

THE PRONOMINAL GENITIVE SINGULAR IN GERMANIC AND PROTO-INDO-EUROPEAN

1. It is generally accepted that the genitive singular of the *o*-stem nouns in Germanic contains the pronominal ending **-so*. Only Anton-
sen 1975: 19, as far as I know, derives the ending from PIE *-os/-es*.
This is in all respects improbable. That PIE had an ending *-es* is
improbable (1985, 176 ff.). Still, it could have arisen in Germanic, as it
did in Balto-Slavic and in Latin. But an ending with *-e* in the *o*-stems
is also improbable (1985, 184 ff.). The forms with *-e* found are probab-
ly of pronominal origin (thus also Rix 1976, 136). And for a genitive
ending in *-s* with the pronouns there is simply no evidence.

That this genitive originated from the pronouns is confirmed by two
facts. One is the *e*-vocalism, which we will discuss below. The other is
that pronominal origin explains why the *-s* has not become voiced
(according to Verner's Law): the pronouns in Germanic all have *-s*
(Oic. *þess*, OHG *des* etc.), which is easily explained by the fact that
the pronouns had a monosyllabic stem, so that, if the stress was on the
stem (and not on the ending), the stress immediately preceded the *-s*-
(Pgm. **þésa*). This gives a completely satisfactory explanation, so
that it is not necessary to adopt the suggestion that (only) nouns with
stem final stress (type Gr. *tomós*) are responsible for this form (e. g.
Bammesberger 1984, 16).

2. The object of this note is to consider the vocalism preceding the
ending. Traditionally one posits both Pgm. **-esa* and **-asa*, from PIE
**-eso*, **-oso* (Guchman 1963, 340, but only **þesa* on p. 319; Krahe 1965,
60 f.; Ramat 1981, 68).

The forms of the noun are:

Goth. <i>dagis</i>	ON	dags	OE	dæg-es	OS	dages	OHG	tages
	Run.	-as	old	-æs		-as		-as

The Runic forms all have *-as* (Krause 1971, 49 and 116). OE *-æs*,
whence later *-es*, derives from **-asa*. OHG *-as* is a late Bavarian
development (Braune-Mitzka 1967, 59 and 181; Nielsen 1981, 196,
against Anton-
sen 1975, 19. It is strange, therefore, that Ramat 1981,
gives OHG *-as* but not OE *-æs*.) OS *-as* also seems to be recent.

(Holthausen 1900, 95, especially because, as in OHG, also the dative *-e* has a variant *-a*; Nielsen l.c. puts the Old Saxon forms on the same level as the Old English ones. The matter is not essential here.)

Of course, it is improbable that PIE as well as Proto-Germanic had two ablaut forms side by side. It is therefore probable that one of the two is secondary. Two considerations decide the question. The first is that Old English and Old Norse (and Old Saxon) were adjacent areas. Thus it is probable that *-as* was an innovation that spread over the three areas. The fact that Gothic and Old High German did not have *-as*, makes it probable that this was an innovation. This agrees with the fact that Old English has more »exclusive (and active) parallels in common with Old Norse than with any of the other languages except Old Fris.« (Nielsen 1981, 258; this conclusion is also based on the fact considered here, but it is only one of a series of arguments). The other consideration is that it is easy to understand that *-es* was replaced by *-as* in an *a*-stem inflection, whereas the opposite would be very strange. (So first Szemerényi 1960, 161; Nielsen 1981, 196 and in earlier publications cited there).

So the conclusion is that the nominal *a*-stem ending of the genitive was PGM. *-ésa*. This was a »strange« form in this inflection, but that is explained by the fact that it was taken over from the pronouns. However, there it was also rather strange.

3. Typical for the Germanic pronominal inflection is the stem PIE **so*, **to-*:

Goth.	Oic.	OE	OS	OHG
<i>sa</i>	<i>sá</i>	<i>sē</i>	<i>sē, thē, thie</i>	<i>der</i>
<i>þana</i>	<i>þann</i>	<i>þone</i>	<i>thana, thena</i>	<i>den</i>
<i>þis</i>	<i>þess</i>	<i>þæs</i>	<i>thes</i>	<i>des</i>
<i>þamma</i>	<i>þeim</i>	<i>þæm</i>	<i>them (u)</i>	<i>demu</i>

It is evident that in German (OHG, OS) the *-e*-spread (Nielsen 1981, 197f. with lit.), so that there is no reason to posit **þemm-* beside **þamm-* (as does Guchman 1963, 319; Krahe 1965, 61; Ramat 1981, 90), nor for an acc. **þen* (-) (Ramat ib.).

In the genitive Old English points to *-o-* (OS once has *thas*) for which PIE **toso* has been invoked. However, these forms must be due to analogy, and the same will hold for OE *hwæs*, beside which there is *hwas* in Old Swedish and Old Danish (Nielsen 1981, 196).

This means that for Proto-Germanic one paradigm without variants must be reconstructed:

<i>*sa</i>	fem. <i>*sō</i>
<i>*þan-</i>	<i>*þōn</i>

*bésa	*bezós
*þazmē	*þeziði

That *þe-* is old is confirmed by the fact that the fem. genitive has this stem: Goth. *þizos* from **tes-ás* (Nielsen 1981, 198). This form was probably created on the basis of **téso* (cf. Beekes 198?, for the feminine: I suppose that the genitive had *-s-*, the other cases *-si-*).

