Abstract

Solutions based on “equivalence interference” are proposed for various problems involving OE verbs. WG verbs with 1SG /-əm/ were modeled on Celtic verbs with /-aami/. Pre-OE eode is from /eiəd/, analogical to 1SG /eiəm/ from /eimi/. OE dyd- is from reinterpretation of peasant /dид-/ , from low-stressed /ded-/ used as a non-emphatic periphrastic, as noble /dǔd-. WG /bii-/ ‘be’ was modeled on Celtic /bii-/ ‘(habitual-future) be’. Habitual-future /bi-/ (lost on the continent) re-developed in OE on the model of habitual-future /bi-/ in Brittonic. The English rule that non-indicative forms of BE are /b/-forms is from Brittonic. 3PL bi(o)don was modeled on Brittonic /bidont/. Pre-OE /ist/ and /im/ were influenced by Brittonic /is/ and /am/. Loss of distinct endings before 1PL and 2PL subject pronouns and loss of distinct preterit subjunctive endings were both modeled on their analogues in Brittonic.

Keywords: Brittonic, Celtic, analogy, equivalence interference, Germanic, verbs

1. Introduction

The recent treatments of OE verbs by Ringe and Taylor (2014) and Hogg and Fulk (2011) show clearly enough that, after more than 150 years of effort, long-standing unsolved problems, often involving West Germanic as a whole, remain as unsolved as ever. So perhaps it is time to look under the rock that has never been looked under: Celtic influence. Some of the cases that will be treated here involve Celtic influences that are limited to the Germanic of Britain, which is to say English, due to Celtic influences acquired in Britain. Others, though leaving a residue of puzzling forms in Old English, appear to go back to Celtic influences on the continent. All cases having any relevance to English have been regarded as fair game here. One promising case, involving “subjunctive intrusion” in the 2SG of strong preterits of West Germanic (Ringe and Taylor 2014, 68), has been omitted on the grounds that it would require an article in itself.

First it is necessary to establish that Celtic influence in West Germanic (WG) is historically plausible. In the case of English, this it not a problem, and it is perhaps
not too early to say that numerous cases of Celtic influence are at last beginning to be recognized (Schrijver 2014, 21-22). Frisian, which historically speaking includes Coastal Dutch (Schrijver 2014, 127, 135), can be seen as deriving from very early forms of Old English taken back to the continent by “reverse migration” (Stenton 1971, 6-8; White 2018), and so counts as a sort of honorary English in this regard. On the continent, it is not probable that such a great family as Celtic once was, dominating much of western and central Europe, would vanish without an areal trace. It has long been known (or at least believed for good reason) that the area east of the middle and upper Rhine, more or less the area of Old High German (OHG), was Celtic-speaking before it became Germanic-speaking, so that here too Celtic influences are historically plausible. By contrast, the NE part of the Old Saxon (OS) area was clearly part of the Germanic homeland, as defined by the Jastorff culture, so that Celtic influences here could only occur by spread in from areas to the S or W belonging to either non-NE OS or Frisian.

Intermediate on the putative “Celtic” and “Germanic” scale is the area of non-NE OS and most Old Dutch (OD). This area once belonged to the Urnfield culture (Mallory 1991, 106) archeologically and to “Nordwest” or “Ancient Belgian”, a lost branch of IE, linguistically. Though among linguists this area has long been seen, on the basis of linguistic evidence alone, as no closer to Celtic than to Germanic, critical examination reveals some serious problems with this. Archeologically, the Urnfield culture shows much more extensive connections with Celtic than with Germanic, enough so that it is often seen as “Pre-Celtic”. The Urnfield culture was (in areas of relevance here) followed by the clearly Celtic cultures known as Hallstadt and La Téne (Chadwick 1970, 28–33). Thus we know that Urnfield material culture was once integrally associated with Celtic linguistic culture, i.e. language. It is also of great significance here (as will soon be seen) that, to judge by the evidence of archeology, language shift to Germanic both began earlier and lasted longer in the Low Countries than in areas more to the S, creating correspondingly greater opportunities for externally motivated innovations to enter the Germanic of this area.

Linguistically, assessment of Nordwest is based entirely on toponymic evidence. But this is a grave error: areal evidence must also be considered. Northerly continental WG shows a greater degree of resemblance to Celtic than does southerly continental WG. Though there are numerous cases where northerly WG shows a resemblance to Celtic and southerly WG does not, there appear to be no cases where southerly WG shows a resemblance to Celtic and northerly WG does not. To present a full list would put the present article over-length, so the case of distinct reflexives, which are utterly absent in Celtic, will have to serve as stand in for the whole. Distinct reflexives were partially lost in southerly WG (only in genitive-possessives), but were completely lost in northerly WG. This is the exact opposite of what the conventional wisdom would lead us to expect, which is a good strong hint that the conventional wisdom is wrong, and is also
difficult to explain if Nordwest was not closely connected with Celtic, enough so that it might well be called “Para-Celtic”. In order to avoid repeatedly having to say “Celtic or Nordwest” below, the term “Celtic” will from here on be regarded as including both. The best explanation is probably that Nordwest was a marginal and archaic form of Celtic, lacking some later characteristic innovations that permit words to be identified as Celtic, innovations that could well have developed after language shift. If so, the pattern seen in the case of reflexives does make sense: the half-strength version occurs where there was one language shift to Germanic, and the full-strength version occurs where there was more than one.

1.1. Equivalence Interference

Since a rare and not yet recognized form of interference that will be called “equivalence interference” comes up very often below, it must be explained here. In secondary acquisition it occasionally happens that a morpheme in the second language is regarded as equivalent to a morpheme in the first language. For example, “es” and “un” in Spanish “El burro es un animal” seem to be the same as “is” and “an” in English. As this case shows, the elements in question most certainly do not have to be identical. Most identifications do not produce any consequences beyond lightening the learning load. But in some cases, translinguistic identifications may make translinguistic analogies seem warranted. For example, Rumanian /am/ ‘have-1SG’ evidently acquired its /-m/ by translinguistic analogy with Albanian /kam/ ‘have-1SG’ (Sandfeld 1930, 13-14). Another case (again from the Balkans) is that Macedo-Bulgarian developed masculine plurals in /-inya/ on the model of Albanian masculine plurals in /-iň/ (Sandfeld 1930, 159). A third case, involving Celtic influence in English, is that (if the exiguous evidence presented by Ahlqvist (2010, 56–58) is to be taken at face value), /b/-forms of BE in Old English developed an absolute/conjunct distinction of the type known in Celtic, due to OE /bi-/ ‘(habitual-future) be’ being identified with Brittonic /bi-/ ‘(habitual-future) be’. It seems probable that the very existence of habitual-future /bi-/ in OE (but not in other Germanic languages), which will be treated below, is another case. Admittedly these cases are a less than impressive overall haul. But though equivalence interference is rare, its workings are readily understandable.

