

On the Indo-European "Bare Stem" Accusative Personal Pronouns

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On the basis of research previously published by the author, this article explores the origin of the so-called "bare stem" enclitic accusative personal pronouns of Indo-European, especially the second person singular form in **te*. It is proposed that a zero grade first person singular stem in **m-* with an affixed objective marker in **e* served as the basis for a reanalysis of the second person singular stem in **te-* as zero-grade **t-* + affix **e*.

The personal pronouns of the early Indo-European dialects present numerous problems for the comparativist. Among the most intriguing is the frequent observation that in the accusative case "the enclitic forms consisted of the full grade of the bare stem, **me, *te ...*" (cf. Gk. *me, sé*,¹ OIr. *-m, -t*; OCS *mę, tę* (probably with the later addition of "the common ending [**-m*] of the accusative singular" [Petersen 1930:169]); Hitt. acc.-dat. *-mu* (with *u* for *a* as a result of analogical influence from 2nd sg. *-du*, cf. Schmidt 1978: 50), *-ta* (Sihler 1995:378, cf. also Burrow 1973:265).² Burrow (1973:265)

¹Gk. *sé* is often derived from **twe* (cf. Szemerényi 1996:213); indeed, some scholars derive **te-* generally "out of **twe* by sporadic loss of *-w-* after initial *t-*" (Burrow 1973:264). However, as Sihler (1995:379) points out, "in G the evidence is mixed and ambiguous—there are many instances of Hom. *hé, he(é)* without *w-*, and there is the possibility that the erymon of Att.-Ion. *sé, *twe*, is not the inherited **twe* but a replacement of **te*. (Dor. *té* is ambiguous; and though *twe* is actually attested, that does not prove that no **te* existed as well).... Note that L *tē* and *sē* have not necessarily lost **-w-*, as is commonly stated; they probably continue the enclitic pronouns, which never had it." Here, as in Shields (1986), I follow Brugmann (1911:383) in positing **te-* as the stem of the second person (singular) personal pronoun, which served as the basis of the second person singular accusative enclitic in the proto-language.

²The close etymological connection between the tonic and enclitic (atonic) pronominal forms is emphasized by Sihler (1995:371). He further points out that the systematic differentiation of these forms is "much subject to leveling

maintains that such pronominal forms attesting the accusative function of the bare stem "are more ancient than the accented forms which have evolved a full case system.... The growth of a full system of inflection for the accented personal pronoun has abolished ... [parallel tonic forms], but the older undeveloped system is preserved in the enclitics" (cf. Schmidt 1978:49). I, too, feel that these pronominal forms reveal a great deal about the morpho-syntactic structure of early Indo-European, and in this brief paper I wish to explore their origin as a means of providing insight into earlier stages of the proto-language. More specifically, I shall focus on the origin of the second person singular accusative enclitic in **te* in light of some recently published research of mine on the nature of the early Indo-European system of personal pronouns (Shields 1986, 1993, 1994, 1998a), demonstrating here that this research provides a natural etymological explanation of this problematic item.

I shall begin by briefly outlining the relevant assumptions which underlie my analysis and by referring the interested reader to the publications in which they appear for fuller theoretical justification. First of all, I ascribe to early Indo-European a personal pronoun system of the type which Forschheimer (1953:53-54) identifies as IIIA, characterized by "a lexical plural in the first person and no plural in the other persons and in nouns." In such a type, "only the first person distinguishes a form for one and a form for a group of which that one is a part 'I' and 'we' ... are ... two independent lexical entities" (Forschheimer 1953:65-66). In short, I reconstruct the following original roots for this paradigm:

	Singular	Plural (Non-Singular)
1st person	<i>*e-</i>	<i>*we-</i>
2nd person	<i>*te-</i>	
3rd person	(Demonstratives were used in this capacity, cf. Brugmann 1904:408, Beekes 1995:207.) ³	

and contamination" in the dialects. Thus, the stem **me-* is attested in Gothic tonic *mi-k* (= particle) and the stem **te-* in the Gothic tonic *þuk*, "the latter for **þik* from **teg*, cf. OHG *dih*" (Szemerényi 1996:213). "Indo-Iranian, OCS, and Hittite best attest the enclitic/tonic distinction" (Sihler 1995:371).

