by Vennemann’s own reckoning, only seven verbs had *-z- in this position, no more than the number that had *-q- or *-w-. 39 What is obvious is Vennemann’s reason for picking *-z-. As he puts it (309-10), [we are] looking for that consonant which (a) never preserved as such in the middle of a word, which is however (b) sometimes reflected as z, which has (c) something to do with the origin of e, and which (d) is prone to cause breaking of a preceding short e. As is well known, there is only a single consonant of that sort ... and that is the consonant *z-. In other words, the reason for positing intermediate prefixes *fesai̯l, *hwezōp, *lezai̯t, etc., rather than, say, *fagai̯l, *hwegai̯l, *legai̯t or *fewai̯l, *hewōp, *lewōt is that Vennemann expects the forms with *-z- to be useful later.

There is, of course, nothing wrong with pursuing a line of argument because we expect it to be productive, and Vennemann is to be commended for making his reasoning explicit. But his candor makes it doubly urgent to ask whether the extension of *-z- to all reduplicated forms makes sense as a real linguistic change carried out by flesh and blood speakers — speakers with no linguistic training and no foreknowledge of the syncope and compensatory lengthenings that Vennemann sees looming around the corner. My own sense is that it does not... I suspect that the learners of an early Germanic language, to the extent they judged forms like *fēball or *hewōp or *hēzai̯t to be opaque, would have done their best to memorize them one at a time, just as learners of modern English memorize mice as the plural of mouse and feet as the plural of foot. No doubt there would have been learning errors and low-level analogies, as in any language with complex morphology. But if a reduplicated preterite proved impossibly difficult to process or recall, there was always a simple recourse — to cut the Gordian knot and replace it with a weak (dental) preterite. This is certainly what happened a few centuries later, as, e.g., in Old High German, where all the verb pura became weak (cf. § 6). To assume, as Bech and Vennemann do, that speakers of Northwest Germanic would have segmented the mass of reduplicated preterites into discontinuous roots and infixes (vel sim.), one of which was then generalized, seems to me a bit like expecting speakers of English to create analogical plurals *fēe (: foot), *giss ( : goose) and *mine (: man) by generalizing the uninflected vowel of mice.

§ 15. Admittedly, this is all rather impressionistic. But there are other reasons to be doubtful of the alleged propagation of *-z-. Looking at the clear reflexes of reduplicated forms in North and West Germanic, one is struck by how little *-r- and *-z- seem to have spread beyond their etymological base. In Old Norse, the internal -r- of rera and grera simply is the (-r-) of the roots rō- and grō-, and the internal -r- of sera and snera goes back, via *-z-, to the -s- of sē- and snē-. 40 The only analogical forms are grera ( : grīna) and the marginal bnera, both obviously based on snera. On the other hand, there is no *glera to gīo (glo) ‘glow’ or *fēla to fīo (fīo) ‘flow’, which are both weak; no *bēra to bīa (bīa) ‘dwell’, which has been incorporated in class VII (pret. sg. bhō); and no *mera to *mē (mē) ‘wear down’, which is again weak. This is not the distribution we would have expected if *-z- had been tirelessly productive; *bēra (< *bezd < *bezd) and *mera (< *mezd) would in that case have been just as likely to turn up as snera and sēra (< *sezd).

38 Or, mutatis mutandis, Vennemann’s *lelōt ( : *léōt), *rerōd ( : *rīōt), *wewōp ( : *wōpjan, see below), which, with their completely predictable root vocalism, would have been even easier to process.
39 Vennemann’s examples of verbs that would have reduplicated with internal *-z-, based on Seebold (1970), are *sēmā, *sēnōwjan – *sēnāt, *sēpān, *swēpan ‘sleep’, *sēwōpan ‘sound’, *sultān ‘salt, spice’, and *sēwō ‘sacrifice’ (: ON só, no preterite attested). This inventory is in fact somewhat misleading. As we shall see in §§ 33-4, the three verbs with initial *sw- actually reduplicated with internal *-w- in Northwest Germanic; on the other hand, Vennemann burrs his own case by assuming that initial *sp-, *st-, and *sk- reduplicated with an internal stop rather than *-z- (*sōtai̯, *sκraekai̯, etc.). Verbs whose reduplicated forms would have had an internal *-z- in Vennemann’s system include *gēzan, *gangai̯, *gētai̯ ‘cry’, *hōtai̯, *kaikai̯, *kōkai̯, *kwai̯ai̯, *kwōpan, *hētai̯ ‘low’, and *hōpan ‘call’. An internal *-w- would have been expected in *wai̯ai̯ ‘roll’, *wai̯ai̯ ‘ball’, *wai̯ai̯ ‘rube’, *wai̯ai̯ ‘swing’, *wōpjan, *wētai̯ ‘blow’, *hwōpan ‘boast’, *hwētai̯ ‘curse’, and *hwō ‘cough’; see below.

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Similarly, in Old High German, three of the four older *r*-preterites are etymologically "correct": the *r*- of *pleruzzan goes back, with dissimilation, to the -r- of the initial cluster in *bluozan; the *r*- of *stëroz goes back, via *z-, to the *r*- of *stëzan; and the *r*- of *screvot could go back to either the *s*- or the *r*- of *scozian. The only wholly analogical form is the verbum purum *birun, which was discussed in § 6. Once again, if *z-* had been extended to the whole set of reduplicated preterites, this is not what we would expect from a random foursome of survivors.

The z-propagation hypothesis is directly refuted by the Anglian forms *heht, *rocd, etc., not one of which shows an unetymological *z-* from *s-z- (*sord, dissimilated from *slofitt, is at best ambiguous). Venne mann explains this by invoking the supposed failure of the Anglian dialects to participate in the main line of class VII development. But it beggars belief that an event so early and so basic as the putative spread of *s-z- could have taken place in some Old English dialects and not others. Anglian, it must not be forgotten, has class VII preterites too.

§ 16. Let us, however, suppose that Bech and Vennemann are right, and that preforms of the type *fægal, *hwæg, *lezd, *hylæau, and *sleðp once served, at least over most of the Northwest Germanic area, as the reduplicated or "infixed" preterites of *fallan, *hwægan, *lætan, *haitan, *hlauman, and *sleðan. Two major steps in the extended scenario now remain: a) syncope, which brought the *z-, now rhotacized to *R- in Vennemann's version of the theory, into contact with the root-final consonant or consonants; and b) compensatory lengthening, which in the simplest cases had the effect of converting the resulting *-eRc- sequences to *-eC-.

In order to evaluate the syncope rule, we will first have to resolve some of the details concerning the exact shape of the pre-syncope forms. In place of the semi-formulaic *fægal, *hwæg, etc. which we have been using thus far, Vennemann (306-8) operates with quite specific and for the most part different preforms:

*fallan  pret. *feRall
*hwægan  pret. *hweRop
*lætan  pret. *leRet
*haitan  pret. *heRit
*hlauman  pret. *hlæRup
*sleðan  pret. *sleRop

The first case, *fallan : *feRall, is straightforward; *feRall is simply the inherited form *fægal, with *-R/-z- substituted for *-b- ex hypot. But the other forms immediately raise questions. Vennemann tells us that "after the accent shift to the beginning of words, the old preterit root vocalism was shortened and, except for the verbs pura, became a function of the defining vocalism of the present tense root form." In keeping with this principle, he sets up *hweRop with a shortened form of the vowel of *hwægan, and *sleRop and *leRet with shortened versions of the vowel of *sleðan and *lætan, respectively.

The *-s-z- of *heRit (: *haitan) and the *-u-z- of *hlæRup (: *hlauman) are similarly to be understood as the shortening products of *-at- and *-au-. But no other examples are cited in support of this rule, for which I can find no basis in the known phonological history of Northwest Germanic. All the evidence indicates that long vowels were not shortened in unaccented (= non-initial) syllables in Northwest Germanic, or even in West Germanic. Indeed, they still remain long in Old High German; it is useful, as a "reality check," to recall the class II weak verbs (type *salbön 'amoint', 3 sg. *salbôb), with an *-ô- that is still marked with a caret by Notker around the year 1000 AD (*salbôn, -ôi). The partly parallel class III weak verbs illustrate the treatment of the unaccented diphthong *-ai-: cf. OFG habèt 'has' < WGmc. *habeþ < PGmc. *habôþ.