1.2. Some Necessary Preliminaries

Various notes or points having general relevance to what follows are best made here. Long vowels will be indicated by doubling, as in “/aa/”. Vs that could be long or short will be represented as in “/a(a)/”. Acoustically central high vowels will be indicated by “ü” when front/round and by “ï” when central. A high front
glide will be represented as “y”, as is traditional in IE linguistics. Since frequent reference to forms that are chronologically indeterminate, in ways having no relevance to overall argument, is routinely necessary, the procedure adopted has been to make a reasonable guess at what the form at a given time was, without repeatedly intruding “vel sim.” Within forms, elements having no relevance have also been glossed over. For example, in treating OE eode the final syllable is represented as */-e/**, since the question of when */-ai/** became */-e/** has no relevance. Early Germanic is assumed to have had a square V-system, with */œ(œ)/ in one low corner and */ɛ(ɛ)/ in the other. For the most part, this means that PIE */a(a)/ and */o(o)/ are presented as */œ(œ)/ in early Germanic.

It is assumed that short diphthongs, which have never been successfully demonstrated in living languages, are not possible phonemes (White 2004). Though Ringe and Taylor (2014, 5-6) argue that short diphthongs should occur in theory, the fact that they cite no case of short diphthongs occurring in fact, which would be the only real proof, must mean that they are unable to do so, and the implications of this should not be casually dismissed.

The family tree of Celtic is assumed to be the traditional one grouping Brittonic with Gaulish as “Gallo-Brittonic”, rather than the revisionist one grouping Brittonic with Irish as “Insular Celtic”. Reasons to prefer the traditional grouping are given by Schrijver (1995, 463–465).

It is assumed that final */-i/** in personal endings was lost rather early, probably by a non-phonological process (as in Latin), as seems to be the view of Hogg and Fulk (2011, 212).

To avoid repeatedly having to say “except BE”, BE is regarded as fictively non-athematic.

2. “Survival” of Athematic Verbs of West Germanic

WG shows an odd tendency for 1SG */-mi/** and */-œœ/** to become associated. The cases where this syndrome either certainly or possibly occurs are as follows: 1) the present of DO in northern OE, OS, and OHG (Prokosch 1939, 211); 2) the presents of GO and STAND in OHG (Prokosch 1939, 211); 3) /eode/ ‘went’ in OE, where a weak preterit pointing back to */-œœ/** occurs in a verb that had 1SG */-mi/** in PIE; 4a) weak 2 verbs in OHG and OS; 4b) weak 3 verbs (by analogy with weak 2 verbs) in OHG (Prokosch 1939, 211); 5a) all regular verbs in Old Dutch and northern OE, where 1SG */-on, -u/** are derivable from (late) */-œœm/**; and 5b) all regular verbs in southern OE and OF, where 1SG */-e/** is derivable from (early) 1SG */-œœm/**.

Verbs with a 1SG pointing back to */-m/** in WG have long been regarded as representing survival of verbs with 1SG */-mi/**, i.e. athematic verbs, in PIE. The prevailing view seems to be that WG just randomly preserved a few athematic
verbs of PIE, most notably DO, and that in some dialects (OHG and OS) 1SG /-m/ spread from DO to weak 2 verbs. There are two problems (neither one fatal) with this. The first is that analogy from DO to weak 2 verbs is (all things being equal) less probable than analogy from weak 2 verbs to DO. The conventional wisdom is forced to posit analogy going the other way only by its unwarranted assumption that 1SG /-m/ must be a survival from PIE. The second problem is that there is nothing about presence that implies survival. It is not controversial that present 1SG /-m/ in later IE languages do not always go back to /mi/-verbs in PIE. For example, 1SG /-mi/ in Sanskrit is clearly an innovation. Of greater relevance to WG, Celtic created a large class of verbs in /-aa-mi/, common in Irish and regular in Brittonic, by replacing /-oo/ with /-mi/ (Lewis and Pedersen 1961, 276–278).

Related to the first problem is indirect evidence suggesting that the association between 1SG /-mi/ and weak verbs was once much stronger than it later became. A fairly simple case is OE /eode/ ‘went’, clearly archaic, where a weak 2 preterit pointing back to /-o-/ appears, for no clear reason, in a verb that had 1SG /-mi/ in PIE. Considerably more complex is the case of the 1SG of regular verbs in northwesterly WG, where there is reason to think that /-ɔm/ was at some point widely generalized. Several paragraphs will be required to make treat this matter.

It is a matter of plain fact that southern OE, OF, OD, and northern OE have all generalized a single ending in the 1SG: /-e/ in southern OE and Frisian (Bremmer 2009, 84-85), /-on/ in OD (Cowan 1961, 44, 48; Robinson 1992, 215), and /-u/ in northern OE. That /-u/ in northern OE may (or may not) be in part from /-oo/ will not be ignored here. For the moment two other facts must command our attention: 1) that the four dialects in question are from the same area, and 2) that the three endings in question, /-on/, /-u/, and /-e/, are all in theory derivable from /-ɔm/, whether before or after loss of final /-m/. For reasons not worth going into here, temporarily glossing over loss of final /-i/ will considerably simplify presentation.

In southern OE (and Pre-Frisian), 1SG /-e/ would have to be from /-ɔm/, created before loss of final /-m/. From this point, its development would be exactly as in the accusative singular of feminine thematics, yielding /-e/. This is the theory of Campbell (1959, 298). Unfortunately, Campbell’s theory, that 1SG /-ɔm/ in southern OE acquired its /-m/ from PIE secondary endings, is problematic for two reasons. First, the idea that dialects ancestral to southern OE maintained a distinct dialectal identity going back to PIE is a stretch. Second, there is no independent evidence that any secondary forms survived the transition from PIE to Germanic (Hill 2004, 261–266). If, as the conventional wisdom would have us believe, OE /-e/ goes back to a subjunctive employed as an indicative, we should find subjunctive sie in place of indicative eom. The resulting paradigm would have been no more irregular than the one that in fact occurs. Positing that /-e/ in southern OE is from /-ɔ-m/ would accordingly seem to be an improvement.