³On the subsequent development of a second person plural (non-singular) pronoun, resulting in what Forschheimer (1953:75) calls a type IIIC system, see Shields (1986:19-20, 1998a).

In my opinion, various stem-alternates attested in the dialects (e.g., 1 sg. oblique **me-*: acc. encl. Gk. *me*, Skt. *mā*, OCS *me*) "arose from analogical reformulations of the basic members of this paradigm and suffixed particles and/or inflectional markers" (Shields 1998a:46). It was the appearance of such alternates which resulted in the classic pattern whereby "the stem for the nominative is different from the stem for the oblique forms" (Sihler 1995:370). My reconstruction of the early Indo-European personal pronoun system is, of course, consonant with my broader acceptance of the view of Indo-European morphology which has come to be called "the new image" (Adrados 1992:1). The central thesis of this approach is simply that the highly elaborate system of inflection attested in dialects like Greek and Sanskrit and many of the grammatical categories associated with that system, "in which an earlier generation saw prototypes of exemplary Indo-European grammatical structure ..., is nothing but a recent common development of this subgroup of languages" (Polomé 1982:53). Thus, from the perspective of "the new image," the inflectional categories of number and case are much more primitively developed in Indo-European than assumed by traditional Brugmannian reconstruction. Adrados (1985:31) argues at length that "ohne Zweifel gab es im PIE keinen Plural," while Lehmann (1974:201-202) similarly endorses "the late development of the number system" (cf. also Lehmann 1993:174-175). The bifurcation of the recent non-singular category into inflectionally distinct dual and plural is even still later (cf. Schmalstieg 1974:192, Adrados 1987:7). In regard to case inflections, Lehmann (1993:154) asserts: "[W]e may state that the evidence in the Anatolian languages supported by that in dialects like Germanic ... indicates that even for a late stage of Proto-Indo-European we cannot assume the set of inflections for eight cases ... that have traditionally been posited on the basis of Sanskrit." I myself have argued extensively (e.g., Shields 1982) that early Indo-European manifested two case categories—a nominative in * \emptyset and a general objective in **N* (= *m* or *n*)—which were gradually augmented through the grammaticalization of a number of deictic particles which came to mark various aspects of the objective function (cf. Markey 1979:65). In Shields (1994), I point out that some deictic particles were also affixed to pronominal forms, not as a means

of expressing case, but as a means of distinguishing emphatic and non-emphatic forms of the same pronoun (e.g., **g(h)e/o* [1 sg. **e-g(h)-*: Lat. *eg-o*, Gk. *eg-ō*]). Those deictics which marked the emphatic possessed 'here and now' deixis, at least at the point in time when they performed this discourse function.

