The Germanic Weak Preterite

Author(s): Jay H. Jasanoff

Source: *Historische Sprachforschung / Historical Linguistics*, 2019, Bd. 132 (2019), pp. 146-167

Published by: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht (GmbH & Co. KG)

Stable URL: https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/27085544

The Germanic Weak Preterite: Facing up to *talgidai*

Jay H. Jasanoff

Abstract: The 3 sg. pret. form *talgidai*, discovered in 1961, belongs to the earliest stratum of the Runic Norse corpus. But since the ending *-dai* (for expected *-de*) is incompatible with the traditional derivation of the weak preterite from a periphrastic construction in **-d^hōm* (< **-d^hoh_1m*), **-d^hēs*, **-d^hēt*, etc., much scholarly effort has been invested in explaining the final *-ai* as an error. This paper maintains that *talgidai* is probably a real form, and that the standard derivation of the weak preterite from a periphrasis in 3 sg. **-d^hēt* is problematic on independent grounds. It is argued that a periphrastic construction with a 3 sg. perfect middle **-(d^he)d^h(h_1)oi* provides at least as good an explanation of the weak preterite as the traditional theory.

1. Introduction

The origin of the Germanic weak or dental preterite is so well-worn a topic that any new discussion has to have a very specific point. There is such a point here; it will emerge below.[1]

The forms of the weak or dental preterite are well known.[2] Since the middle of the last century mainstream opinion has largely coalesced around the idea, first popularized by Bopp, that the weak preterite was a periphrasis involving a form of the verb "do" (OE *dōn*, OHG *tuon*; PIE root **d^heh_1-*). An influential version of the "do" theory was put forth a

---

[1] Earlier versions of this paper were presented at the 1995 East Coast Indo-European Conference (ECIEC) and the 2003 Germanic Linguistics Annual Conference (GLAC); the handout from the latter event was for a time available on the internet and occasionally cited under the title "The Germanic Dental Preterite: A New Perspective." My decision to return to the topic now owes much to recent directions of scholarship and to stimulating exchanges with Patrick Stiles. Errors are of course mine alone.

[2] Given below are the principal forms of Go. *nasjan*, OHG *nerien*, OS OE *nerian* 'save', and ON *telja* 'count, tell':

		Go.	ON	OHG	OS	OE
pl.	1	*nasida*	*talða*	*nerita*	*nerida (-e)*	*nerede*
	2	*nasides*	*talðir*	*neritōs*	*neridos*	*neredes(t)*
	3	*nasida*	*talði*	*nerita*	*nerida (-e)*	*nerede*
	4	*nasidedum*	*tǫlðum*	*neritum (-tōm)*	*neridon*	*neredon*
	5	*nasidedup*	*tǫlðuð*	*neritut (-tōt)*	*neridon*	*neredon*
	6	*nasidedun*	*tǫlðu*	*neritun (-tōn)*	*neridon*	*neredon*
opt.		*nasidedjau, -dedeis, -dedi*	*talði(r)*	*neritī, -tīs*	*neridi*	*nerede*

Historische Sprachforschung 132 (2019), 146–167, ISSN 0935-3518 (print), 2196-8071 (online)

generation ago by Lühr (1984: 39–52; cf. also Lühr 2016: 250–60), who set up a source construction **solpéh₂-h₁ dʰédʰoh₁-m*, lit. 'I made (= provided) with unguent (instr. sg.)'. Phrases of this type, according to Lühr, underwent univerbation and haplology to give PGmc. **salbōdō^{N}*, **-dēz*, **-dē*, etc. – the Proto-Germanic form, in her view, of the preterite of the denominative present (> class II weak verb) **salbō-* < **solpéh₂-i̯e/o-*. Like many others, Lühr believed that the second term of the "do" construction went back to an imperfect **dʰédʰoh₁-m*, **-dʰeh₁-s*, **-dʰeh₁-t*, etc. There have been varying opinions on the specific source of the auxiliary, however; other recently favored candidates for the role include the root aorist indicative (Kortlandt 1989) and the root aorist subjunctive (Hill 2010). The identity of the first term is disputed as well. Many modern writers (e.g., Rasmussen 1996, Ringe 2006: 183–4, Kim 2010: 12–14, Harðarson 2017: 942–5) reject Lühr's construction and start from the older idea of a participial syntagma of the type **salbōda-* + **dē/ō-*, i.e., 'make (to be) anointed'. The only point on which a large majority of supporters of the "do" theory agree, thanks mainly to the evidence of Runic Norse, is that the PGmc. 1–3 sg. endings were 1 sg. **-dō^{N}* (cf. RN *tawido* 'I made'), 2 sg. **-dēz* (cf. Go. *tawides**), and 3 sg. **-dē* (RN *tawide*).[3]

Given all this, it is slightly ironic that in the very period when the "do" theory was rising to the status of *communis opinio*, the formal underpinnings of the theory were shaken by the discovery of a series of new runic forms. The first and most disruptive of these was *talgidai*, unearthed in 1961 on a fibula from Lundegårde/Nøvling (northern Jutland) and dated to the period 210/20–250/60 CE.[4] The inscription, reading *Bidawarijaz talgidai* 'B. engraved [it]', was unambiguous: *talgidai* was the 3 sg. of a weak preterite (= classical ON *telgði*), but with *-dai* instead of the "standard" ending *-de*. Taken at face value, the *-ai* of *talgidai* suggested that the *-e* of later *wurte* 'wrought' (Tjurkö; 375/400–520/30 CE) and probably later *tawide* 'made' (Garbølle; 160–375/400 CE) had been monophthongized from an earlier diphthong. This conclusion was incompatible with the traditional derivation of RN *-de* from monophthongal **-dē* < **-dʰeh₁-t*. The waters were further muddied by two other finds, a hitherto unparalleled 3 sg. *talgida* (Skovgårde / Udby; 210/20–250/60 CE), and a new and earlier instance of *tawide* (Illerup / Ådal; 210/20–250/60 CE).

---

[3] Or **-dēþ*, with **-þ*, later dropped, representing the PIE secondary ending **-t*. The term "Proto-Germanic," in what follows, will be used to refer to a stage at which final stops and non-sibilant fricatives had been lost, and historical vowel + nasal sequences in absolute auslaut had become nasalized vowels.

[4] I use the dates quoted by Schuhmann (2016), who follows Imer 2015.

The interpretation of the three runic endings *-de*, *-dai*, and *-da* has given rise to a considerable volume of scholarship; an overview is provided by Schuhmann (2016). What is most striking about this literature – at least to this reader – is the strength of the resistance to taking *talgidai* at face value. Many ad hoc explanations for the diphthong have been put forth. Thus, Moltke (1976: 98) explained *-ai* (ᚠᛁ) as a copyist's error for *-e* (ᚠᛖ) – an interpretation accepted by Lühr (1984: 51) and Schuhmann (2016: 413–5). Krause (1971: 158), followed by Antonsen (1975: 30), Ringe (2006: 191–2), and Hill (2010: 413), takes *-ai* to be a reverse spelling for *-e*, made possible by the prior monophthongization of **-ai* to *-e* in cases where the diphthong was etymologically justified (cf., e.g., dat. sg. *-ai*, *-e*). Stoklund (1991: 97), Syrett (1994: 246 ff.), and Harðarson (2005: 226 n. 64), among others, take *-ai*, *-e*, and *-a* to be different spellings of a single sound [-æ:]. Other proposals – the list is by no means exhaustive – include Looijenga's reading (2003: 163) of *talgidai* as *talgida* + *i* 'carved in' (impossible because "in" would been **in* at this stage) and Grønvik's far-fetched segmentation (1994: 49–53) of *talgidai* as a noun (*talgida* 'carver') and an expletive (*ai*). Not all these scholars take an explicit position on the "deep" prehistory of the weak preterite. But all interpret the facts in such a way as to uphold the traditional reconstruction 3 sg. **-dē* < **-$d^h eh_1$-t*.

The strategy of trying to explain away *talgidai* is, in my view, fundamentally ill-advised. The purpose of this paper is to explore the consequences of accepting the final diphthong of this form as genuine. In particular, I will defend two claims: first, that the three attested endings *-de*, *-dai*, and *-da* can best be accounted for as reflections of a single PGmc. **-dai*; and second, that the assumption of a PGmc. 3 sg. **-dai* provides at least as good a starting point for a general theory of the weak preterite as the standardly favored PGmc. **-dē*.

