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The Germanic reflexes of PIE *-*sr*- in the context of Verner's Law

ABSTRACT: The paper reconsiders the fate of medial *-*sr*- in Germanic, especially in the context of Verner's Law. It is argued that the epenthesis of *-*t*- took place later than the voicing of *-*s*- by Verner's Law and did not apply to the Vernerian variant *-*zr*-. Instead, I propose that the pre-rhotic *z was lost, resulting, when possible, in a compensatory lengthening of the preceding vowel. Several novel etymologies are offered to support this proposal, and some of its ramifications are explored, including the derivation of the word for 'spring' in Latin and Germanic and the structure of the Germanic words for the four cardinal points.[1]

1. The 'spring' word

Old Icelandic *vár* 'spring' (a neuter *a*-stem) is so similar to Lat. *vēr* – both exhibiting what looks like a shared phonological irregularity – that it is tempting to reconstruct something like *$\underset{\frown}{u}$*ēr*- and label it an Italo-Germanic innovation (cf. Pokorny 1174). The PIE word for 'spring' can be reconstructed as an acrostatic neuter: *$\underset{\frown}{u}$*é́s-r̥*, gen. *$\underset{\frown}{u}$*és-n̥-s* (→ *$\underset{\frown}{u}$*és-n-os*), loc. *$\underset{\frown}{u}$*és-n-i* ~ *$\underset{\frown}{u}$*és-r-i* (Av. *vaŋri*),[2] hence such deadverbial adjectives as *$\underset{\frown}{u}$*esni-no-* (OCS *vesnьnъ*) and *$\underset{\frown}{u}$*esri-no-*, the latter producing Lat. *vernus* '(belonging to) spring' via syncope or haplology: *$\underset{\frown}{u}$*esrino-* > *$\underset{\frown}{u}$*ezr̥$_2$no-* > *$\underset{\frown}{u}$*ererno-* > *vernus*.[3] When compared with the usual form of the

[1] I wish to thank the editors of this volume and the anonymous reviewer of this paper for corrections, incisive comments and helpful suggestions that have led to numerous improvements incorporated in the final draft. Needless to say, any remaining flaws and errors are exclusively my own.

[2] Also (post-PIE) *$\underset{\frown}{u}$*es-en-i* ~ *$\underset{\frown}{u}$*es-er-i*, with *e introduced on the analogy of accentually mobile stems. The *ē : *e ablaut (Schindler's acrostatic type I) seems necessary to explain the non-attestation of the zero grade *us-. It is possible that *$\underset{\frown}{u}$*es-r/n-* is deverbal, from *$\underset{\frown}{u}$*es-* 'graze, feed', tentatively classified in LIV (Rix—Kümmel *et al.* 2001: 692) as a Narten verb, i.e. a root present with an underlying long vowel; cf. Hitt. *wešiya-* 'graze' < *$\underset{\frown}{u}$*és-i̯e/o-*, Goth. *wisan* 'feast' < PGmc. *wes-a-/*wis-i-*, perhaps Lat. *vēscor* 'take food', and a number of nominal derivatives, e.g. Hitt. *weštara-* < *$\underset{\frown}{u}$*és-tōr* 'shepherd', Toch.A *wäsri* (obl.pl. *wsäryās*) 'grassy area' < *$\underset{\frown}{u}$*es-tr-ih$_2$*, OIr. *fess*, OIc. *vist* 'food' < *$\underset{\frown}{u}$*es-tah$_2$*, etc. The original meaning of *$\underset{\frown}{u}$*es-r/n-* would then be '(the onset of) the grazing season'.