To be sure, it is conceivable, for reasons apparently not suspected by Vennemann, that some of his "shortened" forms are actually correct. While no sound law could have produced *heRit or *hlæRup from preforms like *heRait or *hlæRap, it is not out of the question that the original preterite paradigms of these verbs had ablaut (3 sg. *hegalt, *heglaus : 3 pl. *hegaltun, *heglausun), and that the weak stems *hegit (= *heRit) and *hegup- (= *hlæRup) were generalized in Northwest Germanic. And although there is no phonological basis for Vennemann's *leRet, the form his theory really requires is *leRit, which could

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41 Cf. note 38. No principle is given for why the verbs pura were exempt from these developments — why, e.g., the preterite of *slætan was not remade from *sleðo to *slefe at the same time the preterite of *lætan was remade from *leðo to *lefe, that of *slætan was remade to *rehed, etc.

42 Vennemann offers no discussion of this point, other than to remark (307) that shortening is also assumed by Lüdke (1957).
easily have been obtained by substituting \(*R\) for \(*-I\) in the ancient weak stem \(*intel\) (cf. § 5). Inner-paradigmatic ablaut differences, however, do not seem to play a role in Vennemann’s thinking.\(^{41}\)

§ 17. The actual syncope events by which \(*feRall, *hweRep, *leRei, *heRei, *heRei, and \(*slaRep\) supposedly yielded \(*feRll, *hwe(oe)Rep, *leRei, *heRei, *hleoRp, and \(*slaRp\) are only fleetingly discussed by Vennemann, who is more concerned with abstractly motivating syncope in terms of foot structure than with confronting the concrete evidence that, for Northwestern German at the relevant period, no such process actually took place. In fact, it is easy to show that Vennemann’s preforms could not have had the treatments he claims for them. \(*heRei\), the alleged source of OE \(he\)t, etc. via \(*heRe\), has a close match in NWGmc. sg. \(*nazi\) > \(*naRei\) ‘saves, redeems’ (: \(*nazian\), class I weak); yet the daughter forms retain the \(-R\)- in West Germanic (OHG \(ner\), OS \(ner\), OE \(nere\)) and only lost it after \(-i\)-umlaut in Old Norse (cf. \(tel\) ‘counts’ < \(*talip\).\(^{45}\) Likewise telling is the West Germanic retention of the stem vowel in the nom. sg. of \(-i\)- and \(-u\)-stem nouns (cf. OS \(wini\), OE \(wine\) \‘friend\’ < \(*wini\); \(^{46}\) OHG OS OE \(suna\) \‘son\’ < \(*suna\).) The famous fifth-century Galileus inscription, executed long after the rise of class VII ablaut, at a time when the Angles and Saxons were already beginning their conquest of Britain, contains at least four examples of retained stem vowels, including \(-a\)- as well as \(-i\)-, in metrically weak position: ek \(HhewaganatiR\) \(holi\)\(ta\)\(R\) \(horna\) \(taw\)\(ld\)\(a\) \‘H… made the horn’. The facts are too well known to require further illustration here. There is no way that Vennemann’s syncope could have taken place in time for the next step in the drama: the sound change by which \(*heRe\) became \(*he\)t, \(*slaRp\) became \(*sla\), \(*heRei\) became \(*hleoRp\), etc.

§ 18. The purported change of \(*heRe\) to \(*he\)t is the culminating event in the Bech-Vennemann scenario, the development which, if legitimate, would justify all the leaps of faith made thus far. It may come as a surprise, therefore, to learn that the evidence is unambiguously against posting such a rule for Northwestern German. Vennemann and others who derive NWGmc. \(*he\)t from \(*heRe\) attach great importance to PGmc. \(*mizdo(\text{gl})\) ‘pay, reward’ (Go. \(mis\)), a word that appears in Old High German as \(mi\)\(ta\) < \(meta\), in Old Saxon as \(mada\), and in Old English as both \(med\) (West Saxon) and \(meord\) (Anglian). The twofold treatment of the \(*-R\)- in Old English, which recalls the difference between WS \(red\) and Anglian \(reord\), is indeed striking. But as a more thorough inspection of the data reveals, it is also completely unsystematic — in effect, an accident. Preconsonantal \(*-R\)- has two outcomes in West Germanic: \(^{-1}\)-, as in \(meord\); and loss with compensatory lengthening, as in \(med\), \(mêda\), etc. The first is the normal result, found in a number of words running through West Germanic, e.g., OS OE \(hord\), OHG \(hort\) \‘treasure’ (cf. Go. \(hzed\)); OHG OS marg, OE \(me\)\(arg\) ‘marrow’ (cf. OCS \(mo\)\(g\)), etc.; OHG \(var\), OE \(reord\) \‘voice’ (cf. Go. \(raz\)); OHG \(ort\), OS OE \(ord\) \‘point’; OHG \(gart\), OS \(gard\), OE \(gier\) \‘stick, prickle’ (cf. Go. \(gas\)). The second treatment — disappearance with compensatory lengthening — is less common. Here the \(-R\)-less variants are normally found alongside forms of the “normal” type, as in the case of \(meord/mê\(d\).\) Other words showing both treatments are OS \(lin\)\(n\) \‘learn’ beside OHG \(lin\)\(n\), OE \(lear\); OE \(t\)\(lin\) \‘linen, twine’ beside MHG \(zwir\), MLG \(t\)\(wir\); and MD \(he\)\(de\) ‘hards of flux’ beside OE \(keord\). Note also OE \(g\)\(ad\) \‘goad’, probably an \(-R\)-less member of the family of \(gier\) < \(*gaz\).\) The impression created by these forms is that the \(l\)\(ass\) + lengthening scenario was a late and dialectal development, perhaps starting somewhere in the northern (Anglo-Saxonic?) area and spreading geographically on a word-by-word basis.\(^{46}\) This is not the kind of rule that would have launched a transformative restructuring in West Germanic, much less in the Northwestern Germanic period.

Any lingering hope that \(*he\)t and \(*sla\) might nevertheless still be traceable to \(*heRe\) and \(*slaRp\) is dispelled by the evidence from North Germanic. Vennemann states (299) that the change of \(*-R\)- to \(*-e\)– occurred everywhere in Germanic except Gothic and Anglian,” but he cites no examples from Old Norse. This is not surprising, because there are none. The rules for the treatment of \(*R\)- before oral and nasal obstruents in West Norse are quite simple (cf. Noreen (1923: 164): \(*-R\)-

\[^{41}\text{Indeed, Vennemann expressly takes issue (127) with Bamnesberger (1986: 63), whose position on \(*her\), \(*her\), etc. is the same as that adopted here. See further § 23.}\)

\[^{45}\text{Note also the retention of the \(\(he\) \(R\)- in the proterite in West Germanic (OHG \(her\), OS \(ner\), OE \(ner\)), Old Norse does have syncope here (talan).}\)

\[^{46}\text{The development of \(-i\) from \(*iz\) in \(\text{\`}\)v관 in West Germanic is pan-West Germanic. Although ending was mostly lost in Old High German under the influence of the \(\text{\`}\)v관 stem (type \(ans\) < \(*iz\) \‘grace’), it is still preserved in \(\text{\`}\)v관 \text{utterance} and a few other words. Cf. Brunau-Reiffenstein (2002 f.).}\)

\[^{47}\text{Actually three, if one counts the development in the 2 pl. pronoun \(*tv\)\(i\)\(h\) > \(*tv\)\(ih\)\(h\) (OHG \(tv\)\(ih\), OS \(iu\), OE \(iv\)\(ih\)).}\)

\[^{48}\text{According to a forthcoming paper by Sean Crist, OHG \(mi\)\(za\), the most conspicuous German word to show the lengthening treatment, was an early trilo-related borrowing from a pre-Old Saxon dialect.}\)

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gives *-d-, as in hodd ‘treasure’ (*Go. hadda, etc.), rodd ‘voice’ (*Go. razda, etc.), oddr ‘point’ (*OE OE ord, etc.), gaddr ‘prickle’ (*Go. gards, etc.), haddr ‘long hair’ (*OE hīd); *-R- gives *-nn-, as in ramm ‘house’ (*Go. raum), for ‘wave’ (*Go. hinn), probably twinnia ‘to duplicate’ (*Go. twinn, etc.); and *-R- before other stops gives *-n-, as in merga ‘marrow’ (*OHG OS mara, etc.). Under Vennemann’s reconstruction of the preform, the preterite of ON riddu should have been *rednd, not red. It follows that the compensatory lengthening approach, at least in any form resembling its Bch-Vennemann version, is untenable and must be abandoned.