2. **-dē*, **-dai*, or both?

talgidai has not been without its defenders. According to Hollifield (1980: 145 ff., 160), PGmc. **-dē* would have come out as *-da*, not *-de* in Runic Norse, leaving no possible source for RN *-de* (i.e., *-dē*) other than a diphthong. Hollifield's argument is developed further by Nedoma (1997: 113; 2005: 167–8). The most important contribution of Hollifield's and Nedoma's work, for our purposes, is to highlight the fact, insufficiently emphasized in the mainstream literature, that the purported development of PIE **-$d^h eh_1$-t* and PGmc. **-dē* to RN *-de* is problematic

on its own terms. Since PGmc. **ē* (i.e., "**ē*$_1$") was otherwise lowered to **ā* in Northwest Germanic, the standard derivation of RN *tawide* from PGmc. **tawidē* must exempt final syllables from the domain of the rule.[5] But this exemption is wholly ad hoc. The kinship terms in **-ēr*, which are sometimes alleged to provide independent support for the non-lowering of **ē* in a final syllable (cf. OHG *fater*, Younger Runic *faþir* (c. 800)), do not force any such conclusion; the forms in question are more straightforwardly explained, in my view, by assuming an inner-Germanic, and hence pre-Northwest Germanic, shortening of PIE final **-ēr*, **-ōr* to **-ĕr*, **-ăr*.[6] As argued by Nedoma (2005), the expected lowering of PGmc. **-ē* in Runic Norse is probably attested in the *n*-stem nom. sg. ending *-a* (cf. *wiwila* (proper name), *gudija* 'priest', etc.) < PIE **-ē(n)*.[7] In later Norse this ending was fronted and raised to *-e*/*-i* (cf. ON *gumi* 'man', etc.), thus falling together with the final vowel of the 3 sg. of the weak preterite (ON *-ði*). Crucially, however, the weak preterite and *n*-stem endings were distinct in the period of the older runic inscriptions (*talgidai*, *tawide* ≠ *wiwila*).

Against the Hollifield-Nedoma monophthongization hypothesis (i.e., RN *-dē* < *-dai*) Schuhmann (2016: 410–2) raises a chronological objection. At the time of Hollifield's original monophthongization proposal in 1980, the still novel form *talgidai* was arguably older than any of the known forms in *-de*, and the change of final *-ai* to *-ē* could safely be dated to the period after c. 260 CE. With the 1983 discovery of the "new" *tawide*

---

[5] The precise phonetic properties of the vowels we write as **ē* and **ā* (specifically, their relative height and frontness) are irrelevant in this context. The key fact is that the claimed treatment in final syllables is different from the treatment elsewhere.

[6] The kinship terms, and the treatment of **-Vr-* and **-Vr#* sequences generally, present a notorious cluster of problems. The proposed inner-Germanic shortening is seemingly contradicted by Go. *fidwor* '4' < PIE nom.-acc. nt. pl. **-ōr* < ***-or-h*$_2$. But there are no other serious counterexamples, and *fidwor* itself could unproblematically have been restored within Gothic from case forms like dat. pl. *fidworim* and gen. pl. **fidwore*. The PIE paradigm of '4' was amphikinetic, with a strong stem **k*^{w}*etwor-*, a weak stem **k*^{w}*(e)twr-*, and a nom.-acc. nt. pl. **k*^{w}*etwōr*. Proto-Germanic evidently simplified the paradigm by first generalizing **fedwōr-* as the strong stem and **fedur-* as the weak stem; nt. pl. **fedwōr* itself was then shortened by our rule to PGmc. **fedwar*. In the individual branches we find only **fedwōr-* (> *fidwor*) in Gothic, only **fedur-* (cf., e.g., nom. pl. *fjórir*) in Old Norse, and only **fedwar* (cf. OE *fēower*) in West Germanic.

The shortening of final **-ēr*, **-ōr* to **-ĕr*, **-ăr*, though of Proto-Germanic date, was later than the Proto-Germanic rule by which inherited **-er(-)* became **-ar(-)* (cf., e.g., Go. *ƕaþar*, ON *hvaðarr*, OHG *huuedar* 'which' (: Gk. *póteros*); see Stiles 1988: 136, note 4). WGmc. **fader* (OHG *fater*) and Younger Runic *faþir* can thus be taken directly from PIE **-ēr* via PGmc. shortened **-ĕr*. Phonologically, Runic *swestar* 'sister' (Opedal; 160–375/400 CE) can equally well go back to PIE nom. sg. **-ōr* or to PIE voc. sg. **-er* (Stiles 1984).

[7] On the much less attractive analogical alternative, see Nedoma 2005: 158 ff.

(Illerup /Ådal), however, there ceased to be any meaningful chronological difference between the two endings. Schuhmann concludes from this that *-dai* cannot have been linguistically ancestral to *-de*, and that "die gesamte sonstige Überlieferung innerhalb des Germanischen" shows that *talgidai* is a miswriting for **talgide*. But this is a *non sequitur*. An unprejudiced interpretation of the evidence would allow for the possibility – indeed, the likelihood – that the monophthongization of *-ai* to *-ē* was a gradual process, diffused over time and space and sensitive to the regular sociolinguistic variables of age, gender, and style. A useful parallel, should any be needed or desired, is afforded by the variable realization of the historical diphthongs *ai* and *au* in modern Hindi and other Indo-Aryan languages (cf. Shapiro 2003: 258).

If there is any early runic form that invites emendation, it is not *talgidai* but the isolated *talgida* (Skovgårde / Udby). Nedoma (1997: 113; 2005: 166–9, 180) takes *talgida* to be the regular reflex of PGmc. **talgidē*, with the **-ē* of the "standard" reconstruction of the weak preterite and the expected lowering of **-ē* to **-ā*. Phonologically, this is certainly possible. But if all the other relevant runic forms (*talgidai*, *tawide*, *wurte*, etc.) go back to **-dai*, as Nedoma himself maintains, then the *a priori* likelihood of a morphologically distinct preform for *talgida* is not high.[8] The inscription itself, which reads *Lamo talgida* 'L. engraved [it]', deserves a detailed look (cf. Stoklund 1991). The format is unique; the two words *lamo* and *talgida* appear on a single line, but *lamo* is written from right to left and *talgida* is written from left to right. The word boundary is marked by a five-stroke vertical divider:[9]

ᛏᚠᚱᚷᛁᛞᚠ⁝ᛟᛗᚨᛚ
t a l g i d a : o m a l

An explanation for the graphic bidirectionality is offered by Antonsen (2002: 279), who posits a boustrophedon *Vorlage* with *lamo* and *talgidai* (NB: with final *-ai*, in his view) written in different directions on different lines. This layout, he says, "was not appropriate for placement on the needle-holder of a fibula and therefore was reproduced in a single line with a separation mark between the components. It is not at all surprising that under such a circumstance the final *i* of the Vorlage's **talgidai*

[8] The logical consequence of Nedoma's position, which he accepts, is that the weak preterite is a heterogeneous formation, with a "*-*dē*" component containing an *e*-grade form of "do" (*$d^h\bar{e}t$ or *$d^hed^h\bar{e}t$), and a "*-*dai*" component containing a middle ending or somehow contaminated with a middle form.

[9] An image is available at http://runer.ku.dk//userfiles/image/ImgCache/838/rune06b_054.jpg (accessed 1/9/2018).

was inadvertently omitted." Not every student of runic epigraphy will feel comfortable embracing so specific a scenario for an object about whose material history we know so little. But it is entirely credible that in the execution of the inscription an intended final *i*-rune came to be replaced or crowded out by the vertical word divider. Omission of the second element of the diphthong *ai* is independently attested elsewhere in the older runic corpus, e.g., in the often-cited miswriting *hateka* (Lindholm) for **haiteka* 'I am called'.

As always in the case of fragmentarily attested languages like Runic Norse, new discoveries can upend even the most securely established results (cf. §8). In the present state of our knowledge, however, the runic and literary Old Norse evidence distinctly favors **-dai*, not **-dē*, and not both, as the source of the 3 sg. of the weak preterite in the North Germanic branch of the family.[10] At the Proto-Germanic level, the specific case for **-dē*, such as it is, rests on the following data points:

1) the Gothic 2 sg. in *-des* (*nasides*), pointing to a PGmc. **-dēz* and seemingly implying a 3 sg. in **-dē*;
2) the Old High German 3 sg. in *-ta* (*nerita*), phonologically consistent with **-dē* but not **-dai*; and, more generally,
3) the supposed morphological convenience of starting from an *e*-grade 3 sg. $*(d^he)d^heh_1$*-t* and the difficulty of motivating a preform with a final diphthong.

