

THE PLACE OF THE *VESPASIAN PSALTER* GLOSS  
IN THE HISTORY OF ENGLISH

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Historians of the English language have now at their disposal quite a number of up-to-date histories of the language as well as grammars discussing in full detail the language of one period. All the important processes which changed English from a synthetic language into an analytic one have been described; however, few detailed analyses of the mechanisms which actually started those processes have been produced so far.

For instance, the general decay of inflexions is usually and rightly attributed to the early Middle English reduction of the vowels in inflexional endings to an unclear [ə] sound. But this phenomenon could probably not have occurred so suddenly and so overwhelmingly if it had not been prepared for by earlier, more limited changes in the same direction and if the language had not already adapted itself by finding some ways of compensating for their effects. It is, indeed, difficult to imagine that a grammatical system could suddenly collapse, even if 'suddenly' means 'over a century or so', and be almost instantly replaced by a fitting and satisfactory substitute.

The problems I encountered many years ago when preparing my *Glossary of the Vespasian Psalter and Hymns*<sup>1</sup> convinced me that this text would probably provide a good field of investigation for the early signs of breaking up of the inflexional system, if due allowance was made for the fact that it is a gloss and that some phenomena may be due to the influence of the Latin text or, if the gloss is not original, to the fact of copying.<sup>2</sup>

Indeed, the language is remarkably consistent; the text is more than rea-

<sup>1</sup> Only *Part I: the verb*, has been published so far. The appearance of Sherman Kuhn's new edition of the *Vespasian Psalter* (1965), including a complete glossary, made the completion of mine a less urgent matter.

<sup>2</sup> On this much debated problem, cf. a. o., Kuhn 1948:591-629, 1959:161-177 and his preface to his edition 1965: V-VI; Sisam 1953:4; 1956:127; Grøss 1955:138; Girvan 1957: 49; Wilson 1959: 292-310; Mertens-Fonck 1959: 170-173; Wright 1967:15-92; Gerritsen 1970:228-230.

sonably old; it is long enough to provide a fairly wide range of forms illustrating one phenomenon; it is now unanimously recognized as being written in a form of OE which is, in Sherman Kuhn's own words "the nearest thing we have to a direct ancestor of Modern English" (Kuhn 1965:V). Lastly it can be connected with a group of Middle English texts of the same dialectal area, thus illustrating the unbroken development of that variety of English.

One of the phenomena I have chosen to concentrate on, the ending *-e* of the 1st person sg. of the present indicative, was described and explained some fifty years ago by A. S. C. Ross (1933:232-9). However, the study of this phenomenon through the evidence available in the *VP* gloss rather than in a corpus covering at least two centuries and some very different dialectal areas may induce us to look at the process in quite a different light.

The other phenomenon I intend to discuss can be described in a general way as class confusion (in this case, chiefly confusion of classes I and II of weak verbs). This is recognized by most historians of the language and described by most grammarians or rather *used* by them to explain 'abnormal' i.e., in fact, analogical forms. However, the *causes* of the phenomenon, which reveals the breaking up of a system and announces the coming of a new one, are seldom touched upon. I hope to show that a close study of the confusion of classes in the *VP* gloss may reveal some unsuspected aspects and bring out some of the factors that favoured that process.

Most historians of the English language consider that the pres. ind. 1st pers. in *-e* can be explained by morphological substitution: the historically developed *-u* or *-o* was replaced by an ending borrowed from the subjunctive. Very few have actually tried to account for the substitution.

In the article just referred to, A. S. C. Ross expressed the view that in four texts, in which forms in *-u/-o* alternate with forms in *-e*, i.e. *Lindisfarne*, the *Ritual*, *Rushworth*<sup>2</sup> and the *Vespasian Psalter*, "we see the beginnings of the process which led to the use of the 1st sg. pres. ind. in *-e* as the normal form in West Saxon, Kentish and *Rushworth*<sup>1</sup>" (Ross 1933:237). After examining closely and grouping the forms in *-e* in those texts, he added: "From the examples given above it seems that the use of the form in *-e* is more common in the future sense in Anglian than in the true present tense" (Ross 1933:238).

Another explanation was more recently suggested by B. Strang (1970:342). She argues that "In OE..., the subjunctive was a somewhat dominant form, both because it had a very wide range of functions in which it was required or permitted, and because its singular, unlike that of the indicative, was common to all three persons, and therefore of more frequent occurrence than any one indicative singular form".