§ 19. In § 1, at the very outset of our discussion, I likened the task before us to that of a cook in search of a recipe. Many ingredients have accumulated over the years: syncope, contraction, exotic forms of ablaut, compensatory lengthening, analogical shortening, “slope displacement,” accent shifts—all variably suitable in absolute and relative time. Nothing important by now is likely to have been missed; the solution to the problem of class VII, if and when it is found, will almost certainly consist of some assortment of the above elements, measured out and combined in a new and better way. In the belief that such a formula exists, is in principle discoverable, and is even in a sense waiting to be found, some thoughts can now be offered toward a new solution.

§ 20. Let us begin by viewing the problem in perspective. Proto-Germanic had reduplicated preterites; the rationale for their existence as a class has been discussed in §§ 2-3. In Gothic these forms were maintained and preserved, while in Northwest Germanic they were mostly replaced by the strong (ablauting) preterites of class VII. Why do we find this difference? The answer, in the last analysis, lies in the fact that reduplicated preterites in Proto-Germanic were relatively opaque and hard to learn, being characterized, in individual cases, by a) incomplete reduplication of initial clusters, b) Verner’s Law alternations between the reduplication syllable and the root proper, and c) partly unfamiliar ablaut differences between singular and plural. In Gothic vigorous measures were taken to improve the transparency of recduplication: Verner’s Law effects were suppressed, ablaut alternations were analogically eliminated, and the reduplication vowel was everywhere generalized as *-ai-[-e]. The case of Northwest Germanic was different. Here, although there were transparency-enhancing changes as well, notably in the treatment of initial clusters, the overall pace and scope of the “improvements,” such as they were, was insufficient to keep reduplication alive as a living process. Rather, as shown by the few remnants that survive in Old Norse, Old English, and Old High German, the forms ceased to be parsable as what they really were—reduplicated preterites—and either became completely unanalyzable or were misparsed as something else. The latter is what we see in ON sara, snara, etc. The survival and minor productivity of this small subclass was due to the fact that the 1 sg. forms in *-a (sara < *se-nō < *se-sōhã-r-e, etc.) happened to end in the same vowel as the 1 sg. of the dental preterite in -ba (cf. talda < PGmc. *talabã). Speakers could therefore reanalyze a 1 sg. like sara as an anomalous dental preterite, with -r- taking the place of -b-. Since the plural forms in *-um, -udd, -ru lent themselves to this analysis as well (cf. *tehum, -audder, -uru), it only remained for the 2 sg. (historically probably *serust; cf. *Go. saisost) and 3 sg. (historically *sara < *se-nō < *se-sohã-e) to follow suit and take on the weak endings as well. The attested 2 and 3 sg. forms are serir and seri, respectively, mimicking the dental preterite forms taldur, -bu.

The development of the reduplicated preterite *se-nō < *-sē, *-ōt, *-ō into the quasi-weak preterite sara, -ir, -i provides an obvious model for understanding the extraction of the quasi-strong preterite *hēxt, *hēst, *hēdst from reduplicated *hegani, *heganist, *hegani. Clearly, some initial group of remodeled reduplicated forms was reinterpreted as having ablaut, and the rest of class VII “took off” from this nucleus. This is the communis opinio, and it will be upheld here. In one respect, however, our starting assumptions will differ from those of many earlier researchers. Over the century from Brugmann to Vennemann, the problem of the origin of class VII has been repeatedly confused with another, quite separate question—that of the origin of PGmc. *e₂. The mixup is understandable, since one of the goals of a theory of class VII must be to explain why *hēst contains *e₂, and the regular phonological source of this vowel is unknown. But a complete account of class VII must not only explain why the preterite of *haitan is *hēst, it must also explain why the preterite of *hlaupan is *hleup, and perhaps even why the preterite of *haldan was *held rather than *hēlð (cf. § 7). While the diaphthong *e₂ may lack the “mystery” of *e₂, the origin of the ablaut pattern *hlaupan: *hleup is just as obscure, and just as much in need of an explanation, as the origin of the pattern *haitan: *hēst. There is no reason why the class VII ablaut alternations involving *e₂ should be assumed to be more interesting a priori, or more “original,” than those involving *e and possibly *e₂.
One may wonder, therefore, whether the vowel *ë may not have become a kind of will-o’-the-wisp, repeatedly luring investigators into futile searches for “long-vowel” solutions to the class VII problem when it might be more productive to look for ways to generate e-colored vowels in general. The latter approach was tried unsuccessfully by van Coetsem fifty years ago (cf. §8). It is time to try again.

§21. The creation of class VII began with the first steps taken by Northwest Germanic speakers to improve the learnability of the reduplicated forms they inherited from their Germanic ancestors. The earliest such measure was what we may call the “new cluster rule.” Gothic, as discussed in §13, maintains the Proto-Germanic (and PIE) rule of reduplicating *CR- clusters as *C–.C– (C = any obstruent, R = any liquid or nasal; cf. fafrats, saislep, faflak ‘mourned’, gaigrot ‘wept’, etc.), while Northwest Germanic reduplicates *CR- as *C–.R– (cf. ON götr : grera, OE on-drickan : on-dreoc, OHG pluzzan : pleruzzan). Other initial clusters were similarly dealt with. *S-C- groups, which are copied outright in Gothic (cf. ga-staistad, af-skåiskalp ‘departed’), reduplicate as *S–.C–. in Northwest Germanic (cf. OHG sózran : steroz);46 for *S–R–, the one good example, ON snuta : snora, points to Northwest Germanic *S–.R–.Z–, contrasting with Gothic *S–.S–R– (saislep). The obvious generalization is that onset preservation (cf. §13) became the highest priority – in Optimality Theory terms, the highest-ranked violable constraint – for new speakers trying to acquire the reduplication system of their elders.

It has often been suggested (e.g., by Vennemann (306-7, 318 ff.) and van Coetsem (1990 passion)) that the changed reduplication rules of Northwest Germanic were a consequence of the movement of the accent

46 Given how little data we have, of course, it is impossible to be entirely confident about any of the rules relating to s-clusters. The reduplication pattern seen in steroz < *strezant, where the *s- is repeated word-internally, is at odds with the pattern in OE sgeol < *sgeol, where the stop is repeated. But the Old High German form fits better into the overall picture and looks older; it is easier to see how a pre-OE form of the type *sgeolt, with repetition of the *s-, could have been replaced by sgeolt (e.g., under the influence of befjolzt), than how a pre-OHG form of the type *strezant, with repetition of the *s-, might have become *strezant or *stereuent.

An interesting possibility, which time and space will not allow us to pursue here, is that the full reduplication of *s-stop clusters in Gothic was a Gothic innovation. Proto-Germanic, according to this line of thinking, would have had *stesnāt, *stesstāl, etc., with the same reduplication pattern as in most of the other early IE languages (cf. Lat. sitātō ‘take a stand’, Gk. ἀρέσκει < *hēskei, Av. hājati < *stāti, OH. āhastārā). Gothic would have replaced *s-C-s-C by *S–.S–.C– as part of its ongoing effort to enhance the transparency of reduplication wherever possible. This would help explain the fact that Gothic, remarkably, is the only language in the IE family to reduplicate *S-C-clusters in their entirety, without simplification of any kind.

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from the root to the reduplication syllable. The explanatory value of such statements is unclear. Since the establishment of word-initial stress was a development of the Proto-Germanic period, forms like Go. gaigrot and *staistaud were probably just as strongly accented on their first syllable as ON grera and OHG steroz; yet Gothic preserved the Proto-Germanic cluster reduplication rules intact. Vennemann (306-7) notes that the innovatory reduplication pattern seen in Lat. scičtī (< scičdī ‘split’), stērtī (< stēr ‘stand’), spoŋrōntī (< spoŋrōdī ‘promise’), etc. was the creation of a fixed initial stress phase in the history of Latin; he does not, however, mention the fact that Old and Middle Irish, which also had fixed initial stress, never wavered from the PIE system (cf. 3 sg. pret. bebrait (< bebraitī ‘farts’), ssecanī (< ssecanīdī ‘leaps’)). There is no way, in short, that the position of the accent could have been a determining factor in the restructuring of reduplication in Northwest Germanic. At best, it is probably safe to say that onset preservation of the Northwest Germanic type would never have been introduced into a language where the stress was systematically located somewhere other than on the initial syllable.