Items 1) and 2) are not decisive. The 2 sg. of the weak preterite ends in *-ðir* in Old Norse, *-des* in Old English, and *-des*, *-das* in (part of) Old Saxon; all of these could as easily go back to **-daiz*, the predictable 2 sg. counterpart of a 3 sg. in **-dai*, as to **-dēz*, the 2 sg. counterpart of a 3 sg. in **-dē*.[11] In Gothic, where **-daiz* would have given **-dais* [-ðɛ:s], with a long low mid vowel, the open [-ɛ:-] could easily have been replaced by [-e:-] (*-des*) under the influence of the plural, dual and optative forms in *-ded-* [-ðe:ð-] (1 pl. *nasidedum*, etc.). As for the OHG 3 sg. in *-ta*, Hollifield (1980: 151) makes a strong case that this ending is not the historical 3 sg. form at all, but the reflex of the 1 sg. in $*-d\bar{o}^N$, introduced into the 3 sg. as a part of the more general propagation of *ō*-vocalism through the

[10] I omit from consideration the forms *ahti* (Nydam; 330–360 CE), taken by Nedoma (1997: 114) and Eichner (1996:15) to be a careless spelling for **aihtai* 'had'; and $wrta^{q}{}_{l}$ (Etelhem; 475–525 CE), presumably somehow akin to Go. *waurhta* 'made', but not clearly a 3 sg. (cf. Schuhmann 2016: 414 (with literature)).

[11] For the *ō*-timbre of OHG *-tōs* and dialectal OS *-dos* see §7. The *-s* of the West Germanic 2 sg. endings was re-added from the present following the regular West Germanic loss of PGmc. **-z*. On the Old Norse treatment see note 33.

weak preterite paradigm in Old High German (cf. 2 sg. *neritōs* (all dialects), pl. *neritōm*, *-tōt*, *-tōn* (Alemannic)). See further §7.

We thus come to the key question raised by the **-dē* vs. **-dai* controversy: is there a historical "**-dai*" scenario that can hold its own morphologically against the various theories of the weak preterite that assume an inherited 3 sg. in **-dē* < **-d^heh_1-t*? The "**-dē*" approach, let it be noted, is not free of morphological difficulties. Under the Neogrammarian and still standard view that PIE reduplicated presents had *e*-grade in the singular (**$d^hédh^eh_1$-mi*, etc.), neither the imperfect nor the aorist of **d^heh_1-* could have generated the 1 sg. in **-dō^N* < **-d^hoh_1-m* presupposed by RN *-do* (e.g., *tawido* 'I made') and ON *-ða*.[12] Lühr, who takes the Erlangen-Freiburg position that the present of **d^heh_1-* had *o*-grade (**$d^hédh^oh_1$-mi*, etc.), faces the same problem in reverse. To explain the fact that the 3 sg. of the weak preterite is **salbō-dē* (as she reconstructs it) and not **salbō-dō* < **$(d^he)d^hoh_1$-t*, she is forced to assume analogical influence from the no-longer-extant thematic imperfect that the weak preterite would supposedly have replaced:

**solpā́$d^hed^hōm$, *solpā́$d^hed^hēs$, *solpā́$d^hed^hēt$ ← *solpāi̯om, *solpāi̯es, *solpāi̯et*[13]

Analogies of this type, however, in which a "long-vowel" stem takes over the regular **e* ~ **o* alternation of the thematic vowel, are without parallel elsewhere in the IE family. It is surely significant that there was no analogical penetration of *e*-vocalism into the *present* of "do"; cf. OHG *tuom*, *tuos*, *tuot* < PGmc. **dōm(i)*, **dōs(i)* (not **dēsi*), **dōþ(i)* (not **dēþi*).[14]

The few attempts to construct a "**-dai*" theory of the weak preterite have identified the ending **-dai* with the dialectal PIE 3 sg. primary middle ending **-toi* (= Gk. (dial.) *-toi*, Ved. *-te*). The best-known effort along these lines – not coincidentally, given his views on *talgidai* – is due to Hollifield (1980: 160–2). Pursuing an idea of Collitz's (1912: 137–42), Hollifield locates the source of the weak preterite in preterito-presents of the type Go. OHG OS *man* (< PIE perf. 3 sg. **memón-e*) 'has in mind',

---

[12] I do not find credible Ringe's advocacy of a sound change (2006: 192–6) taking pre-Gmc. final **-ēn* to **-ō^N*; cf. Hill 2010: 422.

[13] Reproduced from Lühr 2016: 255. The inherited imperfect of the *-i̯e*/*o*-present is also invoked by Harðarson (2017: 944), who uses it as part of a more complicated account involving the aorist, imperfect, and perfect of "do."

[14] The problem of the origin of the *o*-grade in the present of "do" is, of course, a separate problem, quite distinct from the problem of the origin of the weak preterite. For an alternative to the view that the *o*-vocalism of "do" was inherited from PIE, see Jasanoff 2003: 67, note 134.

which, he says, formed their preterites with the Germanic reflex of the PIE perfect middle (e.g., Go. 3 sg. *munda* < PGmc. **mundai* < pre-Gmc. **memn̥-tói*). In the course of the inner-Germanic development of the perfect middle, Hollifield says, the dental of the 3 sg. ending (**-dai*/**-toi*) was reinterpreted as a tense sign and extended throughout the paradigm. But this idea is too contrived to be convincing, and the fact that it requires us to abandon the otherwise attractive periphrastic framework is not a point in its favor.[15] An ideal **-dai* theory, if we could find one, would build middle inflection – the only plausible source of the final diphthong – into the "do" construction itself.

3. The morphological background

Discoveries of the past few decades have led to an improved understanding of periphrastic constructions in the older IE languages. The earliest compositions of this type are most often elaborations of what has been called the "*guhā* construction." This is the PIE construction X-eh_1 + BE(COME)/MAKE, where X-eh_1 was the instrumental of a verbal or adjectival root noun (e.g., *$g^huǵ^h$- 'concealment', *h_1rud^h- 'redness'); the literal meaning was 'be(come) or make with X-ment/X-ness' (e.g., 'be(come) or make hidden', 'be(come) or make red'). The term "*guhā* construction" comes from the use of the Vedic adverb *gúhā* 'secretly', historically the instrumental (with adverbial accentuation) of the root noun *guh-* 'hiding place, concealment', with the verbs *as-*, *bhū-*, and *kr̥-*/*dhā-* to mean 'be hidden', 'become hidden', and 'make hidden', respectively. In Jasanoff 1978: 122–5 I compared the Vedic uses of *gúhā* with the Latin series *calefaciō* 'make warm', *calefiō* 'become warm', *calēbō* (fut.) 'will be warm' and *calēbam* (impf.) 'was warm'. This equation had important consequences. If *calēbam* was, so to speak, *calē-bam*, then *dūcēbam* 'I was leading' was *dūcē-bam*; and if *dūcēbam* contained a petrified or generalized instrumental ending followed by an auxiliary, then so, elsewhere in the family, did, e.g., OCS imperfects of the type *vedě-axъ* 'id.'.[16] In a later article I argued that the Old Irish *f*-future was likewise a formation of this type (cf. 3 sg. *scairfid* 'will separate' < **skarē-bisaseti* < **skr̥H-eh_1* + **b^huH-*; Jasanoff 2017). A

[15] The same can be said for the formally similar middle-based scenario in Jasanoff 1978: 91–3, which starts from a middle root aorist with generalized primary endings (**mundai* ← **munda* < **mn̥to*).

