Later 19th century: The Neogrammarians

- Group of young academics at Leipzig U. in 1870's
- Some of them make a splash with new discoveries and hypotheses about Indo-European, not altogether well received by their professors
- Also a generational conflict, but primarily a genuine scientific revolution in goals, methods and internal architecture of comparative and historical linguistics
- Map of linguistics (not only Indo-European) largely redrawn in about 20 years
- Karl Brugman(n), Hermann Paul, Hermann Osthoff, Karl Verner, August Leskien, Berthold Delbrück, Eduard Sievers

Later 19th century: The Neogrammarians

One flashpoint: the vowel system

Sanskrit		Greek	
i	~	i	
u	~	u	
a	~	e / a / o	
jajana			*gegona*
			‘I gave birth’

→ which is the original (or at least more archaic)?

Later 19th century: The Neogrammarians

Before 1870's (with few exceptions): Sanskrit is the more archaic, thus:

PIE a > Gk a, e, o

Brugmann & others: Greek is more archaic, thus:

PIE a, e, o > Skt a

→ entire Ablaut theory must be reformulated!

Later 19th century: The Neogrammarians

Ablaut: system of vowel alternations (*sing~sang~sung*)

Earlier analysis (e.g. Schleicher): **bʰr- ~ *bʰar- ~ *bʰār-*

Neogrammarians:

**bʰer-* > Gk *pʰero,* OE *beran* (*to bear*), La *fero* ’I carry’

**bʰor-* > Gk *pʰoreo* ’I keep carrying’, OE *bær* ’I carried’

**bʰēr-* > OE *bæron* ’they carried’

**bʰōr-* > Gk *pʰōr,* La *fūr* ’thief’

**bʰr̥-* > E *born,* G *geboren*

Later 19th century: The Neogrammarians

General insights:

- Language cannot be studied independently of speakers (as opp. to organic view)
  - interest in physiology (articulation) & psychology
  - no life cycle, "energy" etc., lang. not organism
  - phonetics becomes part of linguistics
    - Eduard Sievers (1876) *Grundzüge der Lautphysiologie* (Fundamentals of Speech Physiology) as introduction to Indo-European linguistics

Later 19th century: The Neogrammarians

General insights:

- Uniformitarianism (as opp. to catastrophism)
  - fundamental principles of how languages work and change are constant
  - no radically different stages in history of lg separated by cataclysmic events
    - ↔ Schleicher: no sound change or analogical change in prehistory of languages)
  - first in geology, then spreads into all historical sciences (cf. variety of physical landscape caused by few general mechanisms)

Later 19th century: The Neogrammarians

But what are the general principles of language change?

E.g. *Sound changes have no exceptions*

→ hotly debated debated by many, counterexamples are not difficult to find; but what was the point?

Later 19th century: The Neogrammarians

Partly a matter of methodology: apparent exceptions probably have some other explanation, e.g.:

- borrowing: *shell, shoe, shake* vs. *sky, skin*
- dialect mixture: *read, meat* /i:/ vs. *great, break* /ei/
- interference of morphology:

  what, swan, want /ɒ/ vs. *swam* /æ/

Later 19th century: The Neogrammarians

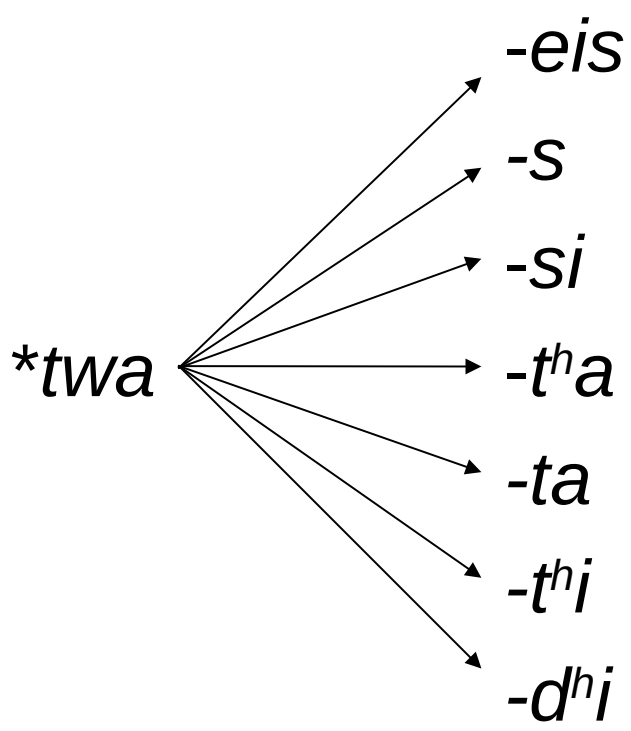
Partly a matter of principle, of the general architecture of language: sound changes are not subject to factors outside phonology (grammatical category, meaning, function)