§22. Do the remains of reduplication in Old Norse, Old English, and Old High German allow us to detect any other common Northwest Germanic innovations in the treatment of these forms? The existence of “r-preterites” in both Old High German and Old Norse has sometimes been thought to be a historically important isogloss. But the agreement between the two languages in this respect is misleading. Only two of the Norse forms – rera and grera – even had an *r– in the Northwest Germanic period; the others – sera, snera, and the analogical gyro/bera owe their -*r- to an *R– < *Z– that remained distinct from the “normal” *r– for many centuries after the breakup of Northwest Germanic (and indeed North Germanic) unity. As far as the Old High German forms are concerned (cf. §6), at least one (steroz) and possibly another (kis-scroet) have etymological *Z–, while a third (pleruzzan, capleruzz) owes its -*r- to a low-level dissimilation of successive liquids (cf. also OE leort < *laet). This leaves only biraun, birrauis, which may indeed, as we have seen, reflect the former existence of a pre-Old High German class of r-preterites to verbis pura. But such a class, if it ever existed, would have been typologically, not genetically related to the Old Norse rera-type.

In fact, the development of r-preterites in both Old High German and Old Norse presents a textbook case of how closely related languages tend to evolve in parallel ways. Owing to a number of independent
not self-evident.\textsuperscript{51} Notwithstanding the shorthand formulation above, an actual proportion of the type *riñan, *leñen : *redan, *leñen : *redan, *leñen : *hautan, *bautan : *X is not likely; if the "pivot" of the analogy had simply been the infinitive, we would also have expected to find monosyllabic reduplicated preterites created to ordinary strong and weak verbs, as, e.g., prot. **lelpaun to *tłpan 'go', or even **səsəkun (**səseekəun?) to *sôkəm 'seek'.\textsuperscript{52} Nor can we assume a spontaneous shortening "epidemic" — a blind reduction of reduplicated preterites by one syllable simply in order to make them monosyllabic. Such a change could not have been implemented without some specific proportional model.

In fact, the easiest way to understand the process that created *heht-, *hefi-, etc. is to position it at a chronological point in the history of Old English prior to the leveling of the contrast between singular and plural stems. We could then envisage a proportion


where X was naturally solved as *heñtun, *beñtun, *dredun, *leñunu (\textit{-h}en, beñson, \textit{-dredun}, leñoolon). The underlying motivation for the change would have been an elementary acquisition error: since *verőd and *lelot (and possibly others now lost) appeared to "eject" the nucleus of their second syllable in the plural, learners mistakenly generalized the pattern to all reduplicated preterites, even in cases where the actual plural stem was disyllabic. The newly created *heñt-, *beñt-, etc., along with inherited *verd- and *lelt-, were subsequently extended to the singular.

\[ \text{§ 24. In the discussion that follows, the morphological process by which disyllabic weak stems of the type *heg(u)it-, *beb(u)it-, etc. were reduced to monosyllabic *heht-, *beht-, etc. will be referred to as com-} \]

\[ \text{\textsuperscript{51} I use the notations *heg(u)it-, *beb(u)it-, etc. to stand for the plural preterite stem in cases where we cannot be sure whether it had zero grade (*heg(-i), *beb(-i), etc.; cf. §6) or simply followed the vocalism of the singular (*hegait, *bebaut, etc.). In theory, the plural should have had zero grade in cases where the singular had 0-grade. In practice, however, a) not all singular forms really did have 0-grade (some had pre-Germanic *-e, *-e, or *-e-vocalism, with or without laryngeal involvement), and b) the possibility of early leveling from the singular to the plural can never be excluded. Caution is therefore indicated; for our present purposes a decision between the *hegait-, *bebaut- and *hegt-, *bebaut- options will not be necessary.} \]

\[ \text{\textsuperscript{52} Proto-Germanic did, of course, have reduplicating verbs in *jav; the present stem of *sôkəm (weak) was of exactly the same structure as that of *sôkəm (reduplicating).} \]

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pressian. The dating of compression, in this technical sense, is not exactly determinable. It is not likely to have been a very recent development in Old English, since it had to be earlier than the pre-Old English loss of the contrast between singular and plural stems. On the other hand, the singular: plural stem contrast survived beyond the breakup of West Germanic, as shown by the generalization of the strong stems pleruz- < *blelōt-, steroz- < *stewaz-, and -serot < *skraud- (< ?) in Old High German, contrasting with the generalization of *rerō-, *lelt- (+ compressed *leht- , etc.) in Old English. This means that compression can be dated almost anywhere within the proper history of Old English (i.e., between West Germanic and Old English); or within West Germanic (i.e., between Northwest Germanic and West Germanic); or within Northwest Germanic (i.e., between Proto-Germanic and Northwest Germanic). Since Old English is virtually the only Germanic language other than Gothic to offer evidence bearing on the form of plural stems, there is no independent reason to prefer one possible dating over another. All we know is that compression occurred somewhere on the Stammbaum pathway connecting Old English to Proto-Germanic; we are free to locate it wherever in that interval it proves convenient to place it for other reasons. As we shall see, all the signs point to the earlier end of our chronological range, in the Northwest Germanic period.

§ 25 Let us assume that the history of reduplicating verbs in Northwest Germanic began with two innovations: a) the new cluster rule (§ 21), and b) compression in the plural. Some typical results, using verbs we have already encountered, would have been the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proto-Germanic</th>
<th>Northwest Germanic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>*leltan</td>
<td>*lelōt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*redan</td>
<td>*rerōd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*senan</td>
<td>*sezō</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*blōtan</td>
<td>*beblōt</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

53) Further uncertain evidence is offered by ON seran (serian), *-u-, -e-, etc., apparently with zero-grade *so-z-, *so-z-. Full-grade plunks of the type Go. sisuxan (trisyllabic) would have given Old Norse plunks in *-onu-, *-au-, *-e-. It is doubtful, however, whether the endings (2 pl.) *-au and (3 pl.) *-e- would have survived long enough to be observed. Here and below, I assume the Northwest Germanic change of PГm. *e to *a.

54) Most of the forms in the Northwest Germanic columns are as good as attested. Old English preserves *leltun (> leorton), *rerudun (> rerordun), *lehtun (> lehton), and *beftun (> befton), and while the corresponding strong stems are not recorded in Old English, the structurally parallel *blōt and *stewaz are found in Old High German (cf. pleruzun, steroz).56 The paired *sezō: *sezun and *grērō: *grerun are directly continued by ON seran: stauran and grēran: grerun, respectively (but see note 53).

55) It is interesting to confront the Northwest Germanic treatment of reduplication, as illustrated above, with the situation in Gothic:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proto-Germanic</th>
<th>Gothic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>*leltan</td>
<td>leltan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*lelōt</td>
<td>lelōt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*leltun</td>
<td>laßun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*rerōd</td>
<td>rauhun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*rerudan</td>
<td>rauhun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*rīdan</td>
<td>rauhun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*sezō</td>
<td>zaissan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*sezun</td>
<td>zaissan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*grōan</td>
<td>haitun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*grērō</td>
<td>haitun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*grerun</td>
<td>haitun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*blōtan</td>
<td>blōtan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*beblōt</td>
<td>blōtan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The verbs *grauan, *blōtan, and *bautan are not found in Gothic, but if they had been, their precursors would uncontroversially have been *guigorun, *baiblotun, and *baibauun. Gothic, as we have seen, did more than Northwest Germanic to maintain the transparency of reduplication – a fact that obviously contributed to its survival in this language. Yet it is important not to exaggerate the degree to which forms like *leltun: *leltun, *hegtait: *hehtun, and *stewaz: *stewaz would have posed a problem for learners and speakers of Northwest Germanic. Proto-Northwest Germanic, like Proto-Germanic itself, was a language in which ablaut and even grammatischer Wechsel (i.e., Verner’s Law alternations) were still living processes. The new cluster rule

56) Given the absence of a secure etymology, it would be foolhardy to try to specify the vocalism of this form.

57) It is not clear to me whether the *-e- in the second syllable of OHG pleruz- is simply a variant spelling for *-o- (i.e., *-o-), the vowel we would have expected from NWГm. *-o- in this position, or whether it requires a special linguistic explanation. In the latter case, I would suggest that the immediate source of the Old High German forms may have been *blōt- rather than phonologically *correct *blōt- , with close *-e- analogically extended to the reduplicated preterite from the present *blōtun (*blōtun).

The preterite of Go. *stauan is fully predictable, though not attested.
and compression would never have been adopted if the resulting linguistic system had not in some sense been easier for speakers to deal with than the old one. The challenge for us is to determine why these “improvements” in the formation of reduplicated preterites nevertheless led to the rapid abandonment of reduplication and its replacement by the class VII ablaut system.