As for OD /-on/ and northern OE /-u/, these would have to be from /-ɔm/ created after loss of final /-m/. That /-u/ was the outcome of /-ɔn/ in
northern OE is strongly suggested by the marginal and archaic /n/-stem feminine accusative singulars in /-u/ found in Northumbrian (Ringe and Taylor 2014, 164). If /-ɔɔm/ became /-ɔɔn/, as is hardly improbable, then of course /-ɔɔm/ would also in time appear as /-u/, which is what we see. If 1SG /-ɔɔm/ spread from weak 2 verbs to all weak verbs, the eventual result would be that all weak verbs and some strong verbs (those with light stems) had /-u/, while some strong verbs (those with heavy stems) had zero. In such a situation, the obvious analogical move would be to extend /-u/ to strong verbs with heavy stems. If so, analogical extension of /-u/ to heavy stems would be more strongly motivated in verbs than in nouns, which would explain something that the conventional wisdom does not: why such analogical extension occurs in verbs but not in (short) nouns. It is also quite possible that /-u/ (from /-ɔɔm/) had previously replaced inherited /-u/ (from /-ɔɔ/) in strong verbs, which would make generalization of a single ending going back to /-ɔɔ/, a feature of all the dialects in question. Despite what is said by Hogg and Fulk (2011, 233), analogy with BE and DO is not the “only” possible source of 1SG /-m/ in monosyllabic contract verbs: final /-m/ might well have been retained in monosyllables. Lack of 1SG /-m/ in northerly OE GO seems best seen as due to analogical removal of anomalous /-m/ being earlier in GO than in DO. All in all, it seems more probable that northern OE /-u/ goes back at least in part) to /-ɔɔm/ than that it goes back to /-ɔɔ/ alone. 1SG /-on/ in OD does not require any special treatment, though it is worth noting that /-on/ in OD is eastern (Robinson 1992, 218), putting it closer to the homeland of the Angles in NW Germany. The generalized 1SG endings of all four dialects can be seen as having a common origin in /-ɔɔm/. If so, we have something that is presumably a desideratum: a “unified account”.

The obvious question is how the difference in chronology is to be explained. The best possibility appears to be that loss of final /-m/ was later in the ancestor of southern OE than in other WG, simply because this dialect occupied a marginal location along the SW coast of the North Sea. The order of innovations would then be: 1) loss of final /-m/ in the more northeasterly areas (a central area); 2) development of 1SG /-ɔɔ-mi/ in all areas; 3) loss of final /-i/ in all areas; and 4) loss of final /-m/ along the more southwesterly coast of the North Sea (a marginal area). Reasons will be given below to think that the earliest innovative 1SG was actually /-mi/. Though 1SG /-ɔɔ-mi/ was at first limited to weak 2 verbs, repeated secondary acquisition in the Low Countries resulted in spread of /-ɔɔ-mi/ at first to all weak verbs and later to (at least some) strong verbs.

Looking backward from Germanic rather than forward from PIE, it would be plausible to posit that in WG some verbs, only those with stems ending in a long non-high non-front V, somehow developed 1SG /-mi/, and that the starting point for this was not in DO but rather in weak 2 verbs. Later spread of /-mi/ from weak 2 verbs to /dɔɔ-/ would be well-motivated, though reasons will be given to think that the two developments were simultaneous. If at some point
/ei-/ ‘go’ was the only verb with 1SG /-mi/ that did not also have /-oɔ-//, then 1SG /ei-oɔ-mi/ would be well-motivated, and on the basis of this a weak 2 preterit /ei-oɔ-de/ would be well-motivated.

An adequate explanation, filling in the blank represented by “somehow”, may be found in terms of equivalence interference from Celtic: Celtic had (as has been seen) a class of verbs with 1SG (absolute) /-aa-mi/. (The definition of “absolute” is not relevant here. Suffice it to say that there is no problem with absolute forms being prominent enough to serve as models for translinguistic analogy.) Verbs with 1SG /-aa-mi/ were apparently more common in Gallo-Brittonic than in Irish, though only a few examples occur in the scanty remains of Gaulish (Lambert 1994, 62). Verbs with /-aa-mi/ also had 2SG /-aa-si/ and 3SG /-aa-ti/, which would be easily identifiable with /-ɔɔ-si/ and /-ɔɔ-Oi/ in WG. It seems reasonable then to posit that verbs with /-ɔɔ-/ in Germanic, which is to say weak 2 verbs and DO, struck the Celtic mind as calling for 1SG /-mi/, which was duly provided. Since Celtic had no /oo/ (Lewis and Pedersen 1961, 6-7), /-aa-mi/ was probably sounded as [-ɔɔmi], so that whether weak 2 verbs in WG had /-aa-/ or /-ɔɔ-/ at the time in question is of no real importance. In OHG, 1SG /-m/ in GO can be seen as due to a second round of the same development, after the change of /ɛɛ/ to /aa/ had made its stem V close enough to /aa/ to trigger the same reaction. (The short forms of STAND in OHG were clearly modeled on GO.) It is worth noting that the main class of verbs that had /-aa-mi/ in Celtic, verbs with /-aa-/ in late PIE, is the same class associated with 1SG /-ɔɔ-mi/ in WG. The cognate status of the two classes was probably perceptible. Such a scenario would answer the following two questions. Why /-mi/ verbs are a peculiarity of WG: only WG entered into contact with an IE language having a class of verbs with 1SG /-aa-mi/. Why /-mi/ verbs give some indirect indication of being not a survival but rather a strangely limited revival: that is what they were. By contrast, the conventional wisdom provides no answer to either of these questions, other than to imply that they are not worth asking.

2.1. OE /eode/ ‘went’

There seems to be general (and well-warranted) agreement that /-ode/ in OE /eode/ points back to /-ɔɔde/. Given that any long V preceding /-oode/ would be shortened, and that /e/ is too short to be a PIE root, OE /eode/ in theory points back to /ee-oode/. This form presents two problems: 1) how PIE /ei/ ‘go’, which clearly must be the root in question, became Germanic /ee/, and 2) why a weak 2 preterit was created for a verb that was certainly not a weak verb.

To answer the second question first, there is no reason that creating a new weak 2 preterit would have struck anyone as a good idea unless 1) the previous present 1SG was an athematic with /-mi/, something like /eimi/ (which would
have been annoyingly similar to BE), and 2) almost all other verbs with 1SG /-mi/ had /-ѹ-mi/. Reasons to think both of these conditions had been met have been given above. In the present case, it seems that first /-mi/ implied /-ѹ-mi/, then /-ѹ-mi/ implied /-ѹ-de/.