[3] *r̥$_2$ > Lat. *er* stands for a secondary syllabic rhotic in pre-Latin, in this case from *ri* before a coronal.

stem, *u̯es-r/n-*, and its derivatives (Gk. *ἔαρ*, OCS *vesna*, etc.), *vēr*, gen. *vēris* looks strange indeed. However, rather than accept an irregular cluster reduction at an indeterminable date, I suggest that we are dealing with a rather trivial case of paradigmatic levelling in Old Latin. The expected post-rhotacism reflexes of the PIE forms would have been **vērer* (vel sim.), gen. **vēnis* (< pre-Lat. **u̯eznes*). Suppose that the *-*n*- of the oblique cases was analogically replaced by the *-*r*- of the nominative/accusative ("Stage III" in (1) below). The resulting new oblique stem *vēr-* was identical with the initial part of **vērer*. Subsequently, the synchronically unmotivated termination was dropped and the paradigm became completely normalised:

(1)

PIE	**u̯és-r̥ : *u̯és-n-(e/o)s*
Stage I	**u̯ēzer : *u̯eznes*
Stage II	**u̯ērer : *u̯ēnes*
Stage III	**u̯ērer : *u̯ēres*
Latin	*vēr : vēris*

Since, under this scenario, *vēr* is a fairly recent form and cannot be regarded as an Italo-Germanic innovation, Germanic **wēra-* has to be explained otherwise. The possibility (referred to in Pokorny) that it represents a reflex of **u̯es-r-* remodelled on **i̯ēr-* 'year', i.e. PIE **($h_{1/2}$)i̯e/oh_1-r-* (> PGmc. **jēr-a-* 'year') is not supported by anything except the vague phonetic resemblance of both words.

If, however, we start with thematised **u̯esr-ó-m*,[4] we get **wezra-* as the output of Verner's Law. Let us consider the possibility that **z* was lost when followed by **r*, with a compensatory lengthening of the preceding vowel. Thus, **wezra-* yields **wēra-* directly. The **ē* here is PGmc. "**$ē_1$*", which developed into a low vowel in Northwest Germanic (hence OIc. *vár*). To have been so phonologised, the lengthening must have taken place at a time when **$ē_1$* had a phonetic quality sufficiently similar to that of short **e*; it can therefore be broadly described as Proto-Germanic. The objection that the cluster **sr* would have received an epenthetic **t* (as in **srou-mó-s* 'stream' > **straumaz*), which in turn would have blocked the operation of Verner's Law, is only valid if the epenthesis is older than Verner's Law – and there is no reason to insist that it must be. Nor is the derivation contradicted by the fact

[4] Thematised heteroclitic stems are attested in Germanic; cf. such dialectal forms as OIc. *vatn*, OE *wæter* (both of them **a*-stems) from **watōr/*watin-* 'water', which was still heteroclitic in Proto-Germanic. The emergence of **wezra-* postulated here would parallel that of **watra-*, the prototype of *wæter*.

that PIE *$su̯ésōr$/*$su̯ésr$- 'sister' yields PGmc. *$swest(ō)r$-: in this case, the Germanic stem remained consonantal, and the comparative evidence suggests that its protoform had non-mobile initial accent throughout the paradigm.

2. Further examples: 'hair' and 'aurochs'

Unfortunately, the medial cluster *-*sr*- was fairly rare. Apart from the 'sister' word, its securely attested reflexes in Germanic include *-*str*- in **þimstra* < **þimsra*- 'dark(ness)' < PIE *$témh_1s$-*ro*- (cf. Skt. *támisra*-).[5] In order to see what happened to it in the environment of Verner's Law, we have to scan the Germanic vocabulary not only for words already known to have contained *-*sr*- but also for potential suspects that may have been missed so far.

