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Root nouns in Elfdalian: Categorisation and etymology

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Abstract

Elsewhere I have proposed a set of rules according to which we may categorise Germanic root nouns into three chronological layers. In this article, I present a synchronic classification of all of the Elfdalian actual and potential root-noun continuants as well as their etymologies and derivational histories in light of this proposal and in order to reveal (i) some interesting aspects of the general processes involved in shifts of inflectional class, and (ii) whether or not some of these processes in Elfdalian when compared to other Nordic varieties may shed light on the cladistical status of Elfdalian within North Germanic. The analysis shows that, while those Elfdalian root-noun continuants whose ancestral forms belong to layers I, IIa and IIb generally remain stable and keep their appurtenance to the root-noun inflectional class, some of the (non-)root-noun continuants actually and potentially belonging to layer III deserve additional attention with regard to this twofold aim.

Keywords: cladistics; Elfdalian; Germanic; Indo-European; language history; processes of inflectional-class shift; root nouns; stratification

1. Introduction

Elsewhere (Hansen 2014:20–50; 2016:176–178) I have proposed a set of rules according to which we may categorise Germanic root nouns into three chronological layers. However, my former two contributions did not cover the Elfdalian material exhaustively. This study, originally presented at the conference *Trið ráðstemma um övdalsku* on 8 May 2015 in Copenhagen,¹ should be regarded as an amendment to that situation.

As we shall see, there is ample reason for focusing more on the Elfdalian material. First, some of the Elfdalian root-noun continuants of the third chronological layer reveal some interesting aspects of the general processes involved in shifts of inflectional class. Second, the presence and absence of some of these processes in Elfdalian when compared to other Nordic varieties may shed light on the cladistical status of Elfdalian within the North Germanic language group.

Addressing this twofold aim of the article, I will therefore, in Section 3, present a synchronic classification of all of the Elfdalian actual and potential root-noun continuants as well as their etymologies and derivational histories. In Section 4, I will focus mainly on parts of the material assigned to the third chronological layer, relating these nouns (i) to well-known processes involved in shifts of inflectional class (Thöny 2013:35–46; Adamczyk 2018:29–60) as well as (ii) to the root-noun continuants and inflectional-class-shift processes present in other Nordic varieties with the purpose of contributing to the cladistical classification of Elfdalian.

Before we proceed to these analyses, however, we may benefit from a minor digression in Section 2 with the purpose of briefly outlining what I presented in Hansen (2014:20–50; 2016), i.e. my proposal of chronological layers in Germanic root nouns and their continuants.

2. Stratification of Germanic root nouns

2.1 Layer I: Root nouns inherited as such from Proto-Indo-European

Building on Nielsen Whitehead (2020) and peripherally on Griepentrog (1995:419) and Kümmel (2004:298–299), I have argued that the root-vowel ablaut grade of a Proto-Germanic root noun inherited as such from Proto-Indo-European is highly predictable. Inherited root nouns simply generalise the ablaut grade of their roots in accordance with their phonotactic structure. Thus, we seem to find:²

- (1) *ě-* or *ō-* grade with the phonotactic structure CVC(C), e.g. PGmc. **bōk-* F ‘beech; book’ (layer IIb also possible), **fōt-* M ‘foot’, **kwō-* F ‘cow’, **naht-* F ‘night’, **nōt-* F ‘large (fishing) net’ (layer III also possible), **traf-* F ‘fringe’ (layer III also possible), **wlōh-* F ‘fringe’ and **wrōt-* F ‘root’
- (2) zero grade with the phonotactic structure CVRC, e.g. PGmc. **brust-* F ‘breast, chest’, **brū-* F ‘brow’, **burg-* F ‘city, town, citadel’, **dur-* F ‘door’, **furh-* F ‘furrow’, **lūs-* F ‘louse’, **mūs-* F ‘mouse; muscle’, **spurd-* M/F ‘track, course’, **sū-* F ‘sow’, **sulh-* F/M ‘plough’, **turb-* F ‘turf, peat’ and **prūh-* F ‘wooden chock, hollow trunk’
- (3) preservation of original *a-* vowel regardless of the phonotactic structure, e.g. PGmc. **aik-* F ‘oak’ (layer IIa also possible), possibly **alh-* M ‘temple, sanctuary’ (layer IIa or IIb also possible), **gait-* F ‘goat’ (layer IIa also possible), **gans-* F ‘goose’ and **nas-* F ‘nose’.