As for the apparent disconnect between PIE /ei/ and Germanic /ee/, we have three possibilities, all somewhat (though not equally) unpleasant. The first is that PIE had not one but two verbs meaning ‘go’, /ei/ and /ee/ (more properly /eH/). The odds against this are obviously astronomical, and the possibility is mentioned only for completeness. The second is that early Germanic inherited a form of /ei/ that had somehow developed lengthened /eei/, which would regularly become /ee-mi/. But /eei/ is neither warranted by the gradation rules of PIE (such as they are understood) nor independently evidenced in other forms of IE. The third is that /ei-ѹ-/ was re-interpreted as /ee-ѹ- with an automatic [y]-glide between /ee/ and /ѹ/. Note that this would create the illusion that the form was somehow not from /ei/ but from /ee/. Given that /ei/ in Germanic became /ii/, the change posited would have to be early. But as the spread of Germanic into the Low Countries was also early, this is not problematic. Though there appear to be no other cases of /ee-ѹ/, so that the change posited is not independently evidenced, this problem is not as bad as the other two. From /ee-ѹ-de/ to /eode/ all changes are regular.

3. Two Cases involving DO

3.1. “Survival” of Present /dѹ-/ in West Germanic

The conventional wisdom (Hogg and Fulk 2011, 314) is that early Germanic /deɛ-/ has been for no identifiable reason altered to /dѹ-/, just randomly survives in WG. Ringe and Taylor (2014, 112-113) “reluctantly” posit that /dѹ-/ is connectable with the Hi-conjugation of Hittite and inherited from PIE. Reluctance is well-warranted: there appears to be no independent evidence that any such thing ever existed in Germanic. The theory of Bammesberger (1986, 112), that present /dѹ-/ is by analogy with a lost preterit /de-dѹ-/, makes more sense. Given that six out of nine reduplicating strong verbs with /ɛɛ/ in the present had /ѹ/ in preterit (Ringe 2006, 191, 249), it is not at all improbable that a new preterit /de-dѹ-/ would be created to go with present /deɛ-/. As /de-dѹ-/ would also be the result of reduplicating a non-existent present /dѹ-, a new present /dѹ-/ might be created on the basis of preterit /de-dѹ-/. But a new present /dѹ- does not make sense unless the old present had been lost in WG, just as it was in other Germanic. Given that Proto-Germanic should, all things being equal, be reconstructed as unitary, this conclusion has some appeal. As Gothic and south-easterly WG (OHG and OS) show clear signs that DO in weak preterits could still be regarded as an odd preterit with a defective distribution, it is possible that
in WG as a whole this perception went far enough that a new present began to seem justified.

If so, we can avoid regarding this divergence of WG from other Germanic as random, by positing a connection with Celtic. Gaulish shows (Lambert 1994, 64) both a past /dede/ ‘made, put’, used in regard to making an offering, and collapse of the perfect and aorist. (It is also possible that Gaulish had periphrastic DO of the type seen in Brittonic and English. For better or worse, the evidence of later French falls far short of establishing this.) If /ded-/ was identified with Germanic /-dɛd-/ in weak preterits, where it could easily be seen as meaning ‘did’, this might account for revival of DO in WG. The 3PL in Celtic, something like /de-dont/, would also have been easily identifiable with its analogue in Germanic, something like /de-dɔɔnt/. All in all, Celts seeking to create a full paradigm for DO in Germanic could hardly have done better than to create a present /dɔɔ-/ on the basis of preterit /de-dɔɔ-/.

3.2. Old English dyd—‘did’

It has never been explained why the preterit of DO in OE was apparently /düd-. Other WG shows forms pointing back to /ded-, deɛd-/, which is at least consistent with what is seen in the weak preterit of Gothic, and similar forms also appear as fading archaisms in OE (Hogg and Fulk 2011, 316). A straightforward reading of the evidence would indicate that OE /düd-/ must be an innovation. Hogg and Fulk (2011, 315) in effect posit that /dɔɔ-id-/ was shortened to /dɔ-id-/, which then became /du-id-/. Unfortunately the assessment of Ringe and Taylor (2014, 369) that this theory “raises more problems than it solves” appears to be justified. But Ringe and Taylor do little better in stating (2014, 369) that “The only conceivable source for y is the past subjunctive”, where /dud-ii-/ is (just barely) possible. It is not apparent why the indicative would be displaced by the subjunctive, and /u/ could only be either by analogy with preterite-presents before they developed present meaning (which would be long ago indeed) or from archaic reduplication with /u/, which is not independently evidenced in Germanic. Furthermore, OE early on got rid of subjunctive /ii/ in preterit subjunctives, which show umlaut only where they have become dissociated from preterits (i.e. in preterit-presents). Under any interpretation, /ü/ would have to be an archaism, which is at odds both with other evidence suggesting that /ü/ is an innovation and with Ringe and Taylor’s (2014, 370) description of /ü/ as “new”. In the end, Ringe and Taylor implicitly retreat from their “only conceivable source” statement by proposing no specific solution, no doubt because no credible solution is possible, and admitting (2014, 370) that OE /düd-/ remains “an unsolved problem”.

With the exception of Hill (2004, 280-281), whose specific solution (deriving OE /ü/ from /e/ in a reduplicated syllable unstressed as late as OE) is not credible,
it has always been assumed that /ü/ in OE /düd-/ could not possibly go back to /e/ in low-stressed /ded-/. But in fact there are reasons to believe both 1) that DO in OE was often low-stressed, and 2) that low-stressed /e/ could (by a somewhat convoluted route) become /ü/. One way or another all authorities, including Ringe and Taylor (2014, 250-251) and Hogg and Fulk (2011, 199), concede the second point, which will be treated below. As for the first, later non-emphatic periphrastic DO must have been, like its analogues in modern SW dialect and in archaizing poetry (“did gyre and gimble”), low-stressed. The obvious objection here is that later non-emphatic periphrastic DO is indeed later, later than the OE period. But unless we are looking at a truly extraordinary coincidence, non-emphatic periphrastic DO must have entered English by transference from Brittonic (McWhorter 2009), where it is very common and evidently old, at a point earlier than the OE period. Massive language shift from Brittonic to English during any later period is not historically plausible, and literally marginal influences from later Welsh or Cornish could hardly win more than similarly marginal acceptance in English as a whole. In short, /düd-/ could in fact be from low-stressed /ded-/, which itself has a clear and entirely non-problematic source in the default stem /ded-/. More should be said on the “somewhat convoluted route” that low-stressed /e/ took in arriving at /ü/. LWS shows several cases where low-stressed /e/ or /i/ can appear as “y”. Some examples are ys, hys, byd for is, his, bid, and hælynd, fædyr for hælend, fæder not to mention LWS -nyss for EWS -ness. Granted that later OE did not distinguish between unstressed /e/ and /i/, it seems improbable that the difference between monosyllabic cases with /i/ and polysyllabic cases with /e/ can be significant. (The rarity of cases with /e/ is from the fact that, since unstressed /e/ became /i/ at some remotely prehistoric point, later unstressed /e/ is secondary.) The exact conditions for the change in question, beyond that fact that it does not occur in absolute finality, are not clear. Perhaps noble dialect accepted from peasant dialect only a few words, all either common in general or common in preaching, that were affected by a somewhat early change. The connection between [ɪ] and peasant dialect, and why the change would be early, will be explained soon below. Phonetically a change of low-stressed /e, i/ to [ʊ] might not appear to make sense. But if we think in terms of acoustic features rather than articulatory features, matters are not so difficult: low-stressed /e, i/ would tend to be centralized toward the range of [ɪ]. If [ɪ] developed, then assignment of [ɪ] to /ü/ would make sense. If not, a development that certainly occurred has no possible explanation.