Now in Shields (1986:14-15), I explain in some detail the origin of the (enclitic) first person singular accusative personal pronoun traditionally reconstructed as **me*. In my opinion, the original objective first person singular pronoun was **e-N*, evident in the accusative traditionally reconstructed as **eme* (i.e., **em-e*, cf. Gk. *emé*, Armen. *im* < **em-e-g(h)e*, Hitt. acc.-dat.-loc. *amuk* < **em-e-g(h)e*, with *u* on analogy with *uk* and *tuk* [Kronasser 1956:14]). "The final **-e* of **eme* represents an element which in later Indo-European generally came to assume the oblique function. The suffix **-e* is seen in locative formations like OCS *kamen-e* 'stone' (sg.), Lith. *rañkoj-e* 'hand' (sg.), and Lith. *rañkos-e* 'hands' (pl.), and in Sanskrit dative singular forms like *vñkay-a* 'wolf'" (1986:15). It also probably occurs in contamination with the traditionally reconstructed locative desience **-i* in the athematic dative singular ending **-ei* (cf., e.g., Skt. *-e*, Lat. *-ī*). Of course, the original unity of the Indo-European dative and locative cases is widely assumed today, even by more traditionally oriented scholars like Beekes (1995:173). The occurrence of **-e* in the pronominal accusative may, at first sight, seem strange until one considers the probability that the dative-locative itself was originally a function of the objective case and that pronominal declension is well known for its preservation of archaism. It is significant that the marker **-i*, so closely associated with the dative-locative category (cf., e.g., loc. sg. Skt. *-i*, Gk. *-i*, Lat. *-e*), "is likewise found with accusative (/dative/genitive) function in enclitic personal pronouns, e.g., **me/oi*: Skt. *me*, Gk. *moi*, Lith. *mi*, cf. ... [Szemerényi 1996:218]). Indeed, Schmalstieg (1980: 70-71) gives 'a few examples where the etymological **-y* has been retained in some forms which we term accusative,' e.g., 'in Old Irish the accusative singular of *ben* 'woman' in the oldest texts is *bein*, but according to Thurneysen, 1946, 184, from the time of the Würzburg glosses on the dative form *mnaí* is used for the accusative. It is usually stated that the accusative singular form *mnaí* is formed by analogy with the dative singular ..., but this does not seem to be a necessary assumption.' Thus, as I point out in Shields 1982:49, it is reasonable to assert 'that the

competition between **-N* and **-i* [and apparently **-e*] was not completely limited to the [non-accusative] oblique cases" (1986:15). After **-N* and **-e* were contaminated in the form **eme*, **e-m-e* was reanalyzed as **em-e*, with **-e* alone coming to assume objective case function. The new stem in **em-* was then subject to reduction to **m-* under conditions of weak stress, cf. Szemerényi (1980:199), yielding enclitic **m-e* as the resulting inflected form. Of course, **me* itself looked very much like a stem without ending, an interpretation made more likely in still later stages of the language as **-e* came to be specialized largely outside the accusative. On the basis of this newly emerged stem in **me-*, other case forms were subsequently derived, e.g., gen. **mene*. OCS *mene*, Avest. *mana*.⁴

As far as the second person (singular) stem in **te-* is concerned, I ascribe in Shields (1986:17) its accusative value to the functional specialization of variant nominative stem-formations "as the number of case distinctions increased within the paradigm of the second person pronoun." Such stem-alternates largely resulted from the reanalysis of structures containing the pronominal element **te-* and an emphatic particle, especially **u* or **i*, e.g., **te-i-*: nom. Osc. *tii-um*, cf. Schmidt (1978:114-115); Hitt. *zi-g*, cf. Shields (1987) (see Shields 1986:17-18 for details). However, I now believe that a much more direct and theoretically motivated analogical explanation is possible. Quite simply, after a reduced first person stem in **m-* was created with an affixed case marker in **-e*, the unexpanded stem **te* was similarly reanalyzed as a zero grade variant in **t-* with an affixed objective case suffix in **-e*.⁵ Vestiges of an earlier objective (> accusative) form in **te-N*, with which **t-e* competed, are still to be seen in OCS *tę* and OP *tien*, and perhaps in a monophthongized variant in **tē* (cf. Schmalstieg 1974), cf. Lat. acc. *tē-d* (= "some kind of particle" [Sihler 1995:379]). This proposal of mine is in some respects akin to one devised by Cowgill (1965:169-170, cf. Sihler 1995:378), in which the enclitic forms **me*, **te* were subject to the addition of "a morpheme *-wé/-mé*, which entailed zero grade of the ... pronoun stem: 2d sg. **t-wé* For the 1st

⁴I view *-ne* itself as a contamination of the "objective" suffixes **-N* and **-i* (Shields 1986:15).