One such word is Germanic 'hair' (OE [WS] *hǣr*, OHG *hār*, OIc. *hár*), usually regarded as having no plausible Indo-European etymology. Since it is attested only in Northwest Germanic languages affected by rhotacism, the evidence is insufficient to decide whether it contains a reflex of PGmc. **r* or **z*. Attempts have therefore been made to connect the 'hair' word with **k̑es*- 'cut', **kes*- 'tidy up, comb' (Hitt. *kišzi*, OCS *češǫ*) or **k̑er(es)*- '± rough hair, bristle' (Mallory–Adams 1997: 252), but these are mere root equations that fail to account for the lengthened grade and other details of the proposed derivation. If, however, we accept the postulated change of *-V*sr*- > *-V*zr*- > *V*:r*- in the Vernerian environment, 'hair' can be neatly etymologised as PGmc. **xēra*- < **xezra*- < PIE **kes-ró-m* (again with *$\bar{e}$ = "*$\bar{e}_1$"), a substantivised verbal adjective meaning literally 'that which is combed'. As substantivisation often involves accent retraction for contrastive purposes (as in *$\hat{g}^h\mathring{l}h_3$-$tó$-m → *$\hat{g}^h\acute{\mathring{l}}h_3tom$ > PGmc. **ɣulþa*- 'gold'), the final accent required to trigger Verner's Law is perhaps non-original, but even in that case it may well have been generalised from the coll./pl. *$kesráh_2$.[6]

Another possible, albeit less compelling, example is the 'aurochs' word, PGmc. **ūr-u*- (ON gen.sg. *úrar*) ~ **ūr-a*- (*uraz* cited in the Vienna Codex as the "Gothic" name of the second rune) ~ **ūr-Vn*- (OHG *ûro*). It has sometimes been compared with Skt. *usrá*- 'bull', *usrā́* '(red)

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[5] The diphthong in OE *þēostre*, OFris. *thiūstere*, OSax. *thiustri* may reflect a perfectly natural development of *-*ems*- > *-*ims*- > *-*iw̃s*- > *-*iu̯s*- etc., preserving the labial component of the original nasal. Another possible, but far more speculative example can be provided by Ger. *Nüster*, OFris. *nostern* 'nostril', if from **nus-ra*- < pre-Gmc. *$\mathring{n}s$-*ro*- (cf. Griepentrog 1995: 219, 325).

[6] Numerous parallel examples can be found in Schaffner (2001); cf. the discussion of PIE collectives and their accent, and of the emergence of the pattern W(*é*)-*o*- : W(ø)-*á*-h_2, leading to Vernerian alternations in Germanic (pp. 106-113). The showcase example in Germanic is the 'wheel' word *x^wex^wla- ~ *$x^we\gamma^wla$- (pp. 221-223).

cow' (thus in Mallory–Adams 1997: 135, where, strangely enough, the loss of **s* is obviously assumed but not discussed). The connection of *usrá-* with the root **h₂au̯s-*/**h₂us-* 'dawn' and Skt. *uṣár-* 'morning (light)' – on which see below – may be folk-etymological within Old Indic. At any rate, if the animal name originated as a colour term meaning 'red like the dawn', it is disputable how aptly it could have been applied to the European aurochs, the bulls of which were spectacularly black (the cows and the calves were admittedly reddish-brown, but note the consistently masculine gender of the words for 'aurochs' in Germanic and in other Indo-European languages). The variable stem class of the Germanic word complicates the comparison.

3. The Compass Conspiracy and the word for 'east'

The next example involves the Germanic word for 'east', but in order to explain its relevance to the question of Vernerian **-zr-*, an brief discussion of the Germanic words for the four cardinal directions is necessary. All of them, i.e. **nurþra-* 'north', **sunþra-* 'south', **austra-* 'east' and **westra-* 'west' have truncated by-forms without the **-r-* (**nurþa-*, **sunþa-*, **austa-*, **westa-*); these are likely to be secondary (and therefore younger) if, as *communis opinio* has it, at least some of the longer ones contain **-tero-*, the PIE adjectival suffix of contrast. Its usual development in Germanic is **-þera-* or **-þara-* (~ **-tVra-* after an obstruent),[7] but in the names of the cardinal points the medial vowel seems to have been syncopated very early. Already in Proto-Germanic, the words were morphologically resegmented as **nurþ-ra-*, **sunþ-ra-*, **aust-ra-*, **west-ra-*, hence the shorter by-forms and new derivatives based on them. The symmetry of the system, resulting from the convergent co-evolution of a closed set of semantically related words (which I shall refer to as "the Compass Conspiracy", cf. (2) below), obscures their etymology. The suffix **-tero-* may indeed be contained in **sun-þra-* if it comes from **s[h₂]u̯ń̥-tero-* (or perhaps **sh₂ún-tero-*) 'facing the sun'.[8] The 'north' word is more difficult, but if its interpretation as **(h₁)n̥ŕ-tero-* (cf. Gr. *νέρτερος, ἐνέρτερος* 'lower, pertaining to the nether world') is correct, the suffix makes another appearance here. The voiceless **þ* in both words indicates pre-Germanic root accent despite the morphological zero grade (apparently as a result of an early accent shift emphasising the antonymy of opposite directions).