All apparent counterexamples to this distributional system may be accounted for in a straightforward manner (Hansen 2014:40–43; 2016:177–178).

2.2 Layer IIa: Lexical borrowings into Proto-Germanic

Contrary to what many scholars have argued (e.g. Krahe 1967:34), the root-noun inflectional class was not closed at the post-Proto-Indo-European stage. Rather, it either stayed open or was reopened in the Proto-Germanic period and was thus capable of accepting new members. This is hardly surprising in light of Adamczyk’s (2018:43) claim that productivity of inflectional patterns is a gradual phenomenon and changes over time, which implies that, e.g. the Germanic root-noun class need

not be either completely open or completely closed and that it may become more or less productive over time.

Lexical borrowings into Germanic either from known languages or from unknown substrata constitute one source of new root nouns. Consequently, the root-noun class has displayed, at least at a specific point in history, one of the three properties that Wurzel (1987:87–92) associates with productivity or openness of an inflectional class – the possibility of extension of the class by borrowing and neologisms.

As argued by Kroonen (2012), a representative of the Leiden-school view on substrata in Germanic, at least lexical borrowings from substrate sources tend to display a consonantly auslauting structure that would have been unsegmentable to the speakers of Proto-Germanic, which is likely to be the reason why they were assigned to the consonant-stem or root-noun inflectional class. Examples of such possible substrate borrowings include PGmc. **gait*- F ‘goat’ (layer I also possible), **hnit*- ~ **gnit*- F ‘nit’, **hnut*- F ‘nut’ and **idis*-/**edis*- F ‘lady’. To these we may add those nouns that are generally accepted as lexical borrowings by substantial parts of the scholarly community, e.g. PGmc. **brōk*- F ‘trousers, breeches’ and **rīk*- M ‘ruler, king’, the sources of which are well known (Celtic) and considerably less controversial than those of the substrate material.

2.3 Layer IIb: Nouns that are transferred from other inflectional classes in Proto-Germanic

Whereas layer IIa consists of new root nouns from external sources, layer IIb comprises the ones from internal sources, i.e. those that have been transferred from other inflectional classes to the root-noun class probably at the Proto-Germanic stage; see also Wurzel’s (1987:87–92) second property of inflectional-class productivity and openness. It is thus highly likely that layer IIa and IIb constitute, in principle, the same layer, the only difference being that they are fed with material from two different sources.

New root nouns of this layer tend to have their origin in the Germanic masculine *a*- or feminine *ō*-stem inflectional classes. In our attempt to understand why some nouns would have been transferred from these classes to the root-noun class, we may retrieve some level of insight from the descriptions of transitional tendencies and inflectional-class profiles in Germanic provided by Thöny (2013:79–82, 314–325) and the general principles of inflectional-class shifts discussed and contextualised by Adamczyk (2018:29–60, 496–514). Thus, it would seem that partial case syncretism between the source classes and the receiving root-noun class constitutes the intuitively most appealing explanation, but this explanation may work equally well the other way around, i.e. for explaining transitions from root-noun to vocalic-stem inflection. Furthermore, even though it is impossible to predict exactly which of the nouns fulfilling the criteria will make the transition, it remains enigmatic why so few such nouns have adopted the full or partial inflection of root nouns.

That the number of nouns undergoing this transition is, indeed, scanty is hardly open to debate. To the best of my knowledge and following the etymological considerations presented in Hansen (2014:22–39; 2016:179), the only nouns belonging to layer IIb are PGmc. **alh*- M ‘temple, sanctuary’ (layer I or IIa also possible), **bōk*- F ‘beech; book’ (layer I also possible), **gaup*- M? ‘barker, mocker’, **mann*- M ‘man’ and

**mark-* F ‘border, region; mark (unity)’ (layer I also possible; see Hansen 2014:41–42). However, we should not exclude the possibility that at least some of the root nouns that fit the distributional system outlined in Section 2.1 may, in fact, just as well have entered the Proto-Germanic language at this later stage. When ascertaining if an item belongs to layer I or IIb, we must therefore often rely on extra-Germanic comparanda, i.e. cognates from more distantly related, non-Germanic languages such as Hittite, Old Indic, Greek or Latin.

Finally, as will probably be evident by now, nouns that entered the root-noun class in layer IIa or IIb, i.e. after the distributional system outlined in Section 2.1 had ceased to be active, may display any root structure and root-vowel ablaut grade.