Though such considerations alone are enough to show that OE did in fact develop [ɪ], however unexpected this might seem, the conventional wisdom dies hard, so a few more nails in the coffin cannot hurt. Unless OE really is the only identifiable language in the world that had short diphthongs, then the contrast between short “ie” and short “y” in EWS must represent /ʊ/ vs. /ü/. (A change of /ie/ to /iɪ/ would explain the spelling “ie”.) The appearance of LWS “y” in cases
corresponding to EWS “ie”, in environments where [ï(ï)] makes much more sense phonetically than [ü(ü)], shows that LWS /ü(ü)/ could at least include [ï(ï)], which in turn shows that LWS developed [ï(ï)] at some point. The observation of Wright and Wright (1928, 99), that supposed [ü(ü)] in Middle English was actually [ï(ï)], shows that traditionally posited /ü(ü)/ came to include only [ï(ï)], which is to say that it was /i(ï)/. Accordingly the most sensible explanation for why LWS uses “y” for both EWS “y” and “ie” is not that Pre-LWS /ï(ï)/ became /ü(ü)/, but rather that Pre-LWS /ü(ü)/ became /i(ï)/. No doubt the reason that this was not long ago accepted is that it severely violates expectation, in two ways: every Germanicist knows 1) that the umlaut of /u(u)/ is /ü(ü)/, and 2) that the only acoustically central high V in other medieval Germanic languages is /ü(ü)/. But for some reason such assumptions clearly do not hold for English.

The obvious question is why reference to [ï(ï)] is necessary in treating medieval English but not in treating other medieval Germanic. Ringe and Taylor as well as Hogg and Fulk gloss over this question in evidently embarrassed silence. A less obvious question is why moving /i, e/ toward the center of the V space should have produced a high central V rather than a mid central V. Unless we are looking at another extraordinary coincidence, the reason must be that central high /i/ (but not /ü/ or /ë/) existed in Brittonic (Jackson 1953, 316-317), so that any OE sound falling within the range of /i/, such as [ü], would strike Brittonic ears as /ü/. (Though only long /ü/ existed in early Brittonic, presumably anything in OE that sounded like “missing” short /i/ would be taken as short /ü/.) Incipient centralization of /e, i/ would bring these too into the range of /i/, which being lax is also not fully high. The initial result would be that having /i(ï)/ became a characteristic feature of OE peasant dialect.

Though it might be objected that a syndrome evidenced only in WS cannot provide a general solution for OE dyd, which occurs throughout OE, a little thought suffices to show that a change of low-stressed /e, i/ to /i/ could not possibly be evidenced outside of WS. Since WS is the only OE dialect showing evidence that /i(ï)/ had developed in noble dialect, which is the only WS dialect (or sociolect) that was written and therefore spelled, WS is also the only OE dialect where “y” spelling /i(ï)/ could possibly be found. Other dialects must be silent on this point.

To return to the main problem, it seems that what happened was as follows. In peasant dialect, the default stem /ded-/ replaced /dææd-/ at some early point. Generalized /ded-/ was soon pressed into service, on the model of its Brittonic analogue, to form non-emphatic periphrastic constructions. Due to low stress, /ded-/ became /dïd-/ , which in time replaced /ded-/ in fully stressed usage. In early noble dialect, which routinely had /ü(ü)/ where peasant dialect had /i(ï)/, peasant /dïd-/ was re-interpreted as noble /düd-/. (Unstressed periphrastic usage remained for the historical moment a stigmatized feature of peasant dialect.) Later developments do not require any special treatment. If what has been posited above
it true, the major phonological peculiarity of DO in English, its appearance as /duid-/, can be seen as integrally and causally connected with the major syntactic peculiarity of DO in English: its use as a non-emphatic periphrastic.

4. Cases involving BE

4.1. The /b/-forms of BE

All WG shows present forms of BE with a stem /bi-/. These have traditionally been seen as archaisms that once existed in all Germanic and just randomly (like athematic verbs) survived only in WG. But actually a stem /bi-/ makes no sense. Though it is clear that the PIE source of /bi-/ was /bʱuu-/, meaning ‘become, grow’, it is also fairly clear that PIE /bʱuu-/ could not become WG /bi-/. One problem is that in Germanic the meaning of PIE /bʱuu-/ had passed from ‘grow’ to ‘farm’ to ‘reside’, leaving no signs that it ever meant ‘be’. Germanicists (evidently full of confidence that this last problem cannot be serious) begin their attempt to get from /bʱuu-/ to /bi-/ by positing a present stem /bʱuuy-/. If we can get to long /ii/, getting from long /ii/ to short /i/ by allegro reduction is not problematic in Germanic or (as will become relevant) in Celtic. But getting from /uuy/ to /iyy/ is problematic indeed. Ringe (2006, 263) seems uncomfortable positing such a change with only necessity as its basis. Hogg and Fulk (2011, 311) posit /bwiy-/ in such a way as to imply that this developed by regular sound change in Germanic, oddly citing Latin /fiioo/ ‘become-1SG’ and Old Irish /buiuu/ ‘(habitual) be-1SG’ in support. Schumacher (2009, 261) too implies that /bii-/ developed by regular sound-change, without citing analogues. But though it is difficult to prove a negative, it appears that no such sound change ever occurred in Germanic.