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[7] The possible lowering of unstressed **e* to **a* before **r* in Proto-Germanic is discussed by Ringe (2006: 125); at any rate the raising of unstressed **e* to **i* did not occur in this position.

[8] I will use (round parentheses) to enclose optional or tentatively reconstructed segments, and [square brackets] to enclose segments underlyingly present but not realised phonetically.

The words for ‘east’ and ‘west’ are different, however. There are reasons to believe that they are connected with the Proto-Indo-European words for, respectively, ‘morning ~ sunrise’ and ‘evening ~ sunset’,[9] neither of which originally involved *-*tero*-. *-*westra*- can be compared with the puzzlingly varied etymon of Lat. *vesper*, *vespera*, Gk. ἕσπερος, ἑσπέρα, OCS *večerъ*, Lith. *vãkaras*, MW *ucher*, all meaning ‘evening’ and sometimes also ‘evening$_{adj}$, western’. For their common ancestor, the cover notation *$u̯eXero$- could be used. The *-*ero*- part is readily identifiable as another PIE suffix of contrast (the more productive *-*tero*- actually seems to be its extended version). *X stands for a medial sequence with extraordinarily diverse reflexes in different branches: *k, *ks and *sp (and whatever comes from them in the attested languages). It was equated by Hamp (1966) with the zero grade of the root *$k^{(w)}sep$- ‘night, darkness’, attested in Hittite, Greek and Indo-Iranian (Skt. *kṣap*- etc.). In post-Proto-Indo-European times, the aberrant medial cluster *-$k^{(w)}sp$- underwent more or less radical simplification in branch-specific ways, though the linear order of its elements was not disturbed. The ‘evening’ word is therefore reconstructible as, approximately, *$u̯é$-$k^{(w)}sp$-*ero*-.[10] Where does *-*westra*- fit in? PIE *-$k^{(w)}sp$- cannot yield Gmc. *-*st*- by any known phonological development. However, if the ancestor of Germanic simplified the cluster to *-*sp*- like Latin and Greek (and possibly Celtic), there would have been a pre-Germanic form like *$u̯éspero$- occurring alongside *$sún$-*tero*- and *$núr$-*tero*-. Its phonological deformation and morphological reanalysis as *$u̯és$-*tero*- is understandable in the light of the observation made above: the words for the cardinal points tend to develop in parallel.

After this prelude the fourth cardinal point can be tackled. The usual reconstruction of its pre-Germanic form is *aus-*tero*-, with the contrastive suffix added to *aus- < PIE *$h_2au̯s$-, the root of Lat. *aurōra*, Gk. (Hom.) *ἠώς* and Skt. *uṣás*- ‘dawn, morning light, name of the dawn-goddess’ (an animate *s*-stem: nom. *$h_2áu̯s$-*ōs*, weak stem *h_2us-*és*- or *h_2us-*s*-´ > *h_2us-´). However, *$h_2au̯s$-*tero*- has no secure attestation outside Germanic with the meaning ‘dawn, morning’ or ‘east’;[11] instead, we have what appears to be *$h_2au̯s$(V)*s*- further extended

[9] A natural and cross-linguistically common equivalence.