However, an analysis of the evidence of the *VP* gloss, isolated from other n. WS texts of different age, size and dialectal area suggests that a phonological factor probably accounts for the forms in *-e* occurring in the gloss and that

those forms almost certainly reflect a process which was also occurring or, more probably, had already occurred in the spoken language.

In the *VP* gloss, the regular ending of the 1st person sg. of the present indicative is *-u*, sometimes *-o*, exceptionally *-a*. There are

about 250 occurrences of *u*  
 about 30 of *o*  
 and only two irregular occurrences of *a*  
 besides regular *gā/gaa*, *slēa*, *ðwēa*

But there are seventeen forms in *-e* or *-ie* glossing a Latin future and one more form in *-ie*, *gelicie* 34.14, glossing *complacebam*.

Five of them  
*gefie* 9.3; 30.8; 62.8; 91.5 glossing *escultabo*  
*gesie* 8.4 glossing *videbo*<sup>3</sup>

will be left out of account for the moment: as suggested by Sherman Kuhn (1948:607), they may be explained by the tendency for the second element of the diphthong to weaken in Mercian and become *e* "whether or not it was followed by an *i* or a *j*... This tendency, Kuhn writes, may be illustrated by a number of words in the gloss. For example, the feminine pronoun *sie* appears with the weakened diphthong twenty-one times. There is no possibility of umlaut in this word, and no possibility of West Saxon influence because the regular form in that dialect was *seo*. The weakening must have begun, Kuhn adds, while the leveling of *io* and *eo* was still going on, for some words (*ðeod*, *ðeow*, *freond*) show all three spellings *eo*, *io*, *ie*".

Two of the other 1st pers. sg. in *-e*,  
*cyme* 41.3 and  
*cweðe* H 3.13

can hardly be referred to as 1st pers. sg. pres. ind. in *-e*: their root vowel is different from the root vowel of the corresponding pres. ind., which are *cumu* and *cweoðu*. However, they gloss respectively the futures *veniam* and *dicam*, which may have been misinterpreted as subjunctives.

Seven other Latin futures can have been mistaken for subjunctives:

benedicam,	62.5,	glossed	<i>bledsie</i>
reddam	65.13	„	<i>gelde</i>
custodiam	58.10	„	<i>halde</i>

<sup>3</sup> The numbering is that of my glossary, which follows Sweet's edition (1938 [1885]: 183-420). Sweet had adopted the numbers of the modern Vulgate; in Kuhn's edition verse numbers correspond to the verse divisions of the manuscript, the numbers of the Vulgate being given in parentheses.



audiam	84.9	„	gehere
vivam	117.17	„	lifge
	118.77	„	lifge
dispergam	H 7.52	„	tostregde.

Three Latin futures, however, can hardly be misinterpreted as subjunctives as they are in *-bo(r)*:

laetabor	30.8	glossed	blisie
parebo	41.3	„	oteawe
dabo	104.11	„	selle.

Moreover, six (out of the nine futures which, in isolation, could be misinterpreted as subjunctives) are immediately preceded or followed by unmistakable futures in *-bo*:

hwonne	ic cyme 7	oteawe	41.3
quando	veniam et	parebo	
hwet	ic cweðe oððe	hwet ondsweorað me	H3.13
quid dicam	aut	quid respondebit mihi	
ic bledsie	ðec 7	ic uphebbu honda	mine 62.5
benedicam te	et	levabo	manus meas
ic ingaa	in hus ðin ...	ic gelde ðe	gehat min 65.13
introibo	in domum tuam ...	reddam tibi	vota mea
ne sweltu	ic ah lifge 7	seggo	werc dryhtnes 117.17
non moriar	sed vivam	et narrabo	opera domini
ic tostregde	hie bescergu	soðlice	H7.52
dispergam	eas	privabo	autem

If we admit that confusion was hardly likely to occur when a Latin future in *-am* was immediately preceded or followed by a future in *-bo*, we are left with 9 almost unmistakable Latin futures glossed by OE subjunctives.