→ very important consequences for historical linguistics!

But what does this mean exactly?

Later 19th century: The Neogrammarians

Cf. Schleicher's derivation of the 2Sing affixes:



The problem is not that the phonetic distance is great in some of these cases – the problem is that the relation is phonetically *not systematic:* there is no *tw ~ s* correspondence etc. elsewhere!

For linguists before 1870's morphology overrode phonology – Neogrammarians turn this around!

Later 19th century: The Neogrammarians

If there is no phonological correspondence,
there is no correspondence at all!

Other ex.: Future in Latin and Greek

La *time-**b**-o* ~ Gr *time-**s**-o* ('I'll fear/respect')

→ does not point to future marker in Proto-IE
bec. no *b* ~ *s* correspondence elsewhere!

Later 19th century: The Neogrammarians

If there is no phonological correspondence,
there is no correspondence at all!

By contrast: Comparative in Hu and Finnish

*úja-**bb*** ~ *uude-**mpi***

cf. *ha**b*** ~ *ku**mp**oa, lú**d*** ~ *li**nt**u, ha**d*** ~ *ku**nt**a,*
*du**g*** ~ *tu**nk**ea...*

→ comparative affix in Proto-Finno-Ugric ✓

Later 19th century: The Neogrammarians

Phonological analysis precedes morphological analysis.

One of the cornerstones of comparative and historical linguistics to this day!

Not only because of this, but Neogrammarians rewrote practically all historical & comparative linguistics; great works, Paul (1880) *Prinzipien der Sprachgeschichte,* Brugmann (1886–93) *Grundriss der vergleich. Gramm.*

Later 19th century: other issues

Dialect geography and the wave theory

- Georg Wenker (contemporary of Neogr’s)
- collected data on Old High German C Shift

Old High German Consonant Shift (partial)

Gmc	>	OHG	ex.: English ~ MoGerm	
p		pf/ff	*pepper*	*Pfeffer*
t		ts/ss	*ten*	*zehn*
k		x (*ch*)	*break*	*brechen*
θ		d	*three*	*drei*