4. Now that the variant reconstructions of the type **teso/tosó*, **tosmē/tesmē*, which concealed the problem, have been removed, the problem of the stem vowel becomes urgent. It is generally assumed that the genitive of **so*, **to-* was **tosó* (mostly **tosio* is assumed, with the ending *-osio* which was only nominal in my view: 1985, 185f., and below), i.e. that *o*-stem pronouns had **-oso*. However, if this were true, it is difficult to understand how *-eso* became generalized in Germanic.

Let us consider the pronouns found in Germanic and assume that the *o*-stems had *-oso* and the *e*-stems had *-eso*.

<i>so</i>	<i>h₁e</i>	<i>k^wos</i>	(<i>k^wis</i>)	Goth. <i>jains</i> etc.
<i>tom</i>	(<i>h₁</i>) <i>im</i>	<i>k^wom</i>	(<i>k^wim</i>)	<i>-om</i>
<i>tosó</i>	<i>h₁eso</i>	<i>k^woso</i>	(<i>k^weso</i>)	<i>-oso</i>

The pronoun for 'this' is not of Proto-Germanic date, and its oldest forms present the normal inflection of **so* : Run. *sa-si*, *þan-si*. So it is not relevant here. (Or if it is, it makes **to-* even stronger.)

Whatever form we postulate for Proto-Germanic, the preforms of Goth. *jains* were *o*-stems.

From the stem (Goth.) *hi-* we have no genitive (I would expect **hesa*, but think there never was a genitive: the forms we have are late and incidental creations).

In the forms given *-eso* is not preponderant. For the interrogative Germanic has only reflexes of the *o*-stem forms (except ON *hwess* etc., but these do not prove *i-/e*-stems). By far the most influential of the pronouns was **so* **to-*, which makes it almost impossible that a form **tosó* would have been changed into **tesó*.

There seems to be only one conclusion: the Germanic paradigm is the direct continuation of the PIE system, which was:

* <i>so</i>	fem. * <i>seh₂</i> ?
* <i>tom</i>	* <i>teh₂m</i> ?
* <i>téso</i>	* <i>tesó</i> ?
* <i>tosméh₁</i>	* <i>tosieh₂(e)i</i> ?

I have added the feminine, with much hesitation.

Thus, I have to withdraw my view (198?, § 1) that *e*-forms were characteristic of *i*- and not of *o*-stems (see, however, below). There is (e.g.) Goth. *þe* (and *hwe*) to show the stem form **te*- (unless this form must be interpreted as **t-eh₁*).

It is quite remarkable that the dative (here the PIE instrumental is given) had *o*-vocalism. There is no evidence for anything but *-o*- here. The fact that in both **téso* and **tosméh₁* the *-e*- is stressed and the unstressed vowel is *-o*- can hardly be accidental. (On the stress of *tosméh₁* see Meillet 1937, 330 ff.).

It may be added that in Indo-Iranian the *ablaut* *e/o* cannot be perceived in these forms (except in the interrogative/indefinite in Avestan, where there had been a strong levelling). Elsewhere *te*- was easily replaced by *to*-. Only in Germanic was the old situation preserved. (Note that also the coexistence of *s*- and *si*- forms in the feminine is extremely archaic, if this interpretation is correct, 198?, § 7). Understandably this has led to many reorganizations in the separate Germanic languages.

The consequences are not without importance: PIE had no pronominal ending *-oso*. The so-called *o*-stem pronouns had *-eso*. This also means that these *o*-stem pronouns did not have and cannot have had *-osio*; this form must be of nominal origin, as I supposed 1985: 185 f. Thus, the genitive singular endings of PIE were the following:

cons. stem nouns	<i>o</i> -stem nouns	pronouns
<i>-os</i>	<i>-os(io)</i>	<i>-eso</i>

5. The following suggestions can be made but not proved. One might assume that **so* **tom* at first had no genitive at all, and that **téso* is **h₁éso* to which a *t*- was added.

It is remarkable that in the Hittite pronominal system, which still defies all attempts at a normal PIE interpretation, we find: (e.g.) *kās*, *kun*, *kēl*, *ke(d)*-, i.e. *-e*- in the genitive etc.

For the interrogative a nominative **k^we* (198?, § 2), instead of **k^wis* can be reconstructed. It may have been possible to create nominatives in *-os* beside such forms in *-e*:

<i>k^we</i>	: <i>k^wo(s)</i>
<i>kē</i>	: <i>kos</i> (Hitt. <i>kās</i>)
<i>h₁e</i>	: <i>h₁os</i> (Hitt. <i>-as</i>)
<i>e/i</i> -	: <i>ios</i>

The essential point is that, to these *-os* forms other case forms could easily be added, but that in PIE the other case forms (those of *k^we*·) also belonged to *-os*, thus:

<i>k^wos</i>	(<i>k^wod</i>)	<i>k^we</i>	<i>k^wid</i>
(<i>k^wom</i>)	(<i>k^wod</i>)	<i>k^wim</i>	<i>k^wid</i>
—	—	<i>k^wéso</i>	<i>k^wéso</i>
—	—	<i>k^wosméi</i>	<i>k^we-i</i> (loc.)
			<i>k^we-h₁</i> (<i>k^w-eh₁?</i>)

Thus, it appears that PIE had only the forms in *-os*, beside those in *-e* or others (like **so*), but no other *o*-stem case forms. Only *-om* and ntr. *-od* may have been formed very early, perhaps in PIE.

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