§ 26. At this point it is worth calling attention to a peculiar gap in our data. In our survey of the reduplicated preterites that remain in North and West Germanic (§§ 5-6) we met a total of five forms in Old Norse,\(^{58}\) seven in Old English, and four in Old High German. Of these sixteen, four were built to roots in *-e- (ON svar, OE recd, leovr, - dreowt), three to roots in *-er (ON svera, grera, OHG pleuzten), three to roots in *-ai- (OE healt, leoal, speof), three to roots in *-au- (OE beotf, OHG stere, -sceater), and three to roots in final *-a- (ON svera, gneral/bnera, OHG biruan). Four of the five basic root vocalisms (cf. § 7) associated with reduplicating and class VII verbs in *-at, *-au-, *-e-, and *-o- are thus included in our sample, along with the “irregular” vocalism *-a-. It is a curious fact, however, that there are no reduplicated forms to roots in *-a- plus tautosyllabic liquid or nasal. Since roots in *-ar- are actually numerically the commonest of the five phonological types that make up the basic membership of the reduplicating class, this is unlikely to be an accident.

§ 27. The reason why we find no traces of the reduplicated preterites of verbs of the type *haldan, *fanhan, etc. becomes clear as soon as we try to work out the details of what such forms would actually have looked like. In the case of *haldan, the Proto-Germanic reduplicated preterite would have been *hagald in the singular and either *hagaldun (with zero grade *guld-< *geld-) or *hagaldun (without synchronic ablaut) in the plural. In Gothic this was routinely normalized to the quasi-attested *hahald: *hahaldun. In Northwest Germanic the singular would have been maintained as *hagald, but the plural *hagaldun/*hagaldun would have been subject to compression. What, we must now ask, would the compression product of *hagaldun/*hagaldun have been? In the cases we have seen thus far, compression meant ejecting the vowel or diphthong of the second syllable: *he(t)un, *be(b)a(t)un was shortened to *he(t)un, *be(b)a(t)um was shortened to *be(t)um. Deleting the second vowel of *hag-

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\(^{58}\) Sacks operated with un-Vernorized preforms (*heahald, etc.) and conceived of what we have here called compression as an analogical process affecting singular and plural simultaneously. He formulated his discovery as follows:

"Let us now consider what might have happened to the *haldun class (7r). Replacing a *heahald- (attested in the Gothic type) with a monosyllabic *heald- would produce an indivisible cluster. But an analogical substitution of the vocalism of the reduplicating syllable, as in § 4.2 above [the reference is to compression of *heald- to *heald- etc. -- JH], could still create an unambiguous monosyllabic form: hence I posit the creation of a "heald-, which must easily accounts for the -e- of Old English and a few OE rhetic forms... It would also explain why it is precisely this sub-type which alone shows no trace of reduplication in Old West Germanic forms" (Sacks 1977: 244-5). It is unfortunate that this brilliant insight was never published in a mainstream journal.

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*hegold was thus replaced by *held, and the preterite of *haldan became non-alternating *held: *heldun.

The absence of reduplicated preterites of the type *hegold, *febanh, etc. in Old Norse, Old English and Old High German, was thus a result of the fact that such preterites were replaced by non-reduplicated forms with e-vocalism within Northwest Germanic itself.

§ 28. The reader will by now surely have sensed where our discussion is leading. The preterite *held(un), which we have almost literally stumbled upon by reconstructing forward from *hegold: *hegoldun (*guld), is actually one of the two main candidates for the Northwest Germanic class VII preterite of *haldan (cf. §§ 7-8). The other possible choice is *held(un). Our next task must be to try to decide between the two.

The descriptive facts are complicated and confusing. Old High German generally has *-ēr (hitalt), while Old Saxon and Old Norse mostly have *-ēr (OS held, ON helt). Old English substitutes *-ae in the majority of cases (heöald), but not in fôn ‘take’ or hön ‘hang’, where there is (late) evidence for both quantities (fëng, hëng; cf. Sievers-Brunner 1965: 307). There are also long-vowel forms in later varieties of Norse and Low German, and short-vowel forms in Old High German (kenc, ifenc, arhenc; cf. § 10).60

A valuable discussion of the whole range of data is provided by Fulk (1987: 169-72), whose object, in keeping with his contraction-based theory of class VII, is to argue for the priority of the long-vowel forms. Fulk is right to point out that short vowels, where we find them, are often explainable by late tautosyllabic shortening rules; this is a clear possibility in Old Norse, though not so obviously in Old High German. He fails, however, to appreciate the extent to which long-vowel forms can be unoriginal as well — borrowed from the types *haitan: *hët and *lätan (NWGmc. *lätan): *hët, where *-ēr was part of the system from the outset (see below). It is striking to realize that even the familiar OE helt, with its clear etymological short vowel, had -ē by the end of the Old English period (Campbell 1959: 306).61

It would take a dissertation-length treatment to sort through all the forms, in all the languages and dialects, that might in principle be brought to bear on the question of whether the original class VII form was *hëlt or *hëld. From the point of view of the data, both reconstructions are probably defensible, though the evidence of OHG see, etc., in my view, distinctly favors the short vowel. While *hëld has been the more usual assumption over the years, this has had more to do with the "e-centered" theory of the research tradition than with any actual merits of the long vowel choice over the short. In any case, since the philological evidence falls short of being absolutely dispositive, the decision must be made according to which form, *hëlt or *hëld, makes better sense within the context of an overall solution to the class VII problem. And by this criterion, for reasons we have now begun to discover, the answer is unequivocally *hëlt.

§ 29. The events chronicled in § 27, by which the reduplicated preterite *hegold: *heglan (and, of course, *febanh: *febell: *febellan, etc.) became first *heglad: *seldun (*febanh: *fengun, *febell: *fellun) and then simply *held: *heldun (*feng: *fengun, *fell: *fellun), were in a very real sense the birth of class VII. With the creation of the preterite type *heldun, the principle was established that ablaut — specifically, ablaut of *-ae to *-e — could be used as a substitute for reduplication in the formation of preterite stems. In the case of roots of the structure *CaRC- (including *CaR as a special case), the new mode of forming the preterite completely replaced the old within the Northwest Germanic period: this is why there are no reduplicated relic forms from such roots. But this was only the beginning. The "secession," so to speak, of the type *haldan: *hegold from the reduplicating class had the effect of isolating and marginalizing the remaining reduplicated preterites — those built in roots in *-ae-, *-au-, *-ē, and *-ē. The result was the extension of the new *a: *e ablaut pattern, incompletely at first, to other root structures. The results will be surveyed in the sections that follow.

§ 30. The most straightforward of the "secondary" class VII verbs are those with roots in *-au-, e.g., *haupan: *hëp(u)n, *staukt: *staukt(u)n. The *au: *eu ablaut pattern in these forms was a simple extension of the *a: *e pattern — an extension made possible by the fact that the diphthongs *eu and *au were still synchronically analyzed as *-eau...
sequences of *e + u and *a + u in early Germanic. Unlike verbs of the structure *CaRC-, however, the *hlanup type did not complete the shift from reduplication to ablaut within the common period. OE: beaft and OHG steroz and -screot show that at least *bautan, *siohtan, and *straudan retained reduplicated byforms in some of the dialects; it is safe to assume that this was true of other verbs as well. It would be a reasonable inference that the creation of the *eu: *eu ablaut pattern was an innovation of Northwest Germanic, fully implemented, perhaps, in some initial group of lexical items; but that by the time the pattern was fully productive the dialects had begun to diverge, making possible the survival of individual reduplicated forms as archaisms.