It is possible, in theory, that the change of /uuy/ to /iyy/ could be morphological rather than phonological. But as Sihler (1995, 546) observes, the exact derivational relationship between /bʱuu-/ and /bʱiyy-/ is “hard to see”. It is hard to see for a very good reason: it is not there. Sihler’s observation was in fact made in treating /fiǐi-/< /bʱuuy-/, where it seems clear (though oddly Sihler does not say so) that development of /ii/ is not morphological but phonological. In Italic and Celtic, long /ii/ in /bʱii/- could be from earlier /uuy-/ in accordance with Thurneysen’s pius Gesetz (Schrijver 1995, 292): /uuy/ in Italic and Celtic becomes /iǐi/. In larger areal perspective, present stems of BE appearing to point back to /bʱii-/ are found in Italic, Celtic, and WG. Though it is certainly reasonable to posit an “Italo-Celtic” clade (going back to early movement of IEs up the Danube), obviously WG could not belong to this clade. If /bii-/ in WG is somehow from Celtic, that would of course explain why it is limited to WG, not to mention why no plausible account of how /biiu-/ ‘reside’ became /bii-/ ‘be’ can be constructed. Since BE is (under ordinary circumstances) absolutely the
last word we would expect to be borrowed, it is phenomenally improbable that WG /bii-/ was borrowed from Celtic. What we need is a process that would, by involving both sound and meaning, produce the illusion of borrowing: equivalence interference. As language shift from Celtic to Germanic began, Germanic /buuy-/ ‘reside’, perhaps pronounced with incipient umlaut, was identified with Celtic /bii-/ ‘(habitually) be’. Germanic /buuy-/ struck the Celtic mind as simply wrong for Celtic /bii-/, and so was “corrected” to /bii-/. 

As for later developments, Schumacher (2009, 260) says that habitual-future /bi-/ in OE is nothing more than a marginal archaism inherited straight from continental WG, having nothing to do with habitual-future /bi-/ in Brittonic. But this is difficult to credit. As for how habitual-future /bi-/ came to exist in OE, there are three possibilities, all (yet again) unpleasant. The first possibility is that habitual-future /bi-/ was brought to Britain by the AS conquest, and survived in Britain, as it obviously did not on the continent, because it was reinforced by habitual-future /bi-/ in Brittonic. But it seems improbable that a distinction between habitual-future and (in effect) progressive sub-aspect, made lexically and only in this one verb, would have had much of life-expectancy in early continental Germanic. Survival from Common WG to early OE, a rather long period, seems improbable. The second possibility is that forms of BE with and without /b-/ survived in meaningless free variation for most of the same long period, long enough for /bi-/ to be revived as a habitual-future in early OE on the model of its analogue in Brittonic. This too seems quite improbable, as we would expect some sort of distributional rule, as seen in later continental WG, to develop in short order. The third is that OE /bi-/ was, due to unusual circumstances, borrowed into early OE from Brittonic. The “unusual circumstances” were that /is/ existed not only in early OE but also in Brittonic, where it was paired with habitual-future /bid/. And if /im/ in early OE was not identified with something like /æm/ in Brittonic, which was also paired with a habitual-future form using /bi-/, it is difficult to explain why /æm/ develops in English. (Both “is” and “am” are treated below.) To the Brittonic mind, /is/ at least would seem to cry out for /bid/, and /bid/ would imply a stem /bi-/ that would then be the basis for other forms. (Since early OE did not distinguish between /d/ and /θ/, there is no point in worrying about /bid/ vs. /biθ/.) Here again, as in the case of eode, it seems that the third possibility, though less than ideal, is not as bad as the other two. Two additional bits of evidence indicate that OE BE was in fact influenced by Brittonic /bi-/. 

The first bit of evidence involves non-indicative forms. In textually attested Celtic, it is a rule that all non-indicative forms of BE (subjunctive, imperative, and non-finite) begin with /b-/ (Lewis and Pedersen 1961, 326, 328). By contrast, in early Germanic no non-indicative forms of BE began with /b-/ (Prokosch 1939, 220-221). Modern English and Middle English (Mossé 1952, 84) show the Celtic rule. Old English shows various intermediate stages in adopting the Celtic rule, varying by place and time in ways of no relevance here. Like their analogues
in Brittonic, these forms (Ringe and Taylor 2014, 373) are always regular, affected only by late changes that affected other verbs. It seems clear that identification of Germanic /bi-/ with Brittonic /bi-/, which can hardly be considered surprising, created a basis for various translinguistic analogies justifying new non-indicative forms of BE with /b-/.

The upshot is that the various /b/-forms of BE seen in OE cannot be seen as archaisms simply transplanted from the continent.

The second bit of evidence involves the case of Northumbrian bi(o)dun ‘be-3PL’. Here attempts at explanation within the traditional “Germanic only” mentality are quite weak. Ringe and Taylor (2014, 373) merely call bi(o)dun “innovative”, clearly an oblique admission of complete bewilderment. Hogg and Fulk (2011, 312), joined by Schumacher (2009, 261), posit that bi(o)dun was created by analogy with preterite-presents. But since only the 3SG, not also the 1SG, was /biӨ/, speakers would have had clear evidence that /bi-/ was not a preterite-present. Nor can bi(o)dun be regarded as a doubly marked plural analogous to /sind-on/. The posited analogy is false, for /sind/ had no synchronically apparent plural marking, which is of course why /-on/ was added. Furthermore, a doubly marked plural should have been /bi-ɑӨ-un/, which (since long diphthongs are never shortened to short diphthongs) would not be expected to appear as biodun.

The way forward was pointed out more than 50 years ago by none other than J.R.R. Tolkien (1963, 30–32), whose knowledge of Welsh enabled him to see that Northumbrian /biӨ, biӨon/ (as they are traditionally regarded) were parallel in sound, meaning, and derivational relation to Brittonic /bid, bidon(t)/.

In Brittonic, the 3SG had become in effect a stem, with personal endings being tacked on to create other forms (Lewis and Pedersen 1961, 278). Though it might be objected that OE had no /d/, only /Ө/, Brittonic had both, as part of a wider distinction of voice in obstruents. Indeed there are good reasons to think, as argued by Laker (2009) that Brittonic influence caused early phonemicization of voice in OE peasant dialect. Accordingly, it seems probable that putative **/biӨ/ was /bid/ from the beginning, since only Britons would have any reason to create any such thing. Schumacher’s objection (2009, 260) to the effect that perception of identity between languages requires absolute identity is, as the case of “El burro es un animal” shows, simply a misunderstanding. Equivalence interference would also strongly favor /-n/ over /-Ө/ as the 3PL ending. But the main thing that equivalence interference provides is an answer to the question that Wright could not answer: treating the 3SG of /bi-/ as a stem seemed like a better idea in Britain than on the continent because the 3SG was a stem in Brittonic, and /bi-/ was the only verb that received such special treatment because only /bi-/ existed in both English and Brittonic.
To sum up the preceding paragraphs, there are reasons to think that habitual-future /bi-/ was soon lost on the continent, and that at least two additional cases of Brittonic influence on the /b/-forms of BE occurred in Britain. It is not plausible to say that the /b/-forms of BE in OE represent nothing but marginal archaisms brought over from the continent. Though matters are more than a little murky, the entire range of resemblances between /b/-forms of BE in English and Brittonic seems to be due to renewed Celtic influences in the Germanic of Britain.