2.4 Layer III: Nouns that are transferred from other inflectional classes in North Germanic

As outlined above, it is beyond any doubt that the root-noun class was or became open to new members at the Proto-Germanic stage, but it did not remain so for long. We have no data on East Germanic developments and transitions posterior to the 4th century CE, but as concerns the West Germanic state of affairs, we seem to find only one or two secure attestations of innovative root-noun inflection that are not paralleled in North Germanic.

The speakers of the North Germanic language variants, on the other hand, were considerably more open to the idea of allowing nouns to transfer from other classes to what originally constituted the root-noun class (see also Brøndum-Nielsen 1935:146, 154–155). Consequently, we find in Old Norse a vast number of nouns undergoing this transition, and the factors triggering it are far more transparent than those underlying the parallel developments at the earlier Proto-Germanic stage outlined in Section 2.3.

Two possible factors for the transition of masculine nouns are (i) interactions between original root nouns and original *u*-stems owing to partial case syncretism, e.g. in the back-projections PGmc. **wand-* M ‘wall’ (ODa. *wand*) and **wintr-* M ‘winter’, and (ii) ‘body-part analogy’ with ON *fótr* M ‘foot’ < PGmc. **fōt-* as the model example, e.g. in the back-projections PGmc. **fingr-* M ‘finger’ and **naġl-* M ‘nail’.

For the feminines, we may define not only two but three possible factors (Brøndum-Nielsen 1935:138–140, 154–155 in particular): (i) that *u*-mutation in the ACC.SG creates a pivot to the feminine *ō*-stems continuants, resulting in original *ō*-stem nouns with visible *u*-mutation (i.e. nouns with a root vowel ON *a* or *á/ó*) being particularly prone to undergoing the transition; (ii) that the output of *i*-mutation in root-noun continuants (GEN.SG and NOM/ACC.PL) resembles that of *R*-mutation in stems ending synchronically in a vowel in Old Norse; and (iii) an apparent desire for total elimination of the old feminine *u*-stem inflectional class.

These three factors may easily explain the transitions to what originally constituted the root-nouns class of ON *qnd*, *qnd* F ‘duck’ (layer I also possible), *bót* F ‘penalty, compensation’, *fló*, *flá* F ‘layer, stratum’ (if with root-noun inflection at all; see Griepentrog 1995:452–454), *glóð* F ‘red-hot ember’, *hond* F ‘hand’ (original *u*-stem status witnessed by the DAT.SG *hendi*), *kinn* F ‘cheek’, *kló* F ‘claw’, *nót* F ‘large (fishing) net’ (layer I also possible), *rond* F ‘edge’, *rong* F ‘frame, rib (nautical)’, *spøng* F

'spangle', *stong* F 'pole', *strönd* F 'beach', *tá* F 'toe', *tong* F 'tongs' and *trefr* F 'fringes (PL)' (layer I also possible).

The triggering factors for the inflectional-class transitions of a few members of layer III are not that easily identified, however. The layer III root-noun continuants in question include ON *hind* F 'fallow buck, hind', *kverk* F 'throat', *sild* F 'herring' (layer I or IIa also possible), *sæ(i)ng* F 'bed with linen', *tík* F 'bitch', *vík* F 'creek, inlet', OEN/Gutn. **-t(a)ug* F 'örtug (unity)' and possibly OEN *nek* F 'sheaf'.

3. Actual and potential root-noun continuants in Elfdalian

3.1 Actual root-noun continuants

With the principles of my categorisation of Germanic root nouns into three chronological layers lined up (see Section 2.1–2.4), we may now turn to the Elfdalian root-noun continuants in order to determine how we can distribute them into the layers already defined.

Easily accessible and nearly identical lists of Elfdalian nouns following what originally constituted the root-noun inflectional class have appeared in both of the leading grammars of Elfdalian: Levander (1909:12, 26–27, 34–35) and Åkerberg (2012:128, 155, 157–159, 169–171). Feminine root-noun continuants fall into two groups: (i) those inflected according to paradigm VI with *i*-mutation and acute accent in the plural, and (ii) those following paradigm VIIb with a stem-final vowel in the NOM.SG in Old Norse and *i*-mutation as well as acute accent in the plural. The only existing masculine root-noun continuant – Elfd. *mann* M 'man' – also follows paradigm VI.