[10] The initial *$u̯é$- is an obscure compositional element, apparently reduced beyond secure identification. Hamp suggests a connection with *$u̯eik/g$- ‘turn, change, unit of time’, which is just a guess, albeit an ingenious one. However, MW *ucher*, Arm. *gišer* ‘night’ and OCS *vьčera* ‘yesterday’ do not require a PIE *Vi diphthong or *i in the first element (Schrijver 1995: 159-160, Beekes 2004); *$u̯é$-, whatever its source and original meaning, accounts for all the attested forms.

[11] Av. *ušas-tara*- ‘eastern’ is based on the *s*-stem *$h_2(a)us$-*os*- (perhaps directly on the loc. *h_2us-*és(i)* ‘at dawn’). It is not quite clear if Lat. *auster* ‘south wind’ belongs here.

with *-(V)*r*-, as in Gk. *ἦρι* 'early' < **ἤερι* < loc. **h₂au̯[s]ser-i* 'in the morning'.[12] A thematic derivative can be seen in Skt. *usrá-* 'daybreak' and Balto-Slavic **aušra-* (OCS *utro* 'morning, tomorrow', *za-u(s)tra* 'in the morning', Lith. *aušrà* 'dawn, daybreak') < **h₂au̯[s]-sr-o-m*.[13] The same derivative occurs in Germanic (**h₂áu̯srom* > **áu̯sra-* > **austra-*) with the meaning '(the feast of) Easter' (OE *ēaster* ~ *ēastor*, pl. *ēastro*) alongside a corresponding nasal stem (OE *ēastre*, pl. *ēastran*). Though 'east' and 'Easter' are often treated as independent derivatives (with PIE **-tero-* and **-ro-*, respectively), there is no good reason for separating them in this way. Meanings such as 'morning', 'east', 'festival of the rising sun' and 'Dawn (as a theonym)' may easily have sprung from a common source. The fact that the OE word for 'east' is *ēast* rather than *ēaster* (but cf. e.g. OIc. *austr*, gen. *austrs* and Lat.-Goth. *Austrogoti*) is due not to separate origin but to semantic specialisation, as a result of which **áu̯sra-* > **austra-* was drawn into the Compass Conspiracy. Its **-tra-* was identified with the suffix **-tero-* > **-tera-* found in the words for 'north', 'south' and (secondarily) 'west'; it is even possible that **austra-* (reanalysed as **aus-tra-*) inspired the syncope that affected **-tera-* in the other three words. As soon as all the Conspiracy members were recast to fit the same morphological pattern, the final steps became possible: **aus-tra-* was now reanalysed as **aust-ra-*, with **aust-* taken to be an indivisible morphological unit, and **aust-a-* arose through back-formation. Thus both 'Easter' and 'east' can serve as examples of **-sr-* > **-str-* in words not affected by Verner's Law. The proposed developments are summarised in (2):

(2) The Compass Conspiracy

virtual PIE	pre-Gmc.	"early" PGmc.	"late" PGmc.
**(h₁)n̥ŕ-tero-*	**núr-tero-*	**nur-þera-*	**nurþ-(r)a-*
**s[h₂]u̯ń̥-tero-*	**sún-tero-*	**sun-þera-*	**sunþ-(r)a-*
**u̯é-k$^{(w)}$sp-ero-*	**u̯ésp-ero-*	**wes-tera-*	**west-(r)a-*
**h₂áu̯[s]s-r-o-*	**áu̯s-ro-*	**aus-(t)ra-*	**aust-(r)a-*

[12] The morphological geminate was simplified like other occurrences of PIE **-s-s-*, cf. **h₁es-si* > **h₁esi* 'thou art' (Skt. *ási*).

[13] With further suffixation, OPol. *justrzenka* 'morning light, the morning star'.