⁵The general objective function of **te-* is clear from its appearance in a variety of oblique cases besides the accusative, e.g., dat. Lat. *tē-bi*, Umbr. *te-fe*, OCS *te-bě*, OP *te-bbei*; encl. acc.-dat.-gen. **te/o-i*: Skt. *te*, OPers. *taiy*, Dor. *toi*, Lith. *ti*.

singular one would expect **m-wé* or **m-mé*. Skt. *mám* suggests **mé*, which ... [Cowgill] take[s] to be a development of pre-IE **m-mé*." While my theory similarly posits zero grade pronouns in **m-* and **-t*, I obviously reject the ad hoc reconstruction of suffixes in **-wé* and **-mé* (cf. Szemerényi 1996:219n.4).⁶ I should note that although the third person is frequently cited as the starting point for analogical changes within paradigms (cf. Benveniste 1971), the importance of the first person has also been documented, cf. Rudzīte (1964:359), Puhvel (1970:631-632), Schmalstieg (1975), and Shields (1978).

One may legitimately expect the creation of objective pronouns in **m-e* and **t-e* to have motivated a similar reanalysis of the first person plural form **we* as **w-e*.⁷ Indeed, I suspect that this is exactly what happened since reflexes of the old objective **we-N* are not directly attested dialectally, although **we-* is widely found in the nominative, hypercharacterized by a variety of non-singular makers after that category emerged just prior to dialectal differentiation (e.g., **we-i*: Skt. *va-yám* [= particle **-om*]; **we-i-s*: Hitt. *weš*, Go. *weis*). However, another analogical development most certainly interfered with this process of integrating **w-e* into pronominal structure. In short, after the emergence of the inflectional non-singular, the enclitic "objective" form of the first person singular (**me*) "was extended by the non-singular marker **-s* to create a new analogical non-singular, i.e., **mes* ... [A new] zero-grade variant of this form, **ms*, which was assimilated to **ns*, cf. Szemerényi 1980:200, apparently began to gain currency as well. Eventually **mes*/**ns* came to displace the old objective **we-N*" (Shields 1986: 16) as well as the postulated objective in **w-e*. Of course, in regard to the first person plural, it must be acknowledged that "in einem Teil der idg. Sprachen stimmt der Stamm des Nom. mit dem Akk. überein," cf., e.g., Armen. nom. *mek*, acc. *mez*; OP nom. *mes*, acc. *mans*; Lith. nom. *mēs*, acc. *mūs* (Schmidt 1978:167). However, the regularity of the paradigms attested in these dialects would seem to be ascribable only to the individual

⁶In Shields (1986:18-19), I derive the stem alternate in **twe-* (cf., e.g., abl. Skt. *tvā-d*, Hitt. *twe-daz*) from a contamination of **te-* and **tu-*, the latter ultimately the result of the addition of the emphatic particle **u* to the stem in **te-* (see Shields 1986:18 for details).

⁷Although the reflexive stem **s(w)e-* may show some formal correspondence with personal pronouns, I have recently argued that it has a very different origin. See Shields (1998b) for details.

dialects themselves. Such a conclusion is strongly implied by the observation that in Old Hittite *anzaš* (< **ns-* + the acc. pl. suffix **-ns*) occurs only in the objective function (~ nom. *weš*) while in later Hittite it competes with *weš* in the nominative function. Although the existence of an original stem-alternation between **we-* (nom.) and **me/* η -* (obj.) is also implied by the fact that Tocharian shows a regularized paradigm in **we-*, not **me/* η -* as in the languages just noted (nom. A *was*, B *wes*, obl. A *was*, B *wes*), it is possible that the Tocharian oblique pronouns *was*, *wes* constitute a relic use of **we* (augmented by non-singular **-s*) in the objective which actually contributed to the nature of the process of the stem generalization here.

As Sihler (1995:369) observes, "The personal pronouns in the IE languages show a bewildering variety of forms. The similarities are obvious, but the precise paradigms of the parent speech are very difficult to reconstruct." Such difficulty is exacerbated when one attempts to build into one's reconstruction "temporal definition" (Adrados 1992:1), or linguistic stages. Yet, despite the inherent varietal and theoretical complexities, I offer these comments as a reasonable explanation of the origin and early evolution of the Indo-European personal pronoun paradigm.

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