So it would seem that, as suggested by A. S. C. Ross, the best way to account for the twelve forms in *-e* glossing a Latin future is to assume a tendency to use the forms in *-e*, whether true subjunctives, like *cyme* or *cweðe* or "contaminated" present forms like all the other ones, with future meaning, as distinct from the ordinary indicative forms in *-u/-o*. This explanation accounts for all the forms in *-e* in the VP gloss: none of them glosses an ordinary present indicative but, on the other hand, over two hundred and fifty Latin futures are glossed by an ordinary present ind. as appears from the example of Ps. 117.17, where *moriar*, *vivam* and *narrabo* are glossed respectively by *sweltu*, *lifge* and *seggo*, and from other examples in the same list (*levabo/uphebbu*; *privabo/biscergu*, etc). In his demonstration A. S. C. Ross does not use the example

ic gefie 7 blisie 30.8  
exultabo et laetabor

because he considers it as "not so certain; the *e* in *blisie*, he writes, may be due to that in the contracted form *gefie* where it is phonologically regular" (Ross 1933: 235, n. 1).

To me this *blisie* (for *blissie*) is perhaps the most important of all the forms discussed, for it shows how the shift from the *u/o* forms to the *e* forms may have occurred in this particular text. As I said, Sherman Kuhn has rightly shown that a number of words in the *Vespasian Psalter* gloss reflect the weakening of *io/eo* to *ie* and that some of these words appear in all three spellings. It seems that in the dialect of the VP gloss, the diphthongs *-io/eo* and *-ie* were interchangeable, particularly in final position. The forms of *gefeon* for the 1st sg. pres. ind. tend to prove it: there are

3 *gefio* 9.16; 74.10; 116.39 and  
4 *gefie* 9.3; 30.8; 62.8; 91.5

all of which gloss either *exultabo* or *gaudebo*. They seem to have been considered as strictly equivalent. The only other forms of a contracted verb occurring in the 1st sg. pres. ind. or subj. are

*gesi o* 5.5; 117.7; H 3.2 and  
*gesie* 8.4.

They all gloss *videbo*; so again, forms in *-io* and *ie* seem to have been considered as strictly equivalent to gloss a future.

These contracted forms in *-io* or *-ie* occur early in the gloss, five of them, at any rate, occur before the first form in *-e* which is not a contracted verb:

<i>gesi o/videbo</i>	5.5	<i>gefie/exultabo</i>	9.3
<i>gesie/videbo</i>	8.5	<i>gefio/exultabo</i>	9.16
		<i>gefie/exultabo</i>	30.8

Indeed, apart from them, the first occurrence of a 1st. pers. sg. in *-e* glossing a Latin future is *blisie/laetabor* 30.8, obviously introduced, as suggested by A. Ross, by the immediately preceding *gefie*, but not so accidental as he thought it to be, and apparently big with consequences for it seems to have opened the way for the series of twelve forms in *-e* that have been discussed. The fact that *blissian* is a weak verb of class II is, moreover, probably not insignificant, for the ending *-e* forms with the preceding *i* the same group as in *gefie*. It may also be significant that in the series *sweltu*, *lifge* and *seggo*, the only form in *-e* is, in fact, in *ie*.

Thus, it seems reasonable to assume that the forms we have in the *Vespasian Psalter* gloss reflect the beginnings of a process which, like most linguistic developments, probably took place at various dates and rates in the different OE



dialects. B. Strang considers that, in this matter, "the innovator is WS" (1970:342).

Indeed, *-e* is the normal ending in West Saxon and Kentish, as well as in *Rushworth*<sup>1</sup>. But most WS texts are later than the Anglian texts, at any rate than the *VP* gloss, and there are still a number of forms in *-u* or *-o* in late 9th-century WS texts. That the *Vespasian Psalter* gloss represents an early stage in the Mercian development, and perhaps in the general OE development as well, appears from the fact that in the later Mercian *Rushworth*<sup>1</sup>, the proportion of forms in *-u/o* versus those in *-e* is reversed: all 1st sg. pres. ind. endings are in *-e* with the exception of a few endings *-u*, *-o* or *-a*.

There may be some truth in what my predecessors thought about the origin of the substitution of the ending *-e* for the historical *-u/-o* in the first pers. sg. pres. ind. Still, the evidence of the *VP* gloss suggests that a phonological factor may have played a prominent part in this substitution: this factor was the weakening, in Mercian, of the second element of the diphthong *eo/io*, which became *ie*.<sup>4</sup>

The second point I'd like to deal with is the information provided by the *VP* gloss concerning the confusion of classes of weak verbs ultimately leading to levelling and loss of any distinction.