It is at this point that another potential example of the Vernerian treatment of medial *-_sr_- can finally be introduced: I suggest that the form *_áu̯s-ro-_ developed a variant with *-_zr_-, preserved in the compound *_h$_2$au̯sro-_ + *_u̯ónd^{h}elo-s_ > *_auzra-wanðilaz_ 'dawn-traveller (~ planet)' > *_aurawanðilaz_. Apart from its use as a proper name (whose astronomical connotations are at best extremely vague, as in the case of OIc. _Aurvandill_) the meaning 'Venus, the morning star' is supported by the celebrated Old English reference to _Ēarendel_ in _Crist_ A 104. The present analysis does not require the postulation of a special compositional form of the word for 'east, dawn' (PGmc. *_auza/i-_ or the like) or an archaic "Caland" variant with *-_i_- replacing the *-_ro_- extension. One and the same form *_h$_2$au̯sro-_ accounts for Germanic *_austra-_ and *_auza-_ equally well. The difference results from the fact that the accent in the endocentric compound in question was originally placed on the agent noun used as the deuterotheme, enabling Verner's Law to affect the first member. As the syllable preceding *-_zr_- was already heavy, the loss of *_z_ did not cause any compensatory lengthening.

4. Two more examples: 'gander' and 'yesterday'

The Germanic 'gander' word *_ɣanran-_ (> OE _ganra_, etc.), is generally regarded as related to the root noun *_ɣans-_ 'goose', but the relationship is by no means clear. The -_r_- cannot represent a rhotacised Vernerian *_z_, which would have become assimilated to the preceding nasal; this rules out "*_ɣanz-an-_". On the other hand, the IE 'goose' word, *_ĝ^{h}āns_/*_ĝ^{h}ans-_ occurs consistently with a final sibilant, also when extended with the suffix *-_er_-, as in Lat. _ānser_, -_is_ 'goose' < pre-Lat. *_hanser-_ (a consonantal stem, cf. Sihler 1995: 158-159) and Slavic *_gǫserъ_.[14] There is no reason to treat the *-_s_- as a suffix rather than an integral part of the root. But if it is indeed the latter, *_ɣanran-_ should go back to a preform with *-_s_-. Since *_ĝ^{h}áns-r-_ would have yielded *_ɣanstr-_ (cf. *_þemstra-_), we are left with *_ĝ^{h}ans-(e)r-_ + -_V́n_- > *_ɣanzr-an-_ > *_ɣanran-_ as the only etymological solution which makes it possible to treat *_ɣanran-_, _ānser_ and *_gǫserъ_ as strictly cognate while at the same time explaining the curious absence of *-_s_- from the Germanic word.[15] As in the previous example, the syllable structure would presumably have blocked compensatory lengthening upon the loss of Vernerian *_z_, but is also possible that we are dealing with common-or-garden cluster simplification here.

My final example involves the Germanic reflexes of the PIE term for 'yesterday', represented on the one hand by Goth. _gistra-dagis_ 'tomorrow', OE _ġiestron_, _ġeostran-dæġ_, OHG

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[14] Thematised; possibly a prehistoric borrowing from a centum-type language.

[15] The transformation of a consonantal stem with a final liquid into a Germanic nasal stem (i.e., a weak noun) is of course commonplace.

gestre, *gestaron*, etc. 'yesterday', and on the other by OIc. *í gær* (~ *gjár*), OSw. *ī gār* 'yesterday' (but also attested with the meaning 'tomorrow' once, in *Hamðismál* 30.6).[16] Etymological dictionaries treat them, respectively, as a *-*t(e)ro-* derivative of PIE **ĝʰðies* (parallel to Lat. *hesternus* < **hes-tr-ino-*), and a reflex of the root noun (or its locative) underlying Gk. *χθές*, Skt. *hyás*, OIr. *(in) dé*, Alb. *dje*, Lat *heri* (cf. de Vries 1962: 157). This explanation does not really account for the long vowel of the Scandinavian forms, and while it does explain the vowel of OIc. *(í) gær* as due to the palatal umlaut or Proto-Norse **ā* (< **ē₁*) before a final *-ʀ < *-*z*, the variant *gjár* remains problematic.