[16] The yet more general implication was that the much-discussed PIE "stative" morpheme **-eh_1-* was in origin simply the case ending of the instrumental singular. A fuller account of the "*guhā* theory" of **-eh_1-*, which contrasts with the theory of "fientives" and "essives" adopted in *LIV* (cf. Harðarson 1998), is presented in Jasanoff 2002–03.

case not yet discussed, but particularly interesting in the context of the weak preterite, is the Lithuanian "semi-participle" in *-damas* (type *vèzdamas* (inf. *vèsti*) 'while leading', *tylė́damas* (inf. *tylė́ti*) 'being silent'). A form of the type *vèzdamas* presupposes an earlier **vedē-damas*, lit. 'having become (*-damas* < **d*^{h}*eh*$_1$*-m(n)o-* 'factus') leading (**ved-ē-*)', parallel to **tīlē-damas* 'having become (*-damas*) silent (**tīl-ē-*)'. On the model of **tīlē-damas*, where the combining form in **-ē-* was identical with the infinitive stem, **vedē-damas* was remade to *vèzdamas* to bring it into alignment with the infinitive *vèsti*.[17]

Given the undoubted IE pedigree of the *guhā* construction, the creation of the weak preterite is best envisioned in the context of a system in which it was possible to say, e.g.,

X-*eh*$_1$ + **d*^{h}*eh*$_1$- 'make X'
X-*eh*$_1$ + **h*$_1$*es-* 'be X'
X-*eh*$_1$ + **b*^{h}*uH-* 'become X'

where X-*eh*$_1$, at least at the outset, was a predicate instrumental with the translational value of an adjective.[18] Primary ("strong") verbs in Germanic used the Germanic reflex of the PIE perfect to form their preterites (cf. Go. *wairþiþ* 'becomes', pret. *warþ*, matching Ved. *vártate* 'turns', perf. *vavárta*). But denominative verbs, which lacked inherited perfects, would have had the *guhā* construction at their disposal to fill the gap. Thus, e.g., X-*eh*$_1$- + **d*^{h}*eh*$_1$-, with the perfect of **d*^{h}*eh*$_1$-, would have furnished a suitable preterite for the denominative factitive present types in **-e*$_i$*e*/*o-* (e.g., Go. *fulljan* 'fill') and eventually **-eh*$_2$*(*$_i$*e*/*o)-* ("**-ā*$_i$*e*/*o-*"; e.g., OHG *niuwōn* 'renew');[19] and X-*eh*$_1$ + **h*$_1$*es-* and X-*eh*$_1$ + **b*^{h}*uH-* would have furnished preterites for the denominative stative-inchoatives in **-eh*$_1$*i*$_i$*e*/*o-* ("**-ēi*$_i$*e*/*o-*"; e.g., OHG *rotēn* 'be(come) red' < PGmc. **ruda(i)-*, replacing earlier **rudē-*).[20] Against this background, and putting aside the detailed formal questions that will concern us in the

[17] And so also *sakýdamas* beside inf. *sakýti* 'to say', *galvódamas* beside inf. *galvóti* 'to think', etc.

[18] It will be noted that the *guhā* construction offers a convenient framework for explaining the origin of the weak preterite regardless of how one understands the morphology of the auxiliary. Lühr's theory, e.g., which likewise employs a predicate instrumental (**solpeh*$_1$*-h*$_1$ + *d*^{h}*eh*$_1$-), could easily be recast in these terms.

[19] I write **-eh*$_2$*(*$_i$*e*/*o)-* with parentheses to capture the fact that the Germanic presents in **-ō-* continue both denominatives and iteratives in **-eh*$_2$*i*$_i$*e*/*o-* (e.g., **salbō-* itself) and factitives in athematic **-eh*$_2$*-* (e.g., **niwjō-*).

[20] The denominative-stative presents in **-eh*$_1$*i*$_i$*e*/*o-*, which would have given PGmc. **-ē-*, were eventually transferred into weak class III, where the characteristic suffix **-a(i)-* (i.e., **-ai-* ~ **-a-*) was etymologically unrelated. Cf. §5 below.

following sections, we can think of the "classical" weak preterite as having emerged in three general steps:

1) generalization of the periphrastic preterite construction to all derived verbs, and generalization of **d^heh_1-* (Gmc. **dē-*/**dō-*) as the only auxiliary, replacing **h_1es-* and **b^huH-*
2) introduction of **-ā-* as the periphrastic combining vowel for verbs in **-ā(i̯e/o)-*

   There was an obvious mechanism: on the model of the presents in **-ē(i̯e/o)-* (e.g., **$rud^hē$(i̯e/o)-* 'turn red'), which had preterites in **-ē-* + DO, (e.g., **$rud^hē$-* + DO 'turned red'), **-ā-* was installed as the combining vowel before the auxiliary in the preterites corresponding to presents in **-ā(i̯e/o)-* (cf. late PGmc. pres. **salbō-*, pret. **salbōdō^N*).
3) alignment of the emerging weak preterite with the past participle

   Again, there was a simple mechanism: on the model of pret. **salbōdō^N* 'anointed' beside ptcp. **salbōdaz* (< pre-Gmc. adj. **solpā-tó-* 'provided with salve'; cf. Lat. *barbātus* 'endowed with a beard'), where the vowel that preceded the dental was the same in the preterite and the participle, the other weak classes remade their preterites to agree with the corresponding participles (e.g. **nazedō^N* (later **-i-*) 'saved', after ptcp. **nazedaz*; **þanhtō^N* 'thought', after ptcp. **þanhtaz*, etc.).[21]

4. The preterite of "do"

Direct study of the forms of "do" is only possible in West Germanic, where the present goes back to a dereduplicated present **(d^he)$d^hōmi$*, **-ōsi*, **-ōti*, etc. The *o*-grade (**d^hoh_1-*), as remarked above, is old and well-established within Germanic, though of disputed antiquity at the IE level. The corresponding preterite is reduplicated and for the most part identical in inflection with the weak preterite:

	Old High German		**Old Saxon**		**Old English**	
	"do"	wk. pret.	"do"	wk. pret.	"do"	wk. pret.
1, 3 sg.	*teta*	*-ta*	*deda*, *-e*	*-da*, *-e*	*dyde*	*-de*
2 sg.	[*tāti*]	*-tōs*	*dedos*, [*dādi*]	*-dos*	*dydes(t)*	*-des(t)*
1-3 pl.	*tātum, -ut, -un*	*-tum, -tut, -tun*	*dedun*, *dādun*	*-dun*	*dydon*	*-don*

[21] The origin of the class I particple type **nazeda-* < **nosetó-* needs no extended discussion: since pre-Gmc. ptcp. **solpātó-* appeared to be made by removing the **-i̯e/o-* of the present stem **solpāi̯e/o-* and replacing it with **-tó-*, **nosetó-* was created by substituting **-tó-* for **-i̯e/o-* in the present **nosei̯e/o-*. *Mutatis mutandis*, the same process was responsible for the creation of Lat. *monitus* (< **moneto-*) 'warned,' the participle corresponding to pres. *moneō* (< **monei̯e/o-*).

OHG 2 sg. *tāti* (+ OS *dādi* beside *dedos*) is an obvious innovation, reflecting the productive West Germanic rule that the 2 sg. of the strong preterite is made by adding **-i* (< **-īz*) to the stem of the preterite plural (cf. OHG *ih sang*, *beiz* : *thū sungi*, *bizzi* 'I/you sang, bit'). The long reduplication vowel of OHG *tātun* and OS *dādun*, which is also indirectly attested in the corresponding Gothic weak preterite forms (*-dedum*, *-uþ*, *-un*), was a Proto-Germanic feature, probably based on the **-ē-* in the preterite plural of class V strong verbs (cf. 3 pl. Go. *gebun* 'gave', OHG *gābun*, etc.).[22]

The origin of these forms is clearer than the origin of the weak preterite as a whole. Like any Germanic strong or reduplicated preterite, the preterite of "do" must ultimately go back to the perfect. The PIE (or just post-PIE) perfect of the root **dʰeh₁-* would have been sg. 1 **dʰedʰóh₁-h₂e*, 2 **dʰedʰóh₁-th₂e*, 3 **dʰedʰóh₁-e*, pl. 1 **dʰedʰh₁-mé*, 2 **-(t)é*(?), 3 **-ḗr* or **-ŕ̥(s)*. With regular sound changes and well-known analogical developments in the plural (including the just-noted lengthening of the reduplication vowel), this would have given a West Germanic paradigm

sg. 1	**dedō̄*[23]	pl.	**dēdum*
2	**dedōþ*		**dēduþ*
3	**dedō̄*		**dēdun*

The 1–3 sg. forms are not, of course, what we actually find. 2 sg. **dedōþ* could not have been the direct source of OS (dialectal) *dedos* or OE *dydes(t)*, and 1, 3 sg. **dedō̄* would have given OHG **teto* (not *teta*), OS **dedo* (not *deda*, *-e*) and OE **dyda* (not *dyde*). As we shall see, however, all the forms of the preterite of "do" would have been easy candidates for later replacement. In the 1 sg. the inherited form was remade within Proto-Germanic itself. **dedō̄* 'I made, did', which was inconveniently identical with the 3 sg.,[24] was renewed as **dedōn* (> **dedō̄*^{N}), with

[22] The view that the **-ē-* of *-dedum* and *tātun* was inherited from Proto-Germanic is not universally shared; see Lühr 2016: 255 ff. and Stiles 2010 for dissenting views. Since the question is peripheral to the problem of *talgidai* and the ending *-dai*, it will not be pursued further here. Watkins' equation of Gmc. **dēdun* with YAv. 3 pl. perf. *dāδarə* [*sic recte*] (1969: 44) is no longer tenable.