The claim is sometimes made that the *-eu- of the preterites *hlohp, *seut, etc. was phonologically distinct from the familiar diphthong *eu (commonly noted *eo) of, e.g., class II strong verbs like *beadan ‘offer’. Thus, Fulk (1987: 166) calls it “almost certainly an over-simplification” to identify the two eu’s. He cites two allegedly complicating facts brought up by Connolly (1979: 13): first, that in Old High German, the -io- of class VII preterites fails to rise to -in- before high vowels, unlike the “normal” -io- of class II strong presents (hlohp, pl. (h)lohpun vs. biotan, 1 sg. biuto); and second, that in Old Norse, the class VII preterites of verbs in -au- invariably have -jó-, while “normal” *eu gives jó before coronal but jó before labials and velars (hlohp, pret. hjóp, but class II drýgrpa ‘drip’). These are not serious problems. The similarity of the two cases is suspicious: neither Old High German nor Old Norse shows a distinctive reflex of the supposedly “different” *eu, but simply a failure of the normal reflex to undergo a low-level phonological process in a morphologically charged environment. We have seen this sort of thing before — in Gothic, where the reduplication vowel is -ai- [a] before all consonants, not just *a, *h, and b, and in Old English, where breaking of e - e is regular in three forms (reard -red, leor) and irregular in three others (leole, beaft, speof). While these latter examples, strictly speaking, involve overapplication rather than underapplication of a rule, the principle is the same: when a new morphological process is created, or an old one refurbished, a very high premium is placed on surface transparency and uniformity. The reason the preterite plural of OHG (h)lohpun is (h)lohpun and not *(h)lifun is not that the -io- of the preterite singular (h)lohp was incapable of being raised before -a-, but that the analogical pressure of the singular forms caused raising to be resisted, or rapidly reversed, in the plural. So too in Old Norse: while the chronological details are open to discussion, the real explanation for why we find -jó- rather than *-jó- in hjóp ‘ran’ and jók ‘increased’ — and only in these two forms, it should be noted — is that the -jó- was the preterite vocalism of the common verbs hoppa : hjó ‘hew’ and báa : hjó ‘dwell’ (see further note 74), as well as of ansa : jór ‘pour’. The basis for claiming a “special” diphthong in NWGmc. *hlohp, *seut, etc. appears to include a substantial component of wishful thinking.

§ 31. Our emerging picture has much in common with van Coetsem’s conception of the class VII preterite vocalism as a “neo-e-grade” substitute for *a-er. Van Coetsem’s theory was fatally undercut by his inability to explain the origin of the *a *eu ablaut pattern or to show how his postulated neo-e-grade diphthong *ei could have yielded *jó- rather than *jó-. In § 27, however, we found a solution to the first problem — one that exploited the process of “compression” to generate plural forms of the type *heldur, *feingan, etc., from which *-e- was generalized to the singular. It is time now to turn to the problem of the preterite vocalism *jó-.

The idea that *jó- must go back to some kind of ei-diphthong has been common currency since the early days of Germanic philology. The PIE long diphthong *ei was the usual choice of the Neogrammarians, not

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63 It is lünan, of course, in Upper German, where both the old and new varieties of WGmc. *æu appear as in before labials and velars.

64 Cf. Brune-Reiffenstein (50), where attention is called to the similar failure of i õ to become i in declensional forms like dat. sg. diota beside nom. acc. gen. diot ‘people’.

65 I will have to leave it to others to evaluate the significance of the fact, reported by Fulk (166) on the basis of van Helten (1896: 446), that Old West Frisian has ë in these forms rather than the expected ë or ë. On the face of it, this does not seem likely to the only substantive evidence for a fine phonetic distinction, nor otherwise directly documented, between two eu-diphthongs would come from one dialect of a language contemporary with Middle English.

Fueled much of the contemporary discussion over the identity or non-identity of the diphthongs in *hlohp and *beadan is the view that the ultimate model for *hlohp was a diphthongal form similar to Gothic ainuk. But it is not at all clear that such forms ever existed in Proto-Germanic. Gothic is the only IE language in which the perfect stems of “vowel-initial” (= usually laryngeal-initial) roots are diphthongic; the other early IE languages all show contraction in such cases (cf., e.g., Ved. perf. 1, 3 sg. dít (‘ei Drive’), Gr. ἤέω (ήέ ϊδ), Ẉēōns (; wegim ‘increase’)). White Gothic could simply be more conservative than Sanskrit and Greek in this respect, it is much likelier that ainuk and ainuk are remodellings, formed by mechanically reduplicating the zero-initial roots ðoik- and ðoik- as ðoiðuk (~ ðoik-uk-) and ðoiðuk (~ ðoik-uk), respectively, in the productive Gothic manner. The “real” Proto-Germanic reduplicated preterites of these verbs would then have been the contraction products of *eikuk- and *eikuk-, presumably *eikuk- (*eikuk-?) and *eikuk- (*eikuk-?). Whatever the subsequent treatment of these sequences — on which see below — they would not have been diphthongic.

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because of any significant evidence for the added mora of length, but
because "short" *ei was known to give *. The canonical expression of
this point of view was the Brugmann-Wood theory (§ 8); later accounts
often assumed *ei as well. Van Coetsen opted for short *ei, positing a
structurally reasonable but factually unsupported lowering of *ei to *ee
(= *ez) before low vowels. What seems never to have been considered,
by van Coetsen or anyone else in the mainstream tradition, is the
possibility of a "second-generation" *ei a diphthong created later than
the change of the old (PIE) *ei to *, but early enough to have *ez
as its reflex in Northwest German.66 This is the approach that will be taken
here. The time span between the Proto-Germanic change of *ei to *
and the breakup of Northwest Germanic was very considerable easily long
enough to accommodate the introduction and subsequent monophthong-
ization of a new diphthong. We will therefore assume that in tandem
with the creation of the neo-e-grade preteritic *hlaup to *hlangan, a neo-
e-grade *heit was created to *haitan. The transparent parallelism of
*hlaup and *heit was later obscured by the monophthongization of *heit
to *hêt.67

A few questions naturally arise in connection with this scenario. Is it
legitimate to assume the creation of a new diphthong in this case *ei
solely out of Systemzwang? The short answer is yes: the creation of a
diphthong is not the creation of a new phoneme, but simply the intro-
duction of a new set of phonotactic arrangements. Such developments
are perfectly common; the case of the Gothic reduplication vowel comes
again to mind. The longer answer, however, is that we do not in fact
know that the diphthong *ei was new in the Northwest Germanic system
at the time of the creation of *heit. PIE "short" *ei had already become
* in Northwest Germanic, but the fate of earlier *ei, both the PIE long
diphthong and the theoretically possible contraction product (e.g., in
reduplicated *ealh), etc.; cf. § 10 and note 65) is unknown. We have
rejected the possibility of a diphthong, either original or contracted,
as the source of the preterite vocalism of NWGmc. *hêt or *heit. It is
entirely possible, however, that a few forms with an etymological long
diphthong may have found their way into the Northwest Germanic
lexicon via other channels. Inherited *-eIC- sequences might have been
expected on general grounds to undergo the same shortening ("Osthoff's
Law") as other sequences of the type *-IRC-, falling together with
*-eIC- and eventually giving *-IRC-. But it is also conceivable that the

Osthoff shortening of *ei would have produced a distinct diphthong *ei,
which remained separate from "normal" *ei and was phonologized as
/ei/ after the passage of *ei to *. If so, the phonological system of
Northwest Germanic would have included a diphthong *ei before the
creation of *heit a fact of potential significance for the more general
problem of the origin of *ez.68

§ 32. We come next to the case of verbs with roots in *-e- and
preterites in *-ez-. the type *lêvan : *lêz(un), *slêpan : *slêp(un), etc.
or, in Northwest Germanic phonetic terms, *lêtan : *lêt(un), *slêpan :
*slêp(un). The phonetic restatement is important, for once we recall
the change of PGmc. *e ("*ez") to NWGmc. *a, it is obvious that the *a : *e
ablaut pattern in this type is simply the "long" version of the *a : *e
pattern in *halde : *held, *hlaup : *hlep, and *heit : *hêt. Assuming, as we almost certainly may, that the vowel *ez was already
part of the phonological system of Proto-Germanic or early Northwest
Germanic, the proportion would have been

pres. *haldan : pret. *held(un), etc. :: pres. *lêtan : pret. X,

where X was solved as *lêt(un), i.e., *lêz(un).69

§ 33. The last and most difficult major group of class VII verbs is the
type with the root vowel *-a-. Here, for the first and only time, the
North and West Germanic facts do not agree. In Old Norse, the one case
of a strong verb with a-vocalism is bêtl, pret. bêt, while in West
Germanic, where the examples are much more numerous, the preterite
vocalism is *-e-. (cf. § 7). The *a : *e ablaut pattern, as both the more robust
and the more obviously in need of an explanation, has the first claim to
our attention.

66 I speak of the "mainstream tradition" here because the idea is in fact broached tentatively, to be sure - by Sacks (op. cit., 248, with footnote).

67 These remarks are offered in a spirit of total agnosticism; no general theory of *ez is even tentatively advocated here. The reason to belief that the shortened reflex of tauto-
syllabic "ei might have had a more open first component than the old "short" *ei is simply that PGmc *a (i.e., *ez) was itself relatively open. Whether such a shortened
diphthong, if it existed, was identical with the *-e- of *heit, and whether it too yielded
*ez, are completely separate issues.