Below I have listed all known instances of Elfdalian root-noun continuants by their NOM.SG and NOM.PL forms. In the nominative plural, I have added a prefixed, superscripted number in order to mark whether the accent is acute (¹) or grave (²), the former indicating original monosyllabicity as expected in the nominative plural of root nouns (Levander 1925:50–51; Wessén 1941:16). In addition, I have provided the immediate etymologies of the Elfdalian nouns and, on that ground, compared them to the three layers of Germanic root nouns presented in Sections 2.1–2.4.³ All the etymologies suggested below conform to the phonological developments described by Levander (1925:86–227; 1928:1–108).

(4) *Masculine root-noun continuants of paradigm VI*

mann, ¹*menner* M 'man': Layer IIB (< PGmc. **mann-* ← **mann-a-* or **mann-an-*)

(5) *Feminine root-noun continuants of paradigm VI*

and, ¹*ender* F 'hand': Layer III (← PGmc. **hand-u-*)

buok, ¹*byöker* F 'book': Layer I (< PGmc. **bōk-* 'beech; book') or IIB (← PGmc. **bōk-ō-*)

bruok, ¹*bryöker* F 'trousers': Layer IIa (< PGmc. **brōk-*; borrowing from Celtic)

djiēt, ¹*djieter* F 'goat': Layer I (< PGmc. **gait-*) or IIa (< PGmc. **gait-*; substrate word)

ert, ¹*erter* F 'pea': Layer IIa (< PGmc. **arwīt-*; substrate word)

- gnit*, ¹*gniter* F ‘nit’: Layer IIa (< PGmc. *(*ga-*)*hnit*; substrate word)
gås, ^{1/2}*gæser* F ‘goose’: Layer I (< PGmc. **gans-*) or IIa (< PGmc. **gans-*; substrate word)
gât, ¹*geter* F ‘door post’: Root-noun continuant only in Elfdalian; see Section 4.2
laus, ¹*lâyser* F ‘louse’: Layer I (< PGmc. **lūs-*)
maus, ¹*mâyser* F ‘mouse’: Layer I (< PGmc. **mūs-*)
nât, ¹*næter* F ‘night’: Layer I (< PGmc. **naht-*)
nyot, ¹*nyoter*/²*nyöter* F ‘note (music)’:⁴ Root-noun continuant only in Elfdalian; see Section 4.2
rand, ¹*render* F ‘edge’: Layer III (< PGmc. **rand-ō/i-*)
ruot, ¹*ryöter* F ‘root’: Layer I (< PGmc. **wrōt-*)
sild, ^{1/2}*silder* F ‘herring’: Layer I (< PGmc. **sil-ōþ* ~ **sil-d-*), IIa (substrate word) or III (< PGmc. **sīpl-ō-*)
syv, ¹*syver* F ‘hedge’: Root-noun continuant in only in Elfdalian; see Section 4.2
tann, ¹*tenner* F ‘tooth’: Layer I (< PGmc. **tanþ-* ~ **tund-*)
- (6) *Feminine root-noun continuants of paradigm VIII*
kluo, ¹*klyöner* F ‘claw’: Layer III (< PGmc. **klō-wō-*)
ton, ¹*töner* F ‘toe’: Layer III (< PGmc. **taihw-ō-*)
tjyr, ¹*tjyner* ‘cow’: Layer I (< PGmc. **kwō-*)

3.2 Potential root-noun continuants

Still, we must not forget the circumstance that inflectional-class transitions need by no means be unidirectional. In Hansen (2014:20–50; 2016), I have identified several instances of nouns entering the root-noun class from other inflectional classes, but the Germanic languages also bear witness of the opposite process, i.e. original root-noun continuants transferred to other classes. This is, in fact, the most frequent direction (Thöny 2013:80). For instance, Goth. **fots* ‘foot’ was transferred from root-noun to *u*-stem inflection, thus appearing as *footus* in the nominative singular (Thöny 2013:128–132), and as for PIE **ḱerd-* ‘heart’, the root-noun inflection was abandoned in favour of neutral *n*-stem inflection even prior to the Proto-Germanic stage (Kroonen 2013:222). For Elfdalian, Levander (1928:124, 131–132) describes this process briefly, but appositely.