[23] The notation **-ō̄* denotes a trimoric vowel, here arising from contraction across a laryngeal hiatus.

[24] It is important to recall that prior to the loss of final short vowels in absolute final position, the 1 sg. pret. and 3 sg. pret. of strong verbs would have had different endings (1 sg. **warþ-a* < **-h₂e* vs. 3 sg. **warþ-e*), making the identity of the 1 sg. and 3 sg. in the preterite of "do" an obvious target for analogical repair. Later, after the 1 sg. pret. and 3 sg. pret. had merged in strong verbs, the direction of analogical pressure would have been reversed, threatening the distinction between 1 sg. **-dō̄*^{N} and 3 sg. **-dō̄*. See §7.

bimoric *-ō- and a disambiguating final nasal that can most simply be attributed to the influence of the similar-looking imperfect (pre-Gmc. *d^héd^{h}oh_1-m, *-d^hoh_1-s, *-d^hoh_1-t, etc.). Other possible, but less likely sources for the *-n would have been the aorist (*d^héh_1-m, *-s, *-t, etc.) and the present optative (*-(o)ih_1-m, *-s, *-t, etc.).

5. The *guhā* construction in Germanic

Let us now consider how the *guhā* periphrasis would actually have been implemented in Germanic. For purposes of exposition we will operate, somewhat anachronistically, with preforms that incorporate most of the characteristic Germanic sound changes (e.g., Grimm's Law, *o > *a, *ā > *ō), but that (*inter alia*) keep intervocalic *-j- intact and maintain unstressed *-e- (i.e., *-ĕ-)[25] distinct from *-i-.

The basic role of the *guhā* construction was to provide derived verbs meaning 'make X' and 'be/become X' with surrogate periphrastic preterites. Thus, for the factitive present *warmĕjana^N 'make warm' (= Go. *warmjan*, ON *verma*) the periphrastic preterite would have been a combination of the type[26]

sg. 1	*warmē	dedō^N	'I made warm'	pl.	*warmē	dēdum
3	*warmē	dedō̄			*warmē	dēdun

This pattern would have been typical of what would become a weak verb of class I. For a stative-inchoative present of the type *warmējelja- 'be(come) warm' (inf. *warmējana^N), however, the construction would have been different. Here the semantically appropriate periphrasis would have been *warmē beb(u)wa (< *b^heb^{h}úH-h_2e) 'I became warm', etc., with the root *bū-/*b^huH- serving as the auxiliary.[27] Such combinations no longer occur in the attested forms of Germanic, because the root *bū-/*b^huH-, as already noted, was eliminated from the evolving Germanic reflex of the *guhā* construction and replaced by *dō-/*d^heh_1-. The role of ē-verbs in the history of the weak preterite was later obscured by the mechanical transfer of the presents in *-ējelja- into the etymologically distinct but functionally similar weak class III, with

[25] The breve (˘) will inconsistently be used below to clarify the contrast between forms that would eventually surface in class I (*-ĕ-) and those that would surface in class III (*-ē-).

[26] The second person forms, which are partly obscure and would add nothing to the discussion, are omitted.

[27] We will assume that by the time this replacement took place, the root *bū-/*b^huH- had already absorbed the functions of *$h_1$es- 'be'.

*-*aiþ(i)* in the 3 sg. and *-*ana*^{N} in the infinitive (cf. OHG *warmēt* < *-*aiþ* 'becomes warm', inf. -*ēn*; see note 20).[28]

It is not obvious, nor can it be trivially assumed, that the replacement of **bū-/*bʰuH-* by **dō-/*dʰeh₁-* would have consisted simply in the direct replacement of **warmē beb(u)wa* 'I became warm' by **warmē dedō*^{N}. The semantics would have been wrong for this: **dedō*^{N} meant 'I made', and **warmē dedō*^{N}, as just seen, meant 'I made warm', corresponding to the factitive present **warmĕje/a-*. What I propose, rather, is that **when **bū-/*bʰuH-* was replaced by **dō-/*dʰeh₁-* in the *guhā* construction, its place was taken not by the (transformed) perfect active of **dō-/*dʰeh₁-* (i.e., **dedō*^{N}, **-dōþ*, **-dō̄*, etc.), meaning 'I made', but by the *perfect middle* of **dō-/*dʰeh₁-*, meaning 'I became'**.[29] For the semantics of the middle of "make/do," compare Russian *pogoda **delajetsja*** [reflexive of *delat´* 'do'] *lučše* 'the weather is getting better', or Spanish ***se está haciendo*** [reflexive of *hacer* 'do'] *tarde* 'it's getting late', or simply Lat. *calefactus sum* 'I became warm', the perfect of *calefiō*. A particularly close parallel is at hand in Lith. *tylė́damas* 'being silent', with *-damas* continuing the aorist middle participle **dʰh₁-m(n)o-* 'having become' (§3). The much-discussed question of whether a perfect middle existed in PIE is, in this context, irrelevant. Three branches of the family – Indo-Iranian, Greek, and Celtic – have an identically formed perfect middle, characterized by the addition of the middle endings (in Indo-Iranian and Celtic with the "stative" 3 sg. in *-*o*)[30] to the weak allomorph of the perfect stem. If, as many scholars believe (cf., e.g., *LIV* 22), the Indo-Iranian, Greek, and Celtic perfect middles were separately innovated in the three branches, it would have been a simple matter for Germanic to introduce a perfect middle as well. That the PIE middle remained for some time a living category in Germanic is not itself in doubt. The derivation of the Gothic passive (e.g., 3 sg. *bairada* 'is carried', 2 sg. *bairaza*, 3 pl. *bairanda*) from a present middle with generalized *-*o-* as the thematic vowel (**bʰérotoi*, **-osoi*, **-ontoi*) is universally accepted. More controversial, but also solidly grounded, is the derivation of the class III weak 3 sg. in *-*aiþ(i)* from a 3 sg. middle in *-*ai* (< *-*oi*) with added "clarifying" *-*þi* (e.g., **dugaiþ(i)* 'helps' (= ON *dugir*) < **dʰugʰói* (= Ved. *duhé* 'gives milk'); cf. Jasanoff 1978: 73 ff.; 2002–03:

[28] Old High German extended -*ē*- (< *-*ai*-), which was originally proper only to the 2, 3 sg. and 2 pl., to the infinitive and the rest of the finite paradigm. The infinitive in *-*ana*^{N} is preserved in Gothic and Old Norse.

[29] So already *in nuce* Jasanoff 2003: 45, note 92.

[30] The Celtic reflex is seen in the Old Irish deponent inflection of the suffixless preterite, where, e.g., 3 sg. *ro·génair* 'has been born' presupposes a perfect middle **ǵeǵnh₁ór*.

156–8). There is thus no reason in principle why Germanic could not have inherited or developed a perfect middle of "do."

The perfect middle of *d^heh_1-*, if formed in the same way as its Indo-Iranian counterpart (cf. Ved. *dadhé*, *-iṣé*, etc.), would have had a paradigm sg. 1 *$d^hed^hh_1$-$h_2$éi*, 2 *$d^hed^hh_1$-th_2éi*, 3 *$d^hed^hh_1$-ói*, pl. 1 *$d^hed^hh_1$-méd$^hh_2$(i)*, 2 *$d^hed^hh_1$-d^h(u)u̯é(i)*(?), 3 *$d^hed^hh_1$-rói* (→ *-n̥tói*). With predictable analogical changes in the plural, this would have given

sg. 1	**dedai*	pl.	**dedumedai*(??)[31]
2	**dedusai*(??)[31]		**dedudwai*(??)[31]
3	**dedai*		**dedunþai*

If we now juxtapose the preterites of intransitive **warmējana*^{N} 'become warm' and transitive **warmějana*^{N} 'make warm' we obtain

	****warmējana*^{N} 'be(come) warm'**		****warmějana*^{N} 'make warm'**
sg. 1	**warmē dedai* 'I became warm'	sg. 1	**warmē dedō*^{N} 'I made warm'
3	**warmē dedai*	3	**warmē dedō̄*
pl. 1	**warmē dedumedai*(??)	pl. 1	**warmē dēdume*
3	**warmē dedunþai*	3	**warmē dēdun*

The weak preterite ending **-dai*, I will suggest, had its origin in the subset of weak verbs whose meaning was 'be(come) X'.