It is generally assumed that the process occurred chiefly during the Middle English period and was partly at least the consequence of the Middle English reduction of the vowels of inflexions to a common [ə] sound. "In destroying the distinction between the 2 and 3 sg. of Weak Class II and the corresponding forms of other regular verbs, and between the 3 sg. and the plural of most verbs other than those of Class II, (this change) was later the cause of further changes that in AB are only just beginning to appear". This is what S. d'Ardenne wrote on p. 233 of her *Iulienne* (1933/1961).

A close examination of the evidence available in the *VP* gloss shows that class confusion was already well under way as early as the 9th century and that several factors, beside the Middle English reduction of unstressed vowels to an unclear sound, probably combined to produce it. The following analysis is an attempt to bring out the most active or obvious of these factors.

a) — A first group of verbs which, in my opinion, reflect hesitation or fluctuation between two classes (weak I and II) is the group of verbs in *-ettan/-etian*. There are five of them in the *VP* gloss (not counting *ondettan/ondet(i)an* where *-ettan* is not historically a suffix but the original root of the verb):

*bliccettan* 'flash', '(cause to) glitter'

*dropettan/dropetian* 'drip', 'fall in drops'

*grymettan/grymetian* 'make a harsh or grating noise', 'roar', 'gnash'

<sup>4</sup> For another, non-phonological explanation of 1st sg. pres. *-e*, see Penhallurick 1978.

*roccettan* 'belch forth', 'utter'

*sporettan* 'kick'

These five verbs were all undoubtedly formed with a Germanic iterative suffix which has left traces a. o. in OHG and O. Icel.; the corresponding OE suffix was *-ettan*. It is found in no less than seventy-six OE verbs gathered, listed and grouped according to their derivation and meaning by A. H. Marckwardt (1942).

Historically, the five verbs occurring in the *VP* gloss are thus weak verbs of class I, though most forms (5 out of 6) of *grymettan* are inflected according to the 2nd class of weak verbs (only *grymetede* 37.9 belongs to the flexion of weak verbs I). Another verb in this group has only one form, *dropetende* 71.6, which could be explained either as the pres. part. of a weak verb I, *dropettan*, with a *t* missing as in *rocetað*, 118.71, beside *roccettað* 144.7, or as the pres. part. of a weak verb II *dropetian*: there was indeed, as stated by A. Campbell, "originally a special development of *-ij-* in the present participle and inflected infinitive (of weak verbs II). Between a main and a secondary stress the vowel was syncopated, and the resulting *-i-* was lost after long syllables (and after two syllables) ..." (Campbell 1959:333 §757). So, apparently at least, *dropetende* could very well be the pres. part. of a weak verb II *dropetian*. This is the form under which I entered this verb in my glossary, but I would now be more inclined to postulate an infinitive *drop(p)ettan*, the pres. part. *dropetende* presenting a simplification of *pp* and *tt* as in *rocetað* from *roccettan*; it must also be noted that the infinitive *droppettan* is supported by the OHG *troffezzen*.

The verb *ondettan* or *ondet(i)an* has been left out so far because this verb is probably derived from a compound noun represented in OHG by *antheiz* 'vow'. Two other OE verbs *oretan* 'fight' and *onettan* 'hasten' have a similar nominal derivation. A. Campbell (1959: §§ 331.7, 336, 356, 372, 455) postulates a development from G. *\*andhaitian* to Prim. OE *\*andhættian*, assuming that the accent of the second syllable was reduced sufficiently early for *ai* to become *ǣ*, instead of *ā*, in fully unaccented syllables, as in *fullestan* beside *fullæstan*. At this point, Campbell considers that conditions for the West Germanic doubling before *ɣ* were recreated and with loss of *h* between a voiced consonant and a vowel, *andhettian* yielded *andettan/ondettan*.

This hypothetical development raises a serious chronological difficulty for it assumes that the WG doubling or gemination remained operative well into a period when processes known to be specifically insular were already at work. It also assumes that the shift of stress from the second syllable to the 1st one was "sufficiently early for *ai* to become *ǣ*". Yet, I believe that the shift of stress and the loss of *h* occurred practically during the same period and that the shift of stress is likely to have been a consequence of the loss of *h*, which caused the root-syllable to become hardly recognizable.