In order to account for all relevant processes regarding actual and potential root-noun continuants in Elfdalian, we need therefore include also Elfdalian nouns that are demonstrably inflected fully or partially as root nouns in other Germanic languages but not in Elfdalian, be these root nouns *ab origine* (layer I) or only by secondary transition (layers IIa, IIb and III). A systematic comparison of the root nouns listed in Hansen (2014:22–39; 2016:170–176, 179–180) with the paradigms of Levander (1909) and Åkerberg (2012) reveals the necessity of adding from various Elfdalian non-root-noun-continuant paradigms the following nouns that all have in common the existence of root-noun counterparts in other Germanic languages or pre-stages thereof:

- (7) *Masculine nouns of paradigm Ia (old heavy-syllable vocalic stems)*
fuot, ²*fuoter* M ‘leg, foot’ < PGmc. **fōt-* ‘foot’ (layer I elsewhere)

- (8) *Feminine nouns of paradigm Ia–b (old heavy-syllable vocalic stems)*
glyöð F ‘red-hot ember’ < PGmc. **glōd-i-* (borrowed from Swedish?) (layer III elsewhere)
mjok F ‘milk’ < PGmc. **meluk-* (layer I elsewhere)
raungg, ²*raungger* F ‘frame, rib (nautical)’ < PGmc. **wrang-ō-* (layer III elsewhere)
saingg, ²*saingger* F ‘bed’ < PGmc. **sēing-ō-* (layer III elsewhere)
spaungg, ²*spaungger* F ‘narrow bridge’ < PGmc. **spang-ō/i-* ‘spangle’ (layer III elsewhere)
strand, ²*strander* F ‘beach’ < PGmc. **strand-ō-* (layer III elsewhere)
taungg, ²*taungger* F ‘tongs’ < PGmc. **tang-ō(n)-* (layer III elsewhere)
waik, ²*waiker* F ‘creek, inlet’ < PGmc. **wik-ō-* (layer III elsewhere)
- (9) *Feminine nouns of paradigm II (old light-syllable vocalic stems)*
 –, ²*dörär* F ‘door’ (only PL) (Åkerberg 2012:161) < PGmc. **dur-* (layer I elsewhere)

4. Analytical implications of the Elfdalian material

4.1 Actual and potential root-noun continuants of particular interest for the present study

The majority of the Elfdalian root-noun continuants does not bring about much new knowledge on the nature and conditioning of the three chronological layers of Germanic root nouns. The root-noun continuants whose ancestral forms belong to layers I, IIa and IIb, in particular, remain stable and simply keep their appurtenance to the root-noun inflectional class, having undergone only the changes predicted by trivial sound laws and general paradigmatic restructurings common to all inflectional classes in Elfdalian (Levander 1925, 1928). Among the nouns belonging to these layers, only Elfd. *fuot* M ‘leg, foot’, *mjok* F ‘milk’ and ²*dörär* F ‘door’ have been transferred to other classes. However, transitions from what originally constituted the root-noun class to other, mainly vocalic-stem classes are trivial (Thöny 2013:79–82) and, at least for the latter two, paralleled in other Scandinavian language variants (Sw. *dörrar* (PL), Da. *døre* ‘doors’ (PL), Nw. *melk*, *mjolk* M/F ‘milk’, etc.; for the transition of the continuant of PGmc. **meluk-* F ‘milk’ to a vocalic stem also in Old English, see Adamczyk 2018:513). Consequently, we need not concentrate more on these.

Some of the root-noun continuants belonging to layer III, on the other hand, do deserve additional attention, because they may reveal some interesting aspects of the processes involved in shifts of inflectional class. In addition, the presence and absence of some of these processes in Elfdalian when compared to other Nordic varieties may shed light on the cladistical status of Elfdalian within the North Germanic language group.

Finally, of the extra-Elfdalian counterparts of the nouns listed in Section 3.1, I have discussed all but three in my previous two contributions: Hansen (2014:20–50; 2016). Therefore, the three entries in our list – Elfd. *gät* F ‘door post’, *nyot* F ‘note (music)’ and *syv* F ‘heddle’ – deserve additional etymological scrutiny beyond the mere assignment of them to one of the three chronologically defined layers outlined in Sections 2.1–2.4.

4.2 Three exclusively Elfdalian root-noun continuants

As just noted, I did not discuss the extra-Elfdalian counterparts of Elfd. *gât* F ‘door post’, *nyot* F ‘note (music)’ and *syv* F ‘heddle’ in my previous two contributions. Consequently, we need to discuss their etymologies prior to attributing them to one of the three layers outlined in Section 2.1–2.4.