6. The formation of the PGmc. paradigm

A great deal had to happen between the evolved *guhā* construction just described and the fully-formed weak preterite of late Proto-Germanic. Univerbation was one step along the way (**warmē dedō*^{N} → **warmēdedō*^{N}); another was the haplology of **-dědˉ* (or later **-didˉ*), but not of **-dēdˉ*, to **-dˉ* (**warmēdō*^{N}). We have already discussed (§3, end) the stages by which the emergent weak preterite was brought into formal alignment with the corresponding present stem and past participle. The adjustment of the preterite to match the present and past participle would have made the active vs. middle contrast in the auxiliary (i.e., active **-(de)dō*^{N}, **-(de)dō̄*, etc. vs. middle **-(de)dai*, **-(de)dai*, etc.) redundant. In the earliest period, when the constituent terms in the *guhā* construction still had their literal value, a periphrastic expression like **warmē dedō̄*, the 3 sg. preterite-in-waiting of the verb that would become Go. *warmjan* (class I), would have meant 'made warm', and **warmē dedai*, the 3 sg. preterite-in-waiting of the verb that would become

[31] The shape of the middle endings, of course, can in some cases only be guessed at. I assume as a convenience that *-u-*, as in the active, was propagated from the 3 pl. as a union vowel.

OHG *warmēn* (class III), would have meant 'became warm'. But after **warmē dedō̄* 'made warm' was remodeled to univerbated **warmĕ(de)dō̄*, with **-ĕ-* matching the **-ĕ-* of pres. **warmĕje/a-* and ptcp. **warmĕdaz*, the specific choice of endings would have ceased to carry informational value. From this point on, the grammatical parsing of an emergent weak preterite form would primarily have been determined by the vowel that preceded the dental. **warmē(de)dai* now meant 'became warm', not because it had the ending of a historical middle, but because it corresponded formally to the intransitive present stem **warmēje/a-* and participle **warmēdaz*. By the same token, **warmĕ(de)dō̄* now meant 'made warm' because its **-ĕ-* matched the **-ĕ-* of the transitive present **warmĕje/a-* (ptcp. **warmĕdaz*). The fact that the preterite of **warmĕjana*^{N} was marked by one set of endings and the preterite of *warmējana*^{N} had another would now simply have been a synchronic anomaly.

Under these circumstances, and against the background of the general decline of the middle in Germanic, the loss of the contrast between the weak preterite active (3 sg. **-dō̄*) and middle (3 sg. **-dai*) would have been inevitable. The interesting detail is that when a unitary voice-indifferent paradigm emerged, it was not based exclusively on the active forms. In the 3 sg. the ending that "won" was **-dai*. We can only speculate on why this was the case. Distributional factors may have played a role; it is worth noting, e.g., that when **-ā-* (> **-ō-*) was introduced as the periphrastic combining vowel in class II, the exact proportion, in quasi-IE (post-laryngeal) terms, would have been

**rud^{h}ēi̯eti* 'turns red' : pret. **rud^{h}ē d^{h}ed^{h}oi* 'turned red' :: **solpāi̯eti* 'anoints' : pret. X,

where the solution, strictly speaking, would have been **solpā d^{h}ed^{h}oi* (> **salbō(de)dai*) 'anointed'. It is thus not out of the question that class II, as well as class III, became a locus of middle inflection.

Whatever the explanation, the 3 sg. of the fully-formed weak preterite generalized the middle ending and the other paradigmatic positions eventually emerged – more or less inevitably, as we shall see – with the active endings. We cannot now recover the exact steps by which the paradigm assumed its final form. Two slightly different general scenarios can be considered:

Scenario 1: active and middle forms competed in each paradigmatic position, with the middle ending winning out in the 3 sg. and the active endings prevailing elsewhere;

Scenario 2: the middle forms were generalized everywhere, but the resulting paradigm was subsequently "activized" outside the 3 sg. under

the influence of the freestanding preterite of "do" (1 sg. **dedō^{N}*, 1 pl. **dēdum*, etc.).[32]

In either case, the shape of the weak preterite paradigm as we have it would largely have been determined by the initial selection of **-dai* and not **-dō̄* in the 3 sg. Thus, in the 1 sg., where **-dō^{N}* (historically active) and **-dai* (historically middle) would have vied for selection as the all-purpose voice-indifferent ending, **-dō^{N}* was favored on account of its non-homophony with the 3 sg. in **-dai*. In the plural, the cumbersome middle endings (**-(de)dumedai* (*vel sim.*), **-(de)dudwai* (*vel sim.*), **-(de)dunþai*) would obviously have been disfavored vis-à-vis active **-dēdum*, **-dēduþ*, and **-dēdun*, which were also the freestanding forms. In the 2 sg., neither the active (**-(de)dōþa*) nor the middle ending (**-dedusai*?) would have had long-term prospects, and a new 2 sg. in **-daiz* was created in imitation of the pattern 2 sg. **-aiz* : 3 sg. **-ai* in the optative.

The result was the late Proto-Germanic paradigm. For a class I weak verb this would have had the form

sg. 1	**warmidō^{N}*	pl.	**warmidēdum*
2	**warmidaiz*		**warmidēduþ*
3	**warmidai*		**warmidēdun*

So too **salbōdō^{N}* (class II), **warmaidō^{N}* (class III, with late substitution of **-ai-*, based on the reformed present, for **-ē-*), **þanhtō^{N}* (irregular class I), etc.

7. The post-PGmc. history

The formal treatment of the weak preterite in Gothic and North Germanic was unremarkable. The Gothic 1, 3 sg. ending *-da* (*nasida*) is the regular reflex of both 1 sg. **-dō^{N}* and 3 sg. **-dai*; only the 2 sg. in *-des* (*nasides*), with [-e:-] (from *-dedum*, etc.) for expected [-ɛ:-] (**nasidais*), is analogical. On the Scandinavian side, Norse participated in the Northwest Germanic simplification of **-dēd-* to **-d-* in the plural, but otherwise maintained the paradigm intact. The 1 sg. in **-dō^{N}* and 3 sg. in **-dai*, which appear as *-do* and *-dai*/*-de*, respectively, in the older runic inscriptions, became *-ða* and *-ði* in literary Old Norse. 2 sg. *-ðir* is from **-daiz*.[33]

---

[32] Since **dedai* 'I/(s)he became', etc. was eventually replaced by the strong preterite of **werþana^{N}* 'to become', it can be assumed that the freestanding preterite of "do" would by this time have been *activum tantum*.

[33] Stiles (1984: 10–12) argues that the phonological reflex of **-aiz* in Old Norse, seen in the gen. sg. of *i*-stems, was *-ar*. If so, the *-ðir* of the weak preterite would have to be analogical to the 3 sg. in *-ði* < **-dai*, just as the 2 sg. optative in *-ir* (PGmc. **-aiz*), under this theory, would have to be analogical to the 3 sg. in *-i* < **-ai*.

