ON LITHUANIAN o : INDO-EUROPEAN *ō

VGBS (p. 41) adduces, with a certain amount of discomfort, Lith. vōkas as cognate to Slavic vēko. Of course the Lith. o points to Baltic *ā, and on the Indo-European plan, this goes poorly with Slavic *ē. In fact, Albanian vetullē f. ‘eyebrow, -lid’ < *uōklā (>) *uōi(V)lā1 fits perfectly with vēko, showing *ō : *ē in ablaut. Naturally, Lith. uo might be expected.

It must then be that the Lith. o < *ā presents a neo-lengthening from *a, which in turn is best here regarded as the outcome of *e, i.e. a vocalized laryngeal. Thus we have *wākas or *vaHkas ← *uakas or *uHkas2.

Slavic vēko then is *uēlk-o-m, Albanian shows *ol, and Baltic *uţk-.

Another form troubled Stang (VGBS 42), *da- ‘give’. Again, we must have a lengthening of a < *e, and this time it seems plausibly to be Winter’s lengthening, i.e. from the reduplicated forms, before *d (media). This would give a relative chronology for vowel quality, since Albanian shared with Balto-Slavic in Winter’s lengthening.

1 For the treatment of post-tonic velar + l in Albanian see E. P. H a m p, Studia Albanica 8(2), 1971, 155; AJP 75, 1954, 186-9.

2 J. E. R a s m u s s e n, Some additional examples of PIE *-ēh₂- and *-h₂ē-, - Copenhagen Working Papers in Linguistics, I, 1990/91, 87-100, proposes *uāh₂k-a-h₂, but that would require Alb. vot-.