Elfd. *gât* F ‘door post’ probably harks back to PGmc. **ganhti-* (> Goth. *fram-gāhts* F ‘progress’, ON *gátt* F ‘rabbet of a doorpost’, Far. *gátt* F ‘threshold; door post’), i.e. an original *ti*-stem formed to the root of PGmc. **ganga-* v ‘go, walk’ (< PIE root **g^heng^h-* ‘walk, move forwards’); see e.g. Kroonen (2013:167). In light of the word formation, we cannot assume this root noun to be inherited as such from Proto-Indo-European (layer I). Nor can we assume it to be a lexical borrowing (layer IIa), since it is easily segmentable in Proto-Germanic and consists merely of morphemes inherited from Proto-Indo-European. Consequently, we must attribute it either to layer IIb or, which is more plausible in light of the lack of root-noun-continuant forms in West and East Germanic, to layer III. That the inflectional-class transition of exactly this noun should have happened only in Elfdalian is hardly surprising. It may have been triggered by its phonological similarity with the root-noun continuant Elfd. *gås* F ‘goose’ (see Section 3.1), and this similarity would not be possible in other Germanic language variants, seeing that the preservation of nasalisation in both words constitutes a unique hallmark of Elfdalian (Levander 1925:213–216).

As evidenced by the absence of the Germanic sound shift, Elfd. *nyot* F ‘note (music)’ is not a cognate of Lat. *nota* F, but ultimately constitutes a borrowing from it, just as ON *nóti* M and MHG *note* F (all meaning ‘note (music)’); see e.g. Hellquist (1922:525) and de Vries (1962:412). Also, the vacillation regarding the presence of *i*-mutation and acute accent in the plural points in the direction of a non-original root noun that has entered what originally constituted the root-noun class at a late stage (layer III). The transition may be partially caused by influence from the hypothetical Elfdalian cognate (Elfd. **nyot*) of ON *nót* F ‘large (fishing) net’ which is, though surely not to be found among the root-noun continuants of Elfdalian, attested with both *i*-stem-, *ō*-stem- and root-noun forms elsewhere (layer I or III; see Hansen 2014:34; 2016:174).

Finally, Elfd. *syv* F ‘heddle’ continues a Proto-Dalecarlian form **sylv* which is, along with archaic Da. *solve* C and archaic Sw. *sölff* C (both meaning ‘heddle’ also), in itself an abbreviated version of a borrowed MLG *sulfende* (*self-*, *solf-*, *sülf-*) M ‘edge of a loom’; see e.g. Hellquist (1922:823–824). Thus, we are once more dealing with a recent borrowing and the assignment of root-noun status to this lexeme only in North-Germanic (layer III). Unlike what we saw with the two previous entries, however, no apparent trigger presents itself for the transition of *syv* F ‘heddle’. It is tempting to assume that both this and the previous entry (Elfd. *nyot* F ‘note (music)’) have undergone the transition, because the triggering factor of layer IIa, i.e. the assignment of consonantly auslauting borrowings to the root-noun class, remained active in Elfdalian. However, in a post-syncope language variant like Elfdalian, nothing really separates the phonological makeup, i.e. the consonantal auslaut, of these two entries from that of most of the remaining nouns.

We may thus conclude that all three Elfdalian root-noun continuants not treated in my previous two contributions have entered what originally constituted the

root-noun class by means of late inflectional-class transitions and thus belong to layer III, i.e. the layer consisting of nouns that have been transferred to the root-noun class from other inflectional classes only in North Germanic. It remains somewhat unclear, however, what has triggered the transitions of these exact nouns. None of the general factors weighted by Thöny (2013:35–46) (semantics, gender, stability of the inflectional-class-marker, syllable structure, prosody) or Adamczyk (2018:46–60) (frequency of occurrence, salience of inflectional markers, semantics, syllable structure, lexical factors) seems to have had the potential to play any particularly decisive role. If anything, an entirely different factor may have been operative in the transitional process of at least two of these nouns, namely standard proportional or four-part analogy (Trask & Millar 2015:99–101) triggered by full (Elfd. *gāt* F ‘door post’) or partial (Elfd. *nyot* F ‘note (music)’) phonological similarity with other lexemes that already inflected as root-noun continuants (Elfd. *gās* F ‘goose’ and **nyot* F ‘large (fishing) net’, respectively).