The isolated status of *(í) gær* makes it difficult even to reconstruct the details of its morphological structure. It is, however, possible to interpret the word as the dative (~ locative) of a formally feminine ō-stem **ɣjērō*. If so, the **ē* may owe its length to compensatory lengthening, and **ɣjērō* itself may be etymologised as **ɣjezrō* < **ĝʰði̯es-ráh₂*, a form related to **ɣ[j]estra-* < **ĝʰði̯és-ro-* in the same way as Lat. *vesper*, Gk. *ἕσπερος* are related to *vespera*, *ἑσπέρα* (the latter representing a collective-like formation). Note that word-initial sequences *Ci̯V- were rare in PIE; I know of no other putative examples of PGmc. *C*jē*-. It is therefore possible that *æ* ~ *já* is the variable outcome of the unique occurrence of **jē* after an initial consonant. The East Scandinavian reflexes such as OSw. *ī gār* show nothing more unusual than the simplification of the initial cluster by yod-dropping, a change too common to require a special explanation.

According to the analysis advocated here, the two related but nevertheless distinct "word families" in Germanic turn out to be isolated remnants of one and the same nominal paradigm displaying Vernerian alternations, and as such deserve to be included among the data collected by Schaffner (2001).[17]

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[16] Lehmann (1986: 156) proposes to interpret the Proto-Germanic word as 'adjacent day' to explain the variation of meaning, but given the comparative data there's little doubt that 'yesterday' was the original meaning (still predominant in the historically documented Germanic languages) and the switch to 'tomorrow' resulted from a common type of semantic confusion which may well have taken place in post-PGmc. times, cf. also Hilmarsson (1991: 122) for parallel shifts in other languages.

[17] Curiously, Modern Frisian dialects show forms which seem to go back to OFris. **jers-*, as if from metathesised **ɣes(a)ra-* (Bremmer 2008: 40) < **ɣesera-*, with a vowel preserved or epenthesised between **s* and **r*. Note also the possible reflex of non-Vernerian **wes(e)r-*, similarly metathesised, in OFris. *wars*, *wērs* 'spring', also cited by Bremmer, cf. the relevant entry in Hofmann—Popkema (2008: 569). This word could be based on the dialectal IE locative **u̯és-er-i*.

5. Conclusion

Although the material presented above to illustrate the postulated change is not particularly rich, the examples in (3) can be listed as supportive evidence for **-sr-′* > **-zr-* > **-(:)r-* (with compensatory lengthening if and only if the preceding syllable is light):

(3) a. PIE **u̯és-r̥/*u̯és-n-* → pre-Gmc. **u̯es-r-ó-* > PGmc. **wezra-* (> **wēra-*) 'spring'

b. PIE **kes-ró-m* (or **kés-ro-m* : **kes-rá-h_2*) > PGmc. **xezra-* (> **xēra-*) 'hair'

c. PIE **(h_2)us-ró-s* > PGmc. **uzra-* (> **ūra-*) '(wild) bovine, aurochs' (?)

d. PIE **$h_2$áu̯s-r-o-* > pre-Gmc. **áu̯sro-* : **au̯sro-′* > PGmc. **austra-* : **auzra-* (> **aura-*) 'east'

e. PIE **ĝ^{h}ānṣ/*ĝ^{h}ans-* → pre-Gmc. **g^{h}ans-r-ón-* > PGmc. **ɣanzran-* (> **ɣanran-*) 'gander'

f. PIE **ĝ^{h}ð̯iés-* → pre-Gmc. **g^{h}i̯és-ro-* : **g^{h}i̯es-rá-h_2* > PGmc. **ɣ(j)estra-* : **ɣjezrō* (> **ɣjērō*) 'yesterday'

The examples probably outnumber those that could be paraded as secure evidence for **sr* > **str*, a change generally considered to be uncontroversial. Note that in (3d) and (3f) non-Vernerian forms with *t*-epenthesis alternate with Vernerian variants showing *z*-loss. The occurrence of such an alternation (predicted by the scenario postulated here) gives additional weight to what would otherwise constitute a rather slim amount of data. Thus reinforced, the evidence is sufficient for regarding the Vernerian treatment of medial **-sr-* in Germanic as a serious possibility.

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