68 The equations Go. hera = ON her, OHG hiar 'here', etc. and Go. frea = OHG fiera 'side' make it practically impossible, in my view, to doubt the Proto-Germanic status of
*ê. In the extremely unlikely event that there was no phonetic *ê in Northwest Ger-
manic until after the monophthongization of *heit a *hêt, the creation of *lêz(un), etc.
could be stipulated to postdate this change.

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There is no easy proportional way to generate the preterite *blēt; at worst, one might wonder whether the rounded root vowel of *blōtan could have led to an inexact identification with the type *hlaupan, pret. *hleup, where the nucleus of the root – a diphthong, in this case – was also rounded. But it is much easier to believe that such an identification could have contributed to the generalization of the *blōtan : *bleut pattern than that the pattern originated in this way. The actual locus of *ē : *eu ablaut, I would suggest, was the nucleus of four verbs in which the *ē- was preceded by a *w : *wōpian 'weep' (Go. wōpian, OHG wōfian, OS wēpian, OE wēpan), *hwōgan 'boast' (Go. hwōgan, OE hwēgan), *hwōsan 'cough' (OE hwōsan), and *swōgan 'sound' (OE swōgan). In these forms the diphthong *ew- would have arisen through the regular workings of the new cluster rule and compression. The case of *wēpian was already discussed by Sacks (op. cit., 244), who noted that if the full reduplicated form of this verb was wēwpēp, then its compressed form would have been *we-wp, i.e., *weup (cf. OHG wēf, OS wiop, OE weop). By the same token, the full reduplicated stems of *hwōgan and *hwōsan would originally have been *hwēgōp, *hwēgōs, whence *hwēwp, *hwēwōs and, with compression, *hwe-wp ( = *hwēwp; cf. OE hwēwp), *hwe-ws ( = *hwēws; cf. OE hwēos).

swōgan belongs here as well, since the cluster *sw- is known to have reduplicated as *swe-w in Northwest German (*swōwōg > compressed *swē-w > OE swē-w; see below).69 Starting from *wōpian : *weup, *hwōgan : *hwēwp, *hwōsan : *hwēws, and *swōgan : *swēw, the pattern of forming preterites in *-eu- to presents in *-ē- became general in West Germanic, spreading first to the half dozen or so remaining verbs with roots of the structure *C(R)ΩC- and thence to the verbal pura in *-ē- (cf. § 35). None of these developments took place in Old Norse, where *wōpian and its congeneres failed to propagate the *ē : *eu ablaut pattern and were eventually lost. blōta, the sole surviving redupliating verb with a root in *-ē- followed by a consonant, had a

69 Since *C- clusters reduplicated as *C- and *R- clusters reduplicated as *R- in Northwest Germanic, it might have been expected that *sw- would rather reduplicate as *sw-... It is never easy, however, to know how far to trust such intuitions; glides, under the new cluster rule, need not have been treated in the same way as obstruents, nasals and liquids. It is also conceivable that *sw- did originally reduplicate as *sw-, but that *sw-, *sw- was later replaced by *sw-, *sw- under the influence of the reduplication pattern of the verbs in *hw- (cf. *hw-, *hw-... Note that OE wep, hwēwp, hwēos, and swēs emerge under this account as reduplicated forms of exactly the same type as heið, hari, etc.

§ 34. The correctness of this account of the *ē : *eu ablaut pattern is confirmed by the irregular behavior of the verb *swēpian 'sweep' (ON sveip, OS swēpian, OE swēpan). With its root-internal *ai-, this verb ought to have formed a preterite in *-ē- in Northwest Germanic, and such a form is actually attested in OS for-sweip. Old Norse and Old English, however, depart from the expected pattern: Old Norse has pret. sg. sveip, pl. svēpa (contrasting with heiða : pret. heið(a)), and Old English has swēppon (contrasting with hētan : pret. hētan).Appearances notwithstanding, these forms are closely related. OE sweip is exactly like sweip: the Northwest Germanic reduplicated preterite was *sweip(a)ip-, which by compression gave *swe-ep > *sweip. Such a form was inherited into North Germanic as well. Phonetically, however, the sequence *sweip presented the speaker-hearer with three labial segments in rapid succession – the *-w- of the initial cluster, the offglide *-w- of the diphthong *-eu-, and the root-final *-p-. Unsurprisingly, there was dissimilation, the effect of which was to unround the internal diphthong from *-eu- to *-ei-.70 An almost identical process is well known to students of Greek comparative grammar, where a classic morphological equation links the aorist (π)εμο/ο- 'say' to the Vedic reduplicated aorist vāc-a- 'it. ' < *we-uk- /e-. The Greek and Vedic forms are exactly cognate; the diphthong *-eu- was dissimilated to *-ei- in Greek in the presence of the flanking labials *w- and *k-. The -ei- of the Old Norse preterite sveip thus turns out to have nothing to do, historically speaking, with the -ei- of the present sveipa < *swēpian. Naturally, this did not prevent an analogical preterite plural sveipan, -u, -u from being created to sveip on the model of class I (bita : bei : bitum : bitum, etc.)

§ 35. The reduplicating verbs in *-ē- include a substantial number of verb pura. That the verb pura originally had reduplicated preterites is clear from Gothic (saiun : sais, etc.) and Old Norse (sa : sera, rā : rēra, etc.). Much of the tangible evidence for these forms, however, has been lost. Thus, in Old Norse the verbs pura are all weak apart from the special case of bita, pret. bjō and the familiar handful of verbs with

69 In the particular case of *blōtan, there is thus no reason to consider the North Germanic preterite *blēt any 'younger' or less original than Wōgic *blēt. Contrary to the usual opinion, the opposite is probably the case.

70 This new ei, of course, was a purely Scandinavian development, which fell together with the ei that resulted from Primitive Norse ai.
preterites in -rə. The same is true in Old High German (cf. Matzel 1987), again with the exception of blāu and its almost unrecognizable reduplicated preterite biruua (for *bibū-; cf. § 6). Old Saxon, with a single exception (see below), has weak verba pura as well. The only language where the verba pura had a fully “normal” development, becoming and remaining class VII strong verbs, is Old English. The Old English verba pura with ā-vocalism are blōawan ‘blow’, grōowan ‘grow’, blōowan ‘low’, rōowan ‘row’, snōowan ‘hasten’, and spōowan ‘succeed’, with preterites blōow, grēowan, rōowan, snōowan, and spōowan.

The *e-u alternation in these forms is the same as in blōtan : bliōt, etc.; the non-organic -w- that follows the root is an English (probably Anglo-Frisian) innovation. Descriptively, blōowan ‘low’ can be included here as well, although the *w- in this case was probably etymologically part of the root (*pleu-).72

We can now spell out the history of these forms. When the *ā- : *eu ablaut pattern was generalized in West Germanic, it also spread to the verba pura in *ē-ā-. A verb like *blōan (< pre-Gmc. *blōjan) thus acquired a preterite *blōu, with a plural whose underlying form would have been /blōu-u/. This sequence could have been realized in several ways. Two obvious possibilities were *blēw, with the second element of the diphthong transferred to the following syllable, and *blēw, with retention of the diphthong in the first syllable and the development of an essentially glide between the *-eu- of the root and the *-w- of the ending. The latter reading, supported by the model of *hēu, pl. *hēw, (: *hāw) and (probably) *fliu, pl. *fliw, (: *flōowan), was apparently the one chosen. *Blēw, which gave OE blōowan (cf. fliw, hēowan, etc.), and the -w-, reintroduced as a constituent of the root, was extended to the preterite singular (blōow) and the present (blōow).

§ 36. In theory, the parallel Old English verba pura with West Germanic ā-vocalism – blōowan ‘blow’, cnōowan ‘know’, crōowan ‘crow’, niūowan ‘now’, ge-rōowan ‘divide’, sāwuan ‘sow’, prōowan ‘twist’, and wōowan ‘low’ – ought to have acquired preterites in *ē-, *ū-, copying the ablaut pattern of WGmc. *hōan : *hēt. The forms that we actually find, however, are not *blē, *cnē, etc., with plurals /blē-uni/, /knē-uni/, etc., but blēow, cnēow, etc., exactly as in the verba pura with ā-vocalism.73 The “blōowan-type” and “blāuwan-type” verba pura, as we shall call them, merged in the preterite – a development that could have taken place in several possible ways:

1) /bē-uni/ (blōowan-type) was realized as *blōowan, with a hiatus-breaking *-w- (possibly phonetic, possibly borrowed from the blōowan-type) that subsequently spread to the singular (*blōow) and the present (blōow), exactly as in the blōowan-type. Later, *-eu- was generalized as the preterite vocalism from the blōowan-type to the blōowan-type, leading to the replacement of *blōow (un) by *blōow (un) > blōew (on).