I would suggest that the development of this verb (as well as of *onettan* and *oretan*) was from G \**and-haitjan* to Prim. OE \**andhætan* (with monophthongization of *ai* to *ā*, front mutation and loss of *ǰ*; after loss of *h* and reduction of the stress of the second syllable *æ* would then join the development of vowels in unstressed syllables. At this point contamination with verbs in *-ettan* would become almost inevitable and that contamination would probably work both ways, producing in all the verbs under discussion and probably in many of those listed by Marekwardt, analogical forms with one or two *t*'s.

The foregoing, however, does not account for the *-i-* or other characteristics of class II (2-3 sg. pres. ind. in *-as*, *-að*, pret. in *-ade*, *-ode*, etc.) which occur in some of the forms of verbs of class I. But a close examination of the verbs ending in *-rian*, whether of class I or II, proves to be rewarding.

Indeed, many verbs whose root-syllable ends in *-r* fluctuate between classes I and II. In view of this phenomenon, one might be tempted to consider that verbs of class I of the *nerian* or *herian* type (preserving *i* after *r* without gemination) may easily have been assimilated to verbs of the *wuldrian* type (class II). However, the evidence available in the *VP* gloss shows that verbs of the *nerian* or *herian* type were kept perfectly distinct from verbs of class II: the [j] sound in these verbs (weak verbs of class I) is always spelt with *g*; this tends to confirm that the [i] sound in these verbs was distinct from the syllabic [i] sound in *wuldrian*. The *VP* verbs of class I in *-rian* are *gedergan*, *hergan*, *nergan*, *biscergan*, *aspyrgan*, *astyrgan*, and *biwergan*. To these must be added a strong verb of class VI with *ian*-suffix *swergan*. Three other verbs in *-rgan*: *bergan* 'taste', *bibyrgan* 'bury' and *awergan* 'do evil, be malignant' have a *-g-* derived from earlier *-ǰ-* as shown by the Old Icelandic forms *bergja* and *byrgja* and Gothic *gawargjan*.

The only verbs in *-r* fluctuating between the two classes are verbs in which the *r* is preceded by a consonant: *froefran/frofrian*; *hyngran/hyngrian*; *timbran/timbrian*. Moreover, they are all paralleled by a substantive (*frofur/or*; *hungur/or*; *timber*) so that it seems — in the case of *froefran/frofrian*, anyway — that one has to do with doublets, one of the pair being a verb of class I with mutated vowel and *ǰ* lost after a long closed syllable, the other one much closer to the substantive and apparently derived from it on the analogy of pairs like *wuldur/wuldrian*; *wundur/wundrian*; *deostre/deostrian*; *weter/wetrian*.

Mutual contamination of the forms of the doublets gave rise to historically impossible forms like

the infinitive *froefran* 76.3  
the pres. ind. 2s *frofres* 118.32

beside the regular subjunctive *frofrie* 118.76 from \**frofrian* as well as the four pres. part. *froefrende* 22.4; 68.21; 85.17; 118.50 and two pret. part. *froefred* 134.14; 117.70, from \**froefran*.

None of the forms of *timbran*, *timbrian* can be said to be unhistorical or

hybrid because *i* is the regular vowel before a covered nasal, whether affected by *i*-mutation or not, and because, on the other hand, back mutation is rare before a consonant group. However,

*getimbru* 31.8 alternates with *timbriu* 88.5,  
*timbreð* (3 g.) 101.17 with *timbriað* (3 pl.) 126.1,  
*timbrende* 117.22 with *timbriende* 146.2.

The two pret. forms show no alternation between cl. I & II:

*timbrade* (s.) 77.69 — *timbradun* (pl.) 128.3,

and the 5 pret. part.

(*for*)*timbred(e)* 50.20; 62.12; 68.36; 88.3; 121.3

could all belong to class I.

Under *hyngrian* which, after this analysis, I would rather write with *i* between parentheses, three forms are "unhistorical" combining as they do the *y* resulting from the front mutation of *u* in weak verbs of class I with endings of class II:

*hyngriu* 49.12, *hyngriende* 106.36 and *hyngriadun* 33.11

whereas four other present participles

*hyngrende* 106.5, 9 and H 10.8; *hyngrendum* 145.7

are regular forms of a weak verb I: *hyngran*.