4.2. “is” and “am”

OE is somewhat peculiar in showing 3SG and 1SG forms of PIE /es-/ that are a bit off. Though the 3SG present indicative should be /ist/, as it is in most continental WG, in AF (and sometimes in OS) it is /is/, and though the 1SG present indicative should be /im/, or at least a broken form (like WS eom) pointing back to /im/, outside of WS the 1SG is typically a form (broken or not) pointing back to /æm/, which must of course be the ancestor of PDE /æm/. Breaking in the 3SG is not really as inexplicable as the conventional wisdom (Ringe and Taylor 2014, 372-373; Hogg and Fulk 2011, 312) would have us think. Final /-m/ would have struck Irish missionary linguists (White 2015, 5–10) as phonemically back, calling for a back V to be intruded in spelling. Due to high frequency, the resulting “broken” spellings (and their later reflexes) would tend to resist regularization. The idea that /im/ should have, as a matter of arbitrary tradition, a broken spelling, iom, would be carried over to /æm/, producing eom. Be that as it may, both of the “distractions” from the expected course of development can be seen as due to equivalence interference from Brittonic.

As for why /ist/ loses its /-t/, the conventional wisdom seems to be that some northerly WG just randomly lost /-t/ in /ist/. Though the usual Brittonic word for “is” points back to long /eis/, which must derive from a stressed form, a descendant of short unstressed /is/ (which also existed in Old Irish) survives in certain unstressed contexts (Lewis and Pedersen 1961, 320). As Germanic /ist/ would have been easily identifiable with Brittonic /is/, it would be understandable if /ist/ in Britain was “corrected” to /is/ by Britons. If so, then OS /is/ is a Frisianism. It is also possible, given that loss of /t/ is old, that /ist/ was “corrected” to /is/ on the continent, which would mean that OS /is/ preserves the original state of affairs. Given the very great possibilities for dialect mixture along the North Sea coast, it seems improbable that there can be a clear verdict.

As for why inherited /im/ was displaced (in much of the country) by /æm/, the conventional wisdom (Hogg and Fulk 2011, 312; Ringe and Taylor 2014, 373) attempts to derive 1SG /æ/ from the 2SG. This is a stretch.
admit that it does not work for Kentish *eam*, and whatever explanation lies behind Kentish *eam* might as well be applied to other cases. The Brittonic 1SG points back to /eim/. But, as in the case of bi-moraic Brittonic /eis/ corresponding to mono-moraic Irish /is/, bi-moraic Brittonic /eim/ corresponding to mono-moraic Irish /am/ (Lewis and Pedersen 1961, 322) is suspiciously long. It seems probable that in this case (as in most cases) Old Irish retains the older state of affairs, so that here too the long V seen in Brittonic is a relatively recent innovation. It is worth noting that Gaulish has /immi/ (Lambert 1994, 62), which (if existing farther east) would easily be identified with /immi/ in WG, strengthening equivalence interference there. Irish /am/ apparently developed from /im/ (after /-mi/ had become regarded as a subject pronoun) in positions of low stress (Lewis and Pedersen 1961, 322). If Brittonic had a short analogue of Irish /am/, that might well have something to do with the change of /im/ to /æm/ in English, but only if that analogue was something close to /æm/.

Determining whether this is plausible involves some complications. Though the conventional wisdom is that Brittonic as of around 450 had no low long vowels, the available evidence is consistent with the proposition that it actually had two, /aa/ and /ææ/. (It would be remiss not to note that /aa/ and /ææ/ were on their way to becoming /ɔɔ/ and /ɛɛ/, foreshadowing developments in English.) Indisputably there was only one short low vowel, which we would expect to be regarded as the short of either /aa/ or /ææ/. In modern Welsh, which has redeveloped /a/ and /aa/, short /a/ is somewhat fronted (William 1960, 7), in a language where the existence of only one low long vowel for many centuries might be expected to lead to some centering. The implication is that short /a/ was once more front than it has since become, almost certainly because it was the short of /ææ/: /æ/. If so, the Brittonic analogue of Irish /am/ was /æm/. Equivalence interference from Brittonic may well be the source of English /æm/.

To sum up, it seems that Germanic /ist/ and /im/ in Britian were in effect dragged off course by the magnetic pull of their identifiable equivalents in Brittonic, /is/ and /æm/.

### 4.3. Conclusion on BE

To sum up, the forms and meanings of BE in OE were subject to several “waves” of influence from Celtic, going back to the continental period. As a result, the forms and meaning of BE in OE show a much greater similarity to the forms and meanings of BE in Brittonic than is found in any other Germanic, including other West Germanic. This cannot be seen as a coincidence produced by supposed internally motivated changes that fall into one of two categories: implausible or “not yet” identified. Equivalence interference is the only realistic possibility.
5. Two Stray Cases

5.1. Absence of Plural Endings before *we* and *ge*

To put it as Ringe and Taylor (2014, 356) do, “An odd quirk of OE grammar is that when the subject pronoun *we* [or] *ge* … immediately follows the verb, the verb ending can be replaced by -e, regardless of tense or mood”. The corresponding duals, which unsurprisingly act as plurals in this regard, may conveniently be ignored here. This case has some interesting features that are too often ignored. First, it is largely characteristic of WS (Hogg and Fulk 2011, 214-215). Second, in its WS home it might be regarded as applying vacuously in the present 1SG, where either application or non-application would produce the same result. Third, it is shared in part by Frisian (Bremmer 2009, 86), which has (like WS) /-e/ as its present 1SG ending.