The facts are less transparent in West Germanic. Here the most interesting language is Old High German, where the ending *-ta* is common to both the 1 sg. and 3 sg. Since *-ta* would have been the regular reflex of PGmc. 1 sg. **-dō^{N}* but not of PGmc. 3 sg. **-dai* (**-dai* would have given **-te*), Old High German is often thought to provide positive evidence for a Proto-Germanic 3 sg. in **-dē*.[34] But this argument does not get us very far. Following the inner-Germanic loss of final short vowels in absolute auslaut, the 1 sg. of the strong preterite, which historically ended in **-a* (< **-h$_2$e*), and the 3 sg. of the strong preterite, which historically ended in **-e*, fell together; the two forms are identical in every Germanic language (cf. Go. 1, 3 sg. *warþ*, ON *varð*, OHG *warth*, etc.). In West Germanic this pattern was generalized: the 1 sg. and 3 sg. were brought into agreement in *all* verbal paradigms outside the present indicative, including the strong and weak preterite indicative and the present and preterite optative (cf., e.g., OHG pres. opt. 1, 3 sg. *werthe*, pret. opt. 1, 3 sg. *wurti*). If, therefore, Old High German originally had a 1 sg. in *-ta* (< **-dō^{N}*) and a 3 sg. in **-te* (< **-dai*), as our scenario demands, the difference would probably not have maintained itself for long. What is surprising is that, as seen by Hollifield (1980: 51), the *-ta* of the 1 sg., or its phonological predecessor, was generalized to the 3 sg., and not vice versa; other things being equal, the 3 sg. might have been expected to have the typological "edge" in such cases. But it was indeed the 1 sg. that spread, as shown by two pieces of indirect evidence. The first is the remarkable extension of **-ō-* to other parts of the paradigm in Old High German, Old Low Franconian, and the more Franconian-like variety of Old Saxon. These dialects have *-tōs*/*-dōs* in the 2 sg. (OHG *neritōs*, OS OLF *-dos*; also OS *dedos* 'you did'), replacing older *-tēs*/*-dēs* < **-dais*.[35] In Alemannic (and the dialect of the OHG Isidore translation) the process went further: *-ō-* also took the place of *-u-* in the endings of the plural (*neritōm*, *-tōt*, *-tōn*). These developments – distinctly peculiar if we think of the **-ō-* as having spread from the 1 sg. alone – instantly become intelligible if we assume that they were preceded by an early replacement, perhaps at the West Germanic level, of **-dai* by **-dō^{N}* in the 3 sg.:[36]

---

[34] In the other West Germanic languages the reflexes of **-dē* and **-dai* would have fallen together.

[35] The older Old High German form of the ending is preserved in scattered archaisms like *chiminnerodes* (: *minnerōn* 'lessen'; Isidore) and *altinotes* (: *altinōn* 'ignore'; Benedictine Rule). For the *-s* see note 11.

[36] Hollifield, who originated the idea that OHG 3 sg. *-ta* was really the analogically extended 1 sg. ending, did not think of the development as pan-West Germanic because he incorrectly believed that Old Saxon still preserved a distinctive reflex of **-dai* in the 3 sg. With this misconception out of the way, it is most convenient to assume that the transferred ending was early WGmc. **-dō^{N}*.

	Northwest Gmc.		**West Gmc.**
1 sg.	*-*dō*^{N}	>	*-*dō*^{N}
2 sg.	*-*daiz*	>	*-*daiz*
3 sg.	*-*dai*	→	*-*dō*^{N}

From the 1 sg. and 3 sg., *ō*-timbre spread to the 2 sg. (*-*dais* → *-*dōs*) in Franconian and Upper German; 2 sg. *-tōs* then became the point of departure for the creation of *-tōm*, *-tōt*, *-tōn* in a part of Upper German. *-*dō*^{N} was also extended to the 3 sg. in the freestanding preterital forms of "do" – provably only in Old High German (cf. 1, 3 sg. *teta*), but quite possibly throughout West Germanic.

The second fact pointing to *-*dō*^{N} as the common 1, 3 sg. ending is the peculiar form of the 1, 3 sg. optative of the weak preterite in Alemannic. The sign of the preterite optative is *-ī-* in both strong and weak verbs in Old High German; cf. East Franconian, Bavarian 1, 3 sg. *wurti*, *neriti*, 2 sg. *wurtīs*, *neritīs*, pl. *wurtīm*, *neritīm*, etc. In Alemannic, however, the expected shortening of final *-*ī* in the 1, 3 sg. fails to take place in weak verbs, so that 1, 3 sg. *wurti* (+ *sungi*, *bizzi*, etc.), with *-ĭ*, contrast with *neritī* (+ *salbōtī*, *habetī*), with *-ī*.[37] This oddity has never been explained (for a recent unsatisfactory proposal see Hill 2010: 450–1).[38] The *-ī* in these forms, in my view, had the same phonological source as the *-ī* in feminine *-īn*-stems of the type OHG *hōhī* 'height', *tiufī* 'depth', etc. The latter are morphologically based on the feminine *-ōn*-stem type *zunga*, gen. *-ūn*; the *-*ī* < *-*ī*^{N} of nom. sg. *hōhī*, I would suggest, "tracks" the *-a* < *-*ō*^{N} of nom. sg. *zunga*. In the optative of the weak preterite there was an analogy: on the model of the 1, 3 sg. indicative in *-*dō*^{N}, the 1, 3 sg. of the corresponding optative was remade to nasalized *-*dī*^{N}, whence Alem. *-tī*.[39] No such remodeling took place in the preterite optative of strong verbs, because these lacked preterite indicatives in 1, 3 sg. *-*dō*^{N}.

---

[37] Cf. Braune 2018: 272.

[38] Hill sets up an analogical final sequence *-*dē-ī*, formed by adding the optative sign *-*ī-* to the weak preterite stem in *-*dē-*. This combination, he says, would have resisted final shortening in Old High German, and would also account for the archaic Old English optative ending *-dæ*, homophonous with the indicative (cf. Bammesberger 1982).

[39] Since nasalization of final vowels was lost very early in West Germanic, this formulation would imply that the innovated forms were pan-West Germanic and leveled out in the other dialects. There is no reason why this could not be the case. Note that if the 1, 3 sg. opt. of the weak preterite was formally aberrant in some way in the prehistory of Old English, it might explain why this ending was replaced in the early glosses (see note 38).

8. Summary

We have explored some of the historical implications of the form *talgidai*, one of our earliest recorded instances of a weak preterite. The final *-ai* of this form, if genuine, would be inconsistent with the traditional interpretation of the weak preterite as a periphrastic construction containing an *e*-grade imperfect or aorist of PIE **d^heh_1-* 'do'. For this reason, modern scholarship has tended to downplay the significance of what might otherwise have been thought a remarkable archaism – either by explaining away the diphthong as an error, or by taking the final *-ai* as an odd spelling for intended [-æ:] or [-ɛ:]. One of our objects here has been to restore some balance to the discussion. Whatever the ultimate origin of the weak preterite, the issues raised by *talgidai* force us to face three facts: 1) the philological arguments against reading a final diphthong are not compelling; 2) the attractions of starting from a PGmc. 3 sg. **-dē* are offset by serious and mostly underemphasized phonological and morphological difficulties; and 3) starting from a middle ending **-dai* is not in principle a dead-end option, but opens another possible avenue to making sense of *talgidai* and the weak preterite as a whole.

The specific scenario offered here consists of the following steps (some of the relative chronology is arbitrary):

- grammaticalization of the *guhā* construction, using the perfect of **d^heh_1-* and **b^huH-* to form periphrastic preterites to derived verbs;
- replacement of 1 sg. perf. **dedō̄* (< **-oh_1-h_2e*) by **dedōn* (> **dedō̄^{N}*), with disambiguating **-n* taken (probably) from the imperfect;
- substitution of the perfect middle of **d^heh_1-* (PGmc. 3 sg. **dedai* < **$d^hed^hh_1$-ói*) for the perfect active of **b^huH-* in the periphrastic preterite of intransitive verbs;
- univerbation, formal alignment with the present and past participle, and haplology of **-dĕd-* > **-d-*;
- loss of the active : middle distinction in the preterite and creation of a unitary paradigm with **-dai* in the 3 sg. but historically active endings elsewhere (**-dō̄^{N}*, **-daiz*, **-dai*, **-dēdum*, etc.);
- post-Gmc. developments: **-dais* → *-des* in Gothic; **-dēd-* > **-d-* in NWGmc.; 3 sg.**-dai* → **-dō̄^{N}* (from 1 sg.) in WGmc.; 2 sg. **-dēs* (< **-dais*) → **-dōs* in pre-OHG and related dialects.