In dealing with the forms pointing to a hybrid or analogical infinitive *hyngrian* one must also bear in mind the tendency for the scribe to use *y* instead of *u* in

*hyses* 64.5 for *huses*  
perhaps *onscyndun* 106.11 for *onscunedun*

though in this case the mutated vowel may point to an original weak verb of class III (Campbell 1959:§ 764). In two other forms,

*synfyllan* 67.3 and *onscyndun* 77.40,

*u* has been written above *y*. This scribal tendency to write *y* for *u* may, in the case of *hyngran/hyngrian*, have obliterated the alternation between mutated and unmutated vowel that can be noticed in the forms of *froefran/frofrian*.

c). — The possibility of the lemma influencing the ending of the gloss is clearly illustrated by some of the forms of two verbs sometimes considered as fluctuating between class I and II: *geliffestan* and *oefestan*. There are nineteen forms of *geliffestan*, two of *oefestan*. The two verbs are weak verbs of class I.



Nine forms of *geliffestan*, one of *oefestan* are regular. One form of *geliffestan* is probably a mistake: *geliffesta* 118.50 glossing *vivificavit*. All the other forms but one are imperatives singular: *geliffesta* glosses *vivifica* 8 times, all in the same psalm: 118.37, 40, 88, 107, 149, 154, 156, 159); *oefesta* glosses *festina* once. Only the first *vivifica* of Ps 118.25 is glossed *geliffeste*. After this, the scribe seems to have been carried away by the ending of the Latin imperative *vivifica*. So, the only form with 2nd class ending that cannot be justified by the lemma is *geliffestas* 84.7 glossing *vivificabis*, elsewhere translated by *geliffestes* (4 times). I sometimes wonder whether the fact that the scribe could be so easily influenced by the ending of his lemma is not in itself significant of the early weakening of the inflexional system.

d). — P. 25, I referred to the possibility of a verb belonging to class III. Weak verbs of class III have become rare in OE: only four of them preserve clear signs of belonging to this class. But, on the one hand, those verbs were among the most frequently used and, on the other hand, their inflexions present alternation of vowels or consonants like:

1. sg. *lifgu*/1 pl. *leofað*  
3 sg. *hafað*/3 pl. *habbað*  
pres. *hycgað*/pret. *hogde*

As soon as the system was no longer felt to be "regular" these alternations may very well have invited further irregularities, i.e. analogical forms in the same or in other verbs.

A case in point in the VP gloss is *hycgan* and its derivative *forhycgan*. Beside "regular"

*forhycgað* (1 pl. pres. ind.) 43.6  
*forhogdes* (2 sg. pret. ind.) 88.39; 118.118  
*forhogde* (3 sg. pret. ind.) 21.25; 52.6; 68.34; 77.59, 62  
*forhogd* (pret. part.) 118.141

it has two 3 sg. pres. ind. *forhogað* 50.19; 101.18  
an imperative pl. *hogiað* 93.8  
a sg. pret. *hogade* 130.2  
and a 3 pl. pret. ind. *hogedon* H 7.57

which might point to a weak verb II *hogian*/*forhogian*. Sherman Kuhn (1965: 210, 231) was right in postulating two different verbs: *forhycgan* and *hogian* (even if 2 of the forms under *forhycgan* might seem to belong to a 3rd verb *forhogian*). The origin of this confused situation probably lies in the existence in Prim. G of at least two distinct verbs derived from the same root with different suffixes, as shown by the variety of forms in the different Germanic languages:

OHG *hogen*, *hukken*, *huggen*

O. Icel. *huga* and *hyggja*.

In this case class confusion has a very ancient starting point.

In the first part of this paper I tried to show that the evidence of the VP gloss suggests that the weakening of the second element of the diphthong *eo/io*, which became *ie*, affecting forms of contracted verbs like *gestio*, *gesio*, which became *gestie*, *gesie* may have contaminated uncontracted verbs, particularly those in which the ending *u/o* of the 1st pers. sg. pres. ind. was preceded by an *i* as in *blissio*, which became *blissie*, thus falling together with the form of the subjunctive.

I then tried to bring out some of the other factors responsible for the gradual decay of the verbal inflexional system through analogy resulting in class confusion and weakening of the distinctive force of verbal endings:

- contamination of verbs in *-ettan* by verbs in which *etan* was a root, not a suffix;
- doublets of the *froefran*/*frofrian* type;
- influence of the ending of the Latin lemma on the ending of the gloss.
- older doublets of the *hogian*/*hycgan* type.

But above all I hope to have given some idea of the mass of information that can still be gleaned in the VP gloss for our understanding of the early mechanisms which determined the further development of the English language.

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