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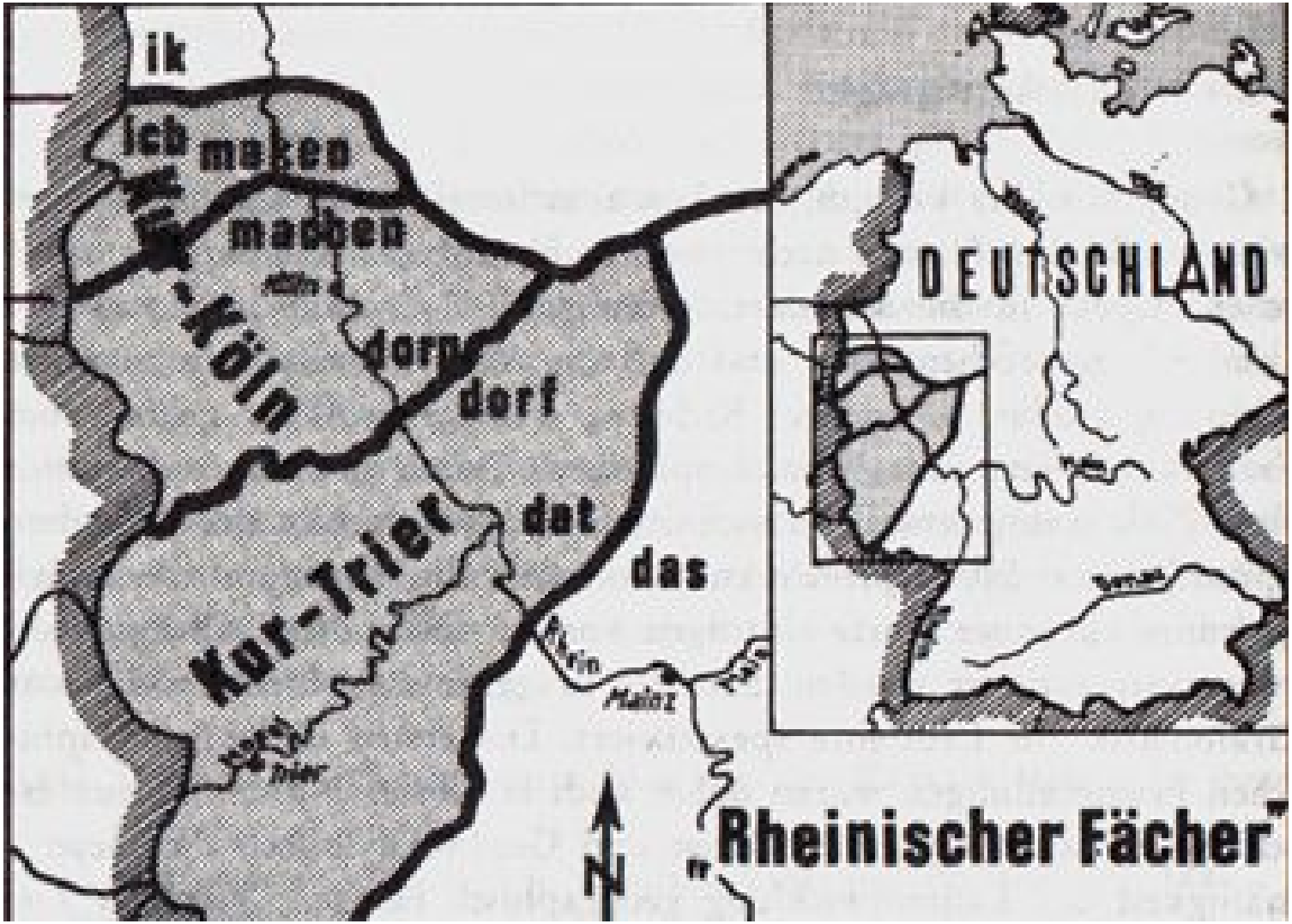
1. In Wint'r flieg'n de düren Blätt'r in d' Luft rüm.
2. 's hiert glei uff z' schnei'n, noch'n ward's Wett'r widd'r bess'r.
3. Leck Kalln in Uffn, dass d' Milch ball kucht.
4. Der (der Pronom, der Artikel) gute olle Mann is mit'n Pfare durchs Eis g'broch'n un ins kalte (auf Kohle) Wass'r g'falln. 5. A' is vor vier odd'r sechs Woch'n g'storwn.
6. 's Feier war z' stark, d' Kuch'n sinn jo ungne ganz schwarz g'brannt.
7. A' isst d' Eier (auf Eaier) imm'r ohne Solz (auf Salz) un Pfeff'r.
8. D' Beene thu mir sihr weih, ich gloowe, ich howwe s' durchg'loff'n.
9. Ich bin bei der (der Pronom, der Artikel) Fro gewast un howwe 's'r g'sat, un se saite, se wallt's ach ihrer ~~Doch~~ Tocht'r sog. 10. Ich will's ach nich mie widd'r thu!
11. Ich schlog'ch glei mitn Kuchlaffl im d' Uhr'n, du Offe!
12. Wu giehst'n hinn, sull'n mir mitt'r gieh? 13. 's sinn schlachte Zeit'n!
14. Mei lieweb Kind, bleib hie ungne stiehe, d' bies'n Gänse beiß'n dich tud.
15. D' host heite am meechst'n g'larnt un bist art'g g'wast, d' darfst ihr heem gieh al ~~s~~ d' Annern. 16. D' bist na nich gruß g'nung, amm' Floshe Wein aus z'trinke, d' musst irscht noch a Bißch'n wachse un gräss'r ~~warn~~.
17. Gieh, sei so gut un sags Dein'r Schwest'r, se solle de Klaedr vor aure (mit gr, auf Eure) Mutt'r fert'g nie'n un mit d'r Berschte reene moche. 18 Ja, wenn d'u g'kannt hättst!