No theory is without its weak points, and in the present case these are largely inherent in the data. For all its durability in the face of attempts to explain it away, *talgidai* is still an isolated form; unless and until

another 3 sg. in *-dai* comes to light, traditionalists will always have grounds to argue for the primacy of Runic Norse *-de*. Conversely, if the hapax runic ending *-da*, here taken to be a miswriting for **-dai*, should turn up with an assured monophthongal reading in other early inscriptions, our attempt to explain the weak preterite without appeal to an *e*-grade imperfect (**$d^h ed^h ēt$*) or aorist (**$d^h ēt$*) would be compromised. We have no way of knowing what surprising forms may some day be discovered. For now, however, the prudent assumption is that the *-dai* of *talgidai* is more likely to represent a diphthong than not; and if it represents a diphthong it can only be part of a middle ending. Middle-based theories of the weak preterite have been tried before. The novelty of the present proposal, and a point in its favor, is that by operating only with the perfect middle of "do," it retains all the advantages of the periphrastic approach while requiring only the barest minimum of actual middle morphology.

Bibliography

Antonsen, Elmer H. (1975). *A Concise Grammar of the Older Runic Inscriptions*. Tübingen: Niemeyer.

Antonsen, Elmer H. (2002). *Runes and Germanic Linguistics*. Berlin/New York: de Gruyter.

Bammesberger, Alfred. (1982). „Der Optativ bei athematischen Verbalstämmen im Altenglischen". In: *Anglia* 100, 413–18.

Braune, Wilhelm (2018). *Althochdeutsche Grammatik. I. Laut- und Formenlehre.* 16. neu bearbeitete Auflage. Berlin/Boston: de Gruyter.

Collitz, Hermann (1912). *Das schwache Präteritum und seine Vorgeschichte*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht; Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press.

Eichner, Heiner (1996). "Recent runic finds: Additional remarks". In: *UCLA Friends and Alumni of Indo-European Studies Newsletter* 5, 14–15.

Grønvik, Ottar (1994). "Bøylenålene fra Udby og fra Nøvling: To runeinnskrifter fra tidlig urnordisk tid". In: Knirk, James (ed.). *Proceedings of the Third International Symposium on Runes and Runic Inscriptions. Grindaheim, Norway, 8–12 August 1990*. Uppsala: Institutionen för nordiska språk, 45–57.

Harðarson, Jón Axel (1998). „Mit dem Suffix **-eh_1-* bzw. **-$(e)h_1$-i̯e/o-* gebildete Verbalstämme im Indogermanischen". In: Wolfgang Meid (ed.). *Sprache und Kultur der Indogermanen. Akten der X. Fachtagung der Indogermanischen Gesellschaft*. Innsbruck: Institut für Sprachwissenschaft, 323–339.

Harðarson, Jón Axel (2005). „Der geschlechtige Nom. Sg. und der neutrale Nom.-Akk. Pl. der *n*-Stämme im Urindogermanischen und Germanischen". In: Meiser, Gerhard/Hackstein, Olav (eds.). *Sprachkontakt und Sprachwandel. Akten der XI. Fachtagung der Indogermanischen Gesellschaft, 17.−23. September 2000, Halle an der Saale*. Wiesbaden: Reichert, 215–36.

Harðarson, Jón Axel (2017). "The morphology of Germanic". In: Klein, Jared/Joseph, Brian/Fritz, Matthias (eds.). *Handbook of Historical and Comparative Indo-European Linguistics*, Vol. 2. Berlin/Boston: de Gruyter, 913–54.

Hill, Eugen (2010): "A case study in grammaticalized inflectional morphology. Origin and development of the Germanic weak preterite". In: *Diachronica* 27, 411–458.

Hollifield, Patrick Henry (1980). "The phonological development of final syllables in Germanic". In: *Die Sprache* 26, 19–53 (Part 1), 145–178 (Part 2).

Imer, Lisbeth (2015). "Jernalderens Runeindskrifter i Norden – Katalog". In: *Aarbøger for Nordisk Oldkyndighed og Historie* 2014, 1–347.

Jasanoff, Jay H. (1978). *Stative and Middle in Indo-European*. Innsbruck: Institut für Sprachwissenschaft der Universität Innsbruck.

Jasanoff, Jay H. (2002–03 [2004]). "Stative *-*ē*- revisited". In: *Die Sprache* 43, 127–70.

Jasanoff, Jay H. (2003). *Hittite and the Indo-European Verb*. Oxford / New York: Oxford University Press.

Jasanoff, Jay H. (2017). "The Old Irish *f*-future". In: Hansen, Bjarne Simmelkjær Sandgaard et al. (eds.). USQUE AD RADICES. *Indo-European Studies in Honour of Birgit Anette Olsen*, 325–39. Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press.

Kim, Ronald (2010). "On the prehistory of Old English *dyde*". In: Krygier, Marcin / Sikorska, Liliana (eds.). *Þe comoun peplis language*. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 9–22.

Kortlandt, Frederik H. H (1989). "The Germanic weak preterit". In: *Amsterdamer Beiträge zur Älteren Grammatik* 29, 101–109.

Krause, Wolfgang (1971). *Die Sprache der urnordischen Runeninschriften*. Heidelberg: Carl Winter.

LIV = Lexicon der indogermanischen Verben. Die Wurzeln und ihre Primärstammbildungen. Zweite, erweiterte und verbesserte Auflage bearbeitet von Martin Kümmel und Helmut Rix. Wiesbaden: Reichert (2001).

Looijenga, Tineke (2003). *Texts and Contexts of the Oldest Runic Inscriptions*. Leiden / Boston: Brill.

Lühr, Rosemarie (1984). „Reste der athematischen Konjugation in den germanischen Sprachen: zu ‚sein' und ‚tun'". In: Untermann, Jürgen/Brogyanyi, Bela (eds.). *Das Germanische und die Rekonstruktion der indogermanischen Grundsprache. Akten des Freiburger Kolloquiums der Indogermanischen Gesellschaft, Freiburg, 26.−27. Februar 1981*. Amsterdam: Benjamins, 25−90.

Lühr, Rosemarie (2016). „Indogermanistik und Germanistik". In: *Historische Sprachforschung* 129, 233–63.

Moltke, Erik (1976). *Runerne i Danmark og deres oprindelse*. Copenhagen: Forum.

Nedoma, Robert (1997). „Neues zu älteren Runeninschriften". In: *Die Sprache* 37, 105–115.

Nedoma, Robert (2005). „Urnordisch *-a* im Nominativ Singularis der maskulinen *n*-Stämme".In: *NOWELE* 46/47 (= *Papers on Scandinavian and Germanic Language and Culture. Published in Honour of Michael Barnes on his Sixty-Fifth Birthday 28 June 2005*), 155–191.

Rasmussen, Jens E. (1996). "On the Origin of the Germanic Weak Preterite". In: *Copenhagen Working Papers in Linguistics* 4, 161–8.

Ringe, Don (2006). "A sociolinguistically informed solution to an old historical problem: The Gothic genitive plural". In: *Transactions of the Philological Society* 104 (2), 167–206.

Schuhmann, Roland (2016). „Zur Endung der 3.Sg.Ind.Prät. der schwachen Verben in den Runeninschriften im älteren Futhark". In: Neri, Sergio/Schuhmann, Roland/Zeilfelder, Susanne (eds.). „*dat ih dir it nu bi huldi gibu*" *Linguistische, germanistische und indogermanistische Studien Rosemarie Lühr gewidmet*. Wiesbaden: Reichert, 407–418.

Shapiro, Michael C. (2003). "Hindi". In: Cardona, George/Jain, Dhanesh (eds.). *The Indo-Aryan Languages*. London/New York: Routledge, 250–85.

Stiles, Patrick V. (1984). "On the interpretation of Older Runic *swestar* on the Opedal Stone". In: *NOWELE* 3, 3–48.

Stiles, Patrick V. (1988. Gothic nominative singular *brōþar* 'brother' and the reflexes of Indo-European long vowels in the final syllables of Germanic polysyllables. *Transactions of the Philological Society* 1988, 115–43.

Stiles, Patrick V. (2010). "The Gothic extended forms of the dental preterit endings". In: *NOWELE* 58/59, 343–66.

Stoklund, Marie (1991). „Die Runeninschrift auf der Rosettenfibel von Udby. Eine neue Diskussionsgrundlage". In: Askedal, John Ole et al. (eds.). *Festskrift til Ottar Grønvik*. Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 88–101.

Syrett, Martin (1994). *The Unaccented Vowels of Proto-Norse* (*NOWELE* Supplement 11). Odense: Odense University Press.

Watkins, Calvert (1969). *Indogermanische Grammatik. III/1. Geschichte der indogermanischen Verbalflexion.* Heidelberg: Winter.

Jay H. Jasanoff

312 Boylston Hall
Harvard University
Cambridge, MA 02138
USA
jasanoff@fas.harvard.edu