4.3 Factors involved in the (non-)transition of Elfdalian nouns to the root-noun class

Interestingly, of the many Elfdalian nouns that demonstrably inflect fully or partially as root nouns or root-noun continuants in other Germanic languages without doing so in Elfdalian, all but three belong to layer III. It is important to note here that I have based this layer mainly on data from Wessén (1958) and thus from Old West Norse (Old Icelandic and Old Norwegian). Though also included, Old East Norse root-noun continuants make up a considerably smaller part of layer III, and many of the layer III nouns attested fully or partially as root nouns in West Norse do not appear as such in East Norse.

The nouns in question are Elfd. *glyöð* F ‘red-hot ember’, *raungg* F ‘frame, rib (nautical)’, *saingg* F ‘bed’, *spauingg* F ‘narrow bridge’, *strand* F ‘beach’, *taungg* F ‘tongs’ and *waik* F ‘creek, inlet’. While *glyöð* is probably borrowed from the Swedish *i*-stem form *glöd*, as the regular reflex of a root-noun continuant in the shape of post-PGmc. **glōd-* would have been Elfd. †*gluoð*,⁵ nothing prevents the remaining nouns from being inherited from Common Norse. All but one of these (Elfd. *waik* ~ ON *vik* ‘creek, inlet’) are of the type whose transition to the root-noun class we may explain by means of *u*-mutation in the ACC.SG forms having created a parallel to the feminine *ō*-stems, thus resulting in *ō*-stem nouns with visible Old West Norse *u*-mutation (nouns with the root vowel ON *a* or *á/ó*) being particularly prone to undergoing the transition (see Section 2.4).

As we saw above, these nouns were, indeed, originally *ō*-stems in Proto-Germanic. Since feminine nouns belonging to the Elfdalian paradigm Ia–b often continue original *ō*-stems, I see no reason to claim that this group of nouns was first transferred to the root-noun class at the layer III stage only to subsequently switch back to the *ō*-stem class. On the contrary, claiming that, in Elfdalian, this group never made its way to what originally constituted the root-noun class in the first place and that the factors triggering a transition was never active is a much more economical scenario. It would therefore seem that, as concerns this subcategory of root-noun productivity, Elfdalian does not group with West Norse. Rather, the apparent lack in Elfdalian of this specific triggering factor suggests what already

Levander (1925:113–114) has noticed, namely that, as in East Norse, *u*-mutation played a considerably less prominent role in Elfdalian than in West Norse.

It would be taking the argument too far, however, to claim on this basis alone that we should classify Elfdalian cladistically as an East Norse language variant. If we take into consideration that Elfd. *rand* F ‘edge’, which resembles *strand* F ‘beach’ phonologically, actually does follow what originally constituted the root-noun inflectional class and therefore has been subject to the triggering factor in question (just as its West Norse cognate ON *rōnd* F ‘edge’), the claim that Elfdalian is a purely East Norse variant even turns out untenable. To this, we may add that this triggering factor has actually been present also in East Norse language variants, albeit to a lesser extent than in West Norse, as witnessed by, for example, Sw. *rand* C ‘edge’ and *strand* C ‘beach’ with the *i*-mutated plural forms *ränder* and *stränder*.

Instead of operating with a strict East-/West-Norse dichotomy, we may gain a deeper insight into the role of the (non-)transitions of this type of original *ō*-stem nouns to the root-noun inflectional class in establishing the cladistical status of Elfdalian by also looking at the fate of this type of nouns in the neighbouring language variants. As Levander (1928:131) points out, the general frequency of *i*-mutated plural forms and thus of root-noun continuants in the Elfdalian – or rather general Dalecarlian – paradigm VI decreases the farther east we travel within the dialectal area and, correspondingly, increases the farther west we travel. In Western Dalecarlian variants, for instance, the plural forms corresponding to the Elfdalian non-root-noun-continuants ²*raungger* and ²*strander* (of *raungg* F ‘frame, rib (nautical)’ and *strand* F ‘beach’, respectively) are ¹*ränggär* (in Äppelbo) and ¹*strändär* (in Nås) with *i*-mutation and acute accent. The sum of these observations implies that the presence or absence of *u*-mutation and thus of the inflectional-class-shift-triggering factor in question does not in itself constitute a decisive factor for the attribution of a language variant to the West or East Norse group, but rather serves to position it within the greater Scandinavian dialect continuum.