The main problem in this case is where /-e/ comes from. As Benskin notes (2011, 160), finding /hæbbe/ instead of **/habbe/, which was clearly not a possible word in OE, is not meaningful, and does not prove the view (supported by Ringe) that /-e/ is of subjunctive origin. But Benskin’s various attempts (2011, 164-165) to derive /-e/ from forms that were duals or subjunctives (or both) are a stretch: neither duals (if they survived) nor subjunctives would be expected to serve as models for plurals or indicatives. (Given that ordinary questions and negations employed the indicative in OE, Ringe and Taylor’s argument (2014, 360) that /-e/ originated in subjunctives employed in questions and negations is puzzling.) Since OE pretty clearly had a rule deleting /-e/ before /-a/ (Hogg and Fulk 2011, 84), /-e/ in the present case can be seen as a valid stem for the present PL and 1SG of most verbs. Use of /-e/ rather than /-a/ might simply show reversion to stem. If so, things like /binde-wee/ are not really descended from any particular form, but rather are in some sense independent creations. Though at this point such an origin for /-e/ might seem no more plausible than any of the possibilities dismissed above, other considerations will soon put a different light on matters.

It has reasonably been suggested by some (including Hogg and Fulk (2011, 214-215)), that the syndrome seen has something to do with personal endings before subject pronouns being redundant. But it is not immediately apparent 1) why such personal endings would have been more redundant in Britain than on the continent, nor 2) why some personal pronouns would have been more redundant than others. Nor is it clear 3) why the syndrome is associated with dialects having a 1SG /-e/, and 4) why the verbal form employed looks for all the world like a stem. What we need is a theory that can answer all of these questions.

Verb-initiality in Celtic does indeed make personal endings redundant. Within the small world of Celtic linguistics it is well-known that the distinction between personal endings and subject pronouns could sometimes become blurred. Lewis and Pedersen (1961, 194) give some striking examples of personal endings
clearly being regarded as subject pronouns in Old Irish. Further examination reveals that Brittonic influence would explain what was special about the 1PL, 2PL, and (possibly) 1SG pronouns in OE: in Brittonic the 1SG, 1PL, and 2PL personal endings (and no other endings) go back to subject pronouns (Lewis and Pedersen 1961, 283). Though in the 1SG the subject pronoun in question was derived from an old non-subject pronoun in /m-/ in all textually attested Celtic this form is employed as a subject pronoun (Lewis and Pedersen 1961, 194, 204). In Brittonic, the 1SG ending /-v/ derives from a cognate of Latin me, the 1PL ending /-n/ derives from a cognate of Latin nos, and the 2PL ending /-xʷ/ derives from a cognate of Latin vos preceded by “s-mobile”, with a change of /s/ to /h/ to /x/. It is clear that in Brittonic the 1PL, 2PL, and 1SG became regarded at some point as expressed by subject pronouns tacked on to stem in /-a/ or (more probably) /-æ/. (The V-final stem seen here is earlier than the C-final stem seen in /bid/, due to apocope having occurred in the meantime: the AS conquest was for the most part much earlier in the SE than in the N.) Stem-final /-æ/ in Brittonic would have been identifiable with stem final /-æ/ (> /-e/) in Pre-OE. Unless we are looking at yet another extraordinary coincidence, the syndrome seen in OE must be connected with its near analogue in Brittonic.

It seems probable that what happened was as follows. Britons secondarily acquiring Germanic applied their rule, where possible (i.e. in V-S orders), to their version of Germanic. Since it was only in southern OE that the 1SG could be regarded as a stem (as there was no deletion rule applying to /-u/ in northern OE), transference of the Brittonic rule would more easily occur in southern OE, and so became characteristic of southern OE (and Pre-F). Translinguistic analogy was significantly aided by recognizable similarity between stem vowels. At first the OE syndrome was, like its Brittonic model, limited to the present indicative. But once Brittonic died out, the OE version of the rule lost its seemingly arbitrary restriction to the present and indicative, and was extended to preterits and subjunctives. Such a scenario appears to be the only one that provides answers to all four of the questions posed above.

5.2. Absence of Distinct Endings in the Preterit Subjunctive

Old English and Frisian show no umlaut in the preterit subjunctive, because present endings have spread to the preterit, displacing inherited forms with /-i-/ < /-ii/ (Hogg and Fulk 2011, 224). This too can be seen as due to Brittonic influence: the past subjunctive in Brittonic did not employ any distinct past subjunctive stem or endings, though it did have distinct subjunctive endings in the present (Lewis and Pedersen 1961, 278, 286). It is understandable then that Britons would form the preterit subjunctive in OE by using the endings of the present subjunctive.
6. Conclusion

The cases treated above and their proposed solutions are as follows.

West Germanic developed pseudo-athematic verbs with present 1SG /-ɔɔ-mi/, beginning in weak 2 verbs, by equivalence interference from Celtic verbs with present 1SG /-aa-mi/. This happened before loss of /-m/ in southern OE and Pre-Frisian, but after loss of /-m/ in northern OE and Old Dutch. Along the North Sea coast, 1SG /-ɔɔm/ was widely generalized, due to repeated simplifications due to secondary acquisition. OE eode developed by analogical creation of present 1SG /ei-ɔɔ-mi/ on the basis of /ei-mi/, followed by analogical creation of /ei-ɔɔ-de/, re-interpreted as /ee-ɔɔ-de/, on the basis of /ei-ɔɔ-mi/.

DO, which in all Germanic had become a defective verb limited to forming weak preterits, was revived in WG, with a new analogical present /dɔɔ/ formed on the basis of preterit /-de-dɔɔ/ in weak verbs, due to the continued existence of recognizably similar forms, like /dede/ ‘did’, in Gallo-Brittonic. OE dyd- was created by reinterpretation of peasant /dïd-/ which first developed in low-stressed /ded-/ used as a non-emphatic periphrastic, as noble /düd-/.

The /b-/ forms of BE in WG /bi-/ were involved in no less than four cases of equivalence interference. First, WG /bii-/ developed by equivalence interference from Celtic /bii-/ . Second, habitual-future /bi-/ in OE developed by translinguistic analogy between OE /is/ and Brittonic /is/. Third, OE adopted the Brittonic rule that all non-indicative forms must be /b/-forms. Fourth, in Northumbrian a new plural /bidon/, treating the 3SG as a stem, developed by equivalence interference with 3PL /bidon(t)/ and 3SG /bid/ in Brittonic. Germanic /ist/ ‘be-3SG and /im/ ‘be-1SG’ show irregular developments due to equivalence interference from their analogues /is/ and /æm/ in Brittonic.

Both absence of personal endings before 1PL and 2PL subject pronouns and absence of distinct preterit subjunctive endings in OE are due to their analogues in Brittonic.

Given how improbable it is that mere misleading coincidence could produce such an array of areal resemblances involving both sound and meaning but not due to borrowing, the concept of “equivalence interference” as a linguistic process must be taken seriously.

Notes

1 Insertion of /y/ > /i/ was later (Hogg and Fulk 2011, 281).
References