2) the replacement of *-ē- by *-eu- was the first, not the last step in the partial merger of the two types; the preterite *bē, pl. *bē-uni/ (blōowan-type) was remade to *bliu, pl. *bliuwan without an intermediate stage *blōow-un. *-w- then spread to the singular and the present, as in the blōowan-type.

3) /bē-uni/ (blōowan-type) was initially contracted to *bliu; the new contracted form, under the influence of the blōowan-type plurals in *-euwan, was interpreted as a fast-speech variant and hypercorrected to disyllabic *blōuwan. The stem-form *bliu-, with its adventitious *w-, then spread as in the blōowan-type.

It is not clear whether a choice can be made from among these scenarios. The first, unlike the other two, predicts the existence of intermediate forms of the type blōew (on). A few such forms seem in fact to be attested, notably early West Saxon cnēow (cf. Campbell 1959: 319). But it is impossible to exclude the possibility that the -ē- here is simply a late analogical echo of the -ē- in the class VII type hātan : kēt (ibid.).

No discussion of verba pura in Old English can be complete without a mention of the Old English hapax obar-seu ‘sowed over, übersäte’, the oldest and best example of a class VII preterite from a verbum purum outside Anglo-Frisian (the normal preterite of OS sāian is sāida, -de). Since the -eu of obar-seu can in principle represent either *-eu(w) or *-ēw, the form is compatible with all three of the above pre-Old English scenarios. Old English and Old Saxon differ, of course, in that Old Saxon never extended the -w- of the preterite forms to the present.74

72 I here provisionally follow Sievers-Brummer (1965: 306), against d’Algern (1997: 85), in treating the peculiar form blieg, corrected in the manuscript to ge-blēow ‘blow’, as a scribal error. If genuine, blēg (phonemically /blēgh/) would have to be interpreted as a late “improvement” of *blēn < *blē.73

73 A later equivalent of OS -sei is found in MD sien. For the use of *-w- as a hiatus breaker outside the preterite in continental West Germanic, see the detailed survey by Thörnellsdotter (1993: 103 ff., 114 ff.).
§ 37. The final group of class VII preterites that call for comment are the Old English forms of the type *hōold, *fōoll, etc., with -ō- for NWGmc. *-ō-. While repeated attempts have been made to generate the diphthong in these forms through some kind of early breaking or contraction, a more straightforward explanation is available. The class VII roots of the structure *CaRC- in Old English fall into two groups — those ending in -m- or a nasal cluster, and those ending in -l- or an l-cluster. In the first group the facts are confused: fōn (< *fōhan), pret. feng and fōn ‘hang’ (< *fōhan), pret. feng show no sign of -ō- in the preterite at all, while two of the three verbs that do have preterites in -ō- (gōgan ‘go’, pret. gōng, bannan ‘summon’, pret. bēon, spannan ‘span’, pret. spēon) also have variant preterite forms in -a- (gōng, geban; cf. further blandan ‘mix’, pret. ge-bland). Whatever the source of these -a- variants, their existence fatally undercuts the historical credibility of gōng, bēon, and spēon.55 In the second group of *CaRC- roots — those ending in -l- or an l-cluster — the -ō- is more solidly established.56 Here, however, it is a striking fact that three of the verbs of this type (wælstan ‘rule’, pret. wēold, wælcan ‘roll’, pret. wēolc, wællan ‘roll’, pret. wēoll) begin with w-. The situation recalls the case of wēgan and its congers (§§ 33–4), where the combination of reduplication and compression led to the emergence of diphthongal *weuwp-, *sweuwp-, etc. from reduplicated *we-w(ō)p-, *swe-w(ō)p-, etc. Precisely such a development can be assumed for wælstan, etc.: the compressed weak stems *we-w(ō)l- (< wælstan), *we-w(ō)l- (< wællan), *we-w(ō)l- (< wællan), were realized as *weuld-, *weol-, *weol-, respectively, which gave the attested forms. In Old English, wælstan and wællan imposed their pattern on the rhyming verbs hæaldan, feallan ‘fold’, ‘ge-srealdan’ ‘possess’, and fealdan ‘fall’.57 In the other languages the analogy operated in the reverse direction, and the forms in *-e- were eliminated.

The verb *hēadan retained its reduplicated preterite *hēbad (3 pl. *hēbbon or *hēbbaan?) in Northwest Germanic; this became *bēba, whence biruun (Old High German. In Old Norse, as acutely observed by Haraldur Bernhardsson (p.c.), *hēbad [hēba] first became *hōpa, which in turn gave *hēv and hōja (Norse 123: 163, 171 f.).58 blandan also has a possible preterite blend; see Campbell (1959: 318). gong was apparently the regular preterite to the parallel class III strong verb *sīngan (cf. ON 3 sg. sīgand, the underlying PIE present *sīgongh-/sīgongh- is discussed in Jasanoff (2003: 75).59 Despite an Anglian (Rū) occurrence of fellow quantity unknown) for fellan ‘fall’.60 Surmised on the strength of the comparative evidence and the preterite *atoll.61 Also drawn into the type, no doubt on account of its initial we-, was wēasun ‘grow’, pret. wēas.62 For ‘correct’ class VI *wōa.

§ 38. It is time to summarize. If the approach outlined here is correct, the solution to the class VII problem involves no new ingredients, so to speak, but only a new way of combining them. The essential steps in our “recipe” are the following:

I. Common Northwest Germanic developments

1. New cluster rule. Reduplication was restructured in such a way as to preserve root-initial clusters in word-initial position, with cluster reduction word-internally. Exx.: *gerō, *bēlō, *stezaut, *swēwōg.


3. Creation of *a: *e ablaut. In roots of the structure *CaRC-, compression produced phonotactically impossible clusters when the initial consonant was an obstruent. Exx.: *hēgald: **hēgaldun, fēbahn: **fēbungum.

In such cases

a) the clusters were simplified by deletion of the initial obstruent. Exx.: *hēgald: *hēlādun, *fēbahn: *fēbungum.

b) the new plural stem, which no longer appeared to be synchronically reduplicated, was extended to the singular. Exx.: *hēld (for *hēgald): *hēldun, *fēng (for *fēbung): *fēngum.

4. Extension of *a: *e ablaut. The pattern *haldan (pres.) : *hēld (pretr.) was extended, partly on a word by word basis, to other root structures. Specifically,

a) the type *htōpan: *hēlan: *hēlpōn was replaced by *htōpan: *hēlupōn.

b) the type *hōtan: *hēgait: *hētan: was replaced by *hōtan: *hētan: *hētan: (**)fētūn, .63

z subsequentl became *e (**)e2.64

c) the type *lōtan: *lefōt : *leifun was replaced by *lōtan: *lōtan: *lōtan: (**e = **e2).

d) in loose imitation of c), the type *blōtan: *blefōt: *bleifun was replaced by *blōtan: *blōtan: *blōtan: [or purely North Germanic?].

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II. Post-Northwest Germanic developments

1. Extension of *Ø : *eu ablaut pattern [West Germanic]. Starting from cases of the type *wojan > *weυoνp > *weυop and *wrógan > *swęνoς > *swęνp, the *Ø : *eu pattern spread to:

a) other verbs with roots of the structure *C(R)dC-. Exx.: *blōthan : *bleut(n), *hrōpan : *hreup(n).


2. Replacement of *Ø by *-e-. [Old High German, inconsistently elsewhere]. *-e- was supplanted by *-e- in the preterite of verbs with roots of the structure *CaRC-. Exx.: OHG hialtan : hiat, gangan : géong.

3. Replacement of *-e- by *-eu- [Old English]. The pattern *wailtan : *weuld, proper to verbs in *-w-, was extended to other verbs with roots of the structure *CaRC-. Exx.: OE: hēaldlan : hēold, gangan : géong.

4. Spread of *-w- in verba pura [partly West Germanic or Ingvaeric, partly Old English only]. The *-w- proper to the preterite of verba pura in W.Gmc. *-Ø- (type *blōthan : *bleu : *bleuwan) was extended beyond its original sphere.

a) first to the preterite of verba pura in W.Gmc. *-Ø-. Exx.: OE pret. sēow(On), OS obar-seu (W.Gmc. *sēan < *sē(i)jan);

b) later, to the present of verba pura of both types: Exx.: OE blōwan, blōwan, sōwan.

References


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Braune-Reifenstein: see Braune 2004a.

Braune-Heidermanns: see Braune 2004b.


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Siewiers-Brunner, see Brunner 1963.


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