As for the remaining, identifiable triggering factors of layer III (see Section 2.4), we may infer from the material that, in Elfdalian, the two factors for the transition of masculine nouns (i.e. interactions between root nouns and *u*-stems + ‘body-part analogy’) seem not to have played any role. None of the masculine layer III root-noun continuants of Old Norse are found as such in Elfdalian, where the only masculine root-noun continuant left is *mann* M ‘man’. Contrarily, the remaining two triggering factors for feminine nouns, i.e. the output of *i*-mutation in the GEN.SG and NOM/ACC.PL of root nouns resembling that of *R*-mutation in stems ending in a vowel in Old Norse as well as total elimination of the feminine *u*-stem class, seem both to have played a role. For the former type, see the root-noun continuants Elfd. *kluo* F ‘claw’ and *ton* F ‘toe’ (with intrusive *n* probably originating from the definite article⁶); for the latter, see Elfd. *and* F ‘hand’.

5. Concluding remarks

In this article, I have demonstrated that we may unproblematically assign all of the Elfdalian root-noun continuants to the three layers defined in Hansen (2014:20–50; 2016). A couple of further remarks are in place, though.

First, we must now add three Elfdalian root-noun continuants – *gât* F ‘door post’, *nyot* F ‘note (music)’ and *syv* F ‘heddle’ – to the lists presented in Hansen (2014:20–50; 2016). Judging from their etymologies, we must necessarily assign all of them to the most recent layer III, i.e. nouns that have been transferred from other inflectional classes only in North Germanic. This circumstance underlines the view of Hansen (2014:20–50; 2016) that the Germanic root-noun class was not closed but rather (semi-)productive and open to new members, even in cases of comparatively recent borrowings such as Elfd. *syv* F ‘heddle’, which again confirms Adamczyk’s (2018:43) claim that productivity of inflectional patterns is a gradual phenomenon and changes over time. Moreover, in the case of Elfd. *gât* F ‘door post’ and *nyot* F ‘note (music)’, we have identified a possible factor triggering the transition from a vocalic-stem class to the root-noun class that was not mentioned in the general lists of Thöny (2013:35–46) and Adamczyk (2018:46–60), namely full or partial phonological similarity with other nouns that already inflected as root-noun continuants.

Second, a handful of North Germanic nouns described in Hansen (2014:20–50; 2016) as belonging to layer III are not inflected as root-noun continuants in Elfdalian where, on the contrary, they keep their affiliation with the \bar{o} -stem class. From this we may conclude that *u*-mutation, which, by creating a pivot to the feminine \bar{o} -stems in the ACC.SG, results in \bar{o} -stem nouns being particularly prone to inflectional-class transition, did not operate in Elfdalian to the same extent as it did in Old West Norse, but the root-noun inflection of Elfd. *rand* F ‘edge’ still reveals that it did operate to some extent. Together with data from neighbouring dialects and other East Norse language variants, this suggests that we cannot use the presence or absence of *u*-mutation – and thus of the inflectional-class-shift-triggering factor in question – to attribute a language variant to the West or East Norse group, but only to position it within the greater Scandinavian dialect continuum.

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Notes

1 A video recording of my original presentation at the conference may be viewed at <https://nors.ku.dk/kalender/inss/tredje-konference-om-lvdalsk/program/>, from where the PowerPoint presentation and the abstract may also be downloaded.

2 Abbreviations: ACC = accusative; C = commune/common gender; Da. = Danish; DAT = dative; Elfd. = Elfdalian; F = feminine; Far. = Faroese; GEN = genitive; Goth. = Gothic; Gutn. = Gutnish; Lat. = Latin; M = masculine; MHG = Middle High German; MLG = Middle Low German; NOM = nominative; Nw. = Norwegian; ODa. = Old Danish; OEN = Old East Norse; ON = Old (West) Norse; PGmc. = Proto-Germanic; PIE = Proto-Indo-European; PL = plural; SG = singular; Sw. = Swedish; V = verb.

3 In what follows, < means ‘is developed from by means of regular sound change’, while ← means ‘is developed from by other means than regular sound change’ (e.g., by derivation, inflectional-class transition or other types of analogical change).

4 Only Levander (1909:34) suggests root-noun status for this lexeme. According to Åkerberg (2012:157), it rather groups with the old heavy-syllable vocalic stems (probably \bar{o} -stems) of the feminine paradigm Ia. Steensland (2010:383) presents both options.

5 I thank Stefan Jacobsson-Schulstad for drawing my attention to this fact.

6 Similarly in the plural form ¹töner as well as in the plural forms Elfd. ¹klyöner (of *kluo* F 'claw') and ¹tjyner (of *tjyr* F 'cow').

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