Later 19th century: other issues

Dialect geography and the wave theory

- Georg Wenker (contemporary of Neogr's)
- collected data on Old High German C Shift
- result: south to north gradually fewer sounds affected by shift → *Rhenish fan* / *Rheinischer Fächer* (images from www.uni-marburg.de)

The Rhenish fan



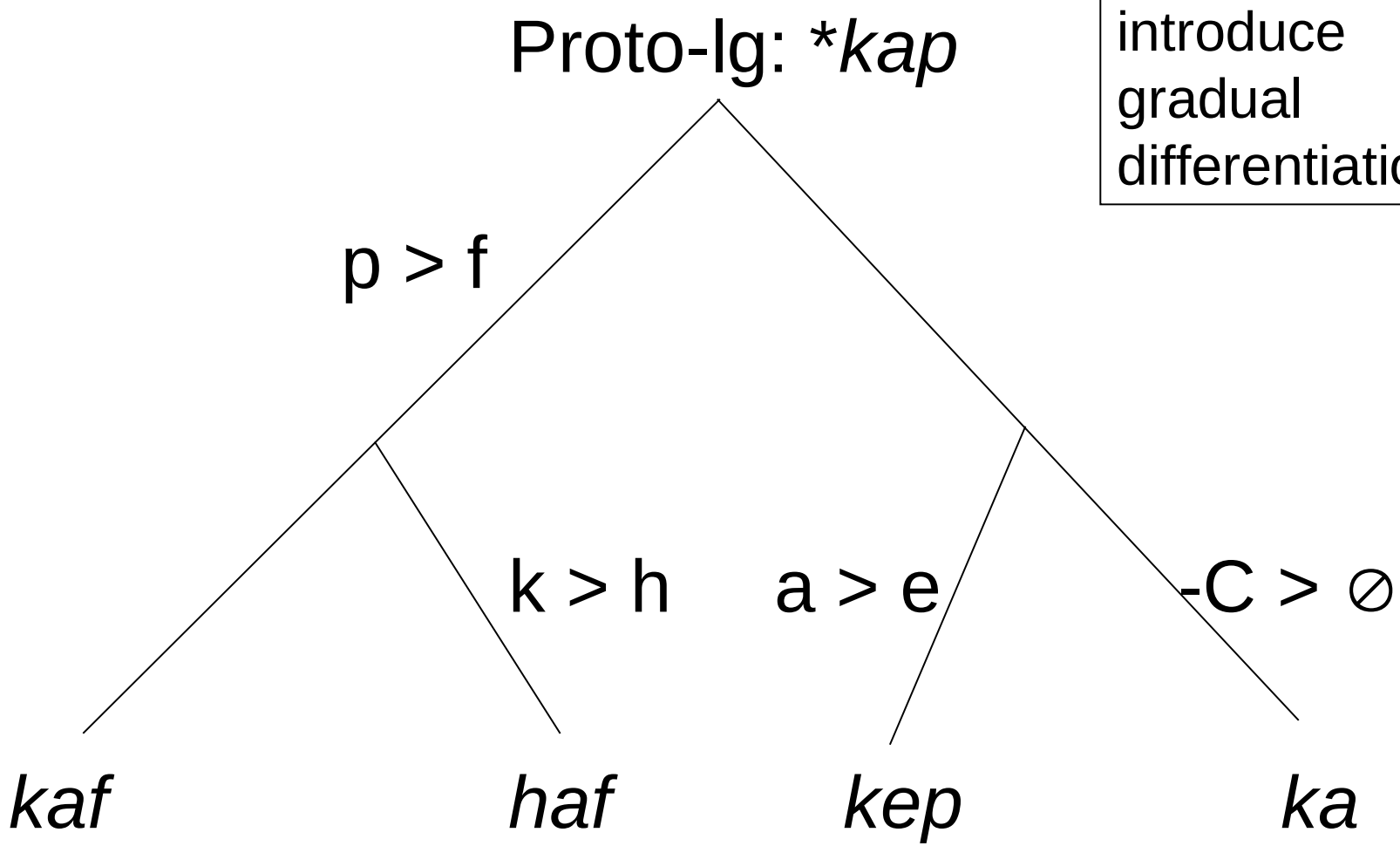
Later 19th century: other issues

Dialect geography and the wave theory

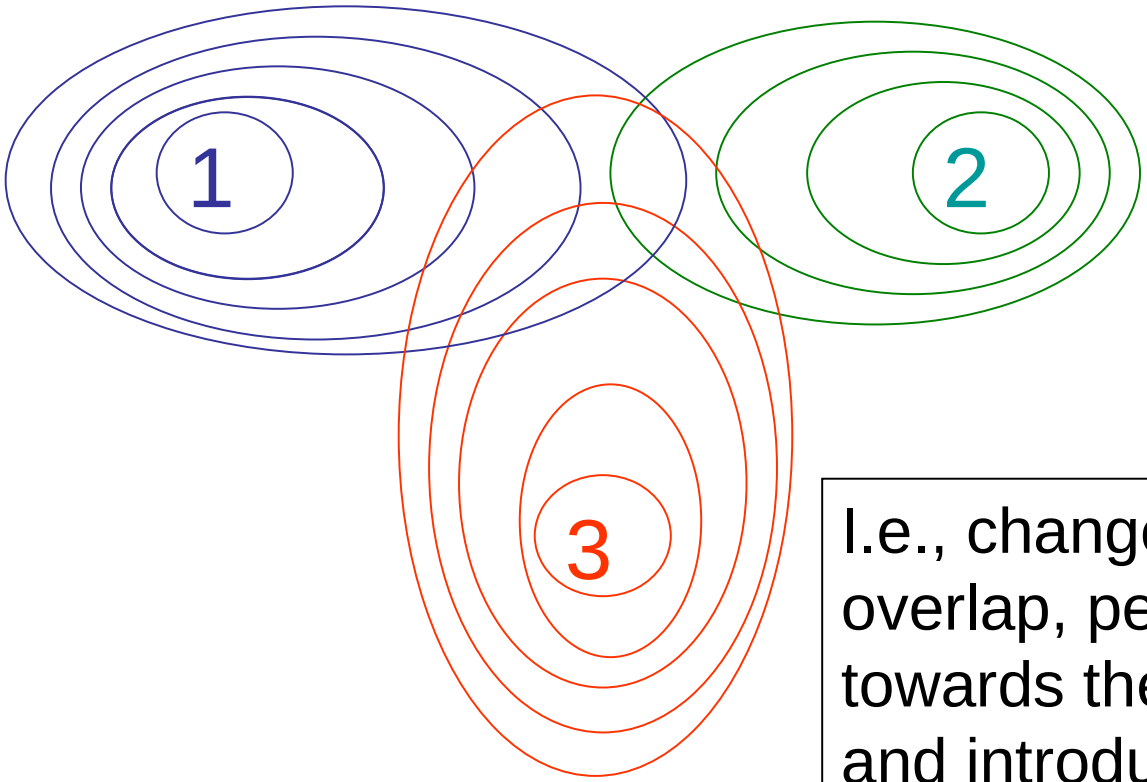
- Georg Wenker (contemporary of Neogr's)
- collected data on Old High German C Shift
- result: south to north gradually fewer sounds affected by shift → *Rhenish fan* / *Rheinischer Fächer*
- conclusion: sound changes spread in time and space like waves
- which is a challenge to the family tree model

Family tree model of change

I.e., the changes introduce gradual differentiation



The spread of change (wave theory)



I.e., changes can overlap, peter out towards the peripheries, and introduce similarities in addition to differences