

# LINGUISTICS

## ENGLISH *-s* vs. *-th* IN THE THIRD PERSON SINGULAR: HISTORICAL CONTRASTS AND CROSS LANGUAGE ARGUMENTATION

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The origin and subsequent dialectal diffusion of historically contrasted *-s* vs. *-th* desinences in the third singular present indicative of English verbs have long been matters of controversy. The conventional wisdom offered by the standard handbooks on these issues is now highly questionable, particularly so in light of recent advances in comparative studies, as well as sociolinguistics, linguistic typology and universals, and current theoretical perspectives.

Among the Germanic languages, English evolved rather remarkably as an increasingly deflecting language, and in so doing paralleled comparable massive contact languages such as Afrikaans and Yiddish. Nevertheless, the third singular present indicative (cf. *dare* subj. with  $\emptyset$  and *dares* indic. with *-s*) with its persistent *-s* marker is the only member of the paradigm that retained a person marker. Even without rampant deflection, this retention is both typologically rare and unnatural: the third singular present indicative is a highly animate slot in the verb paradigm and, though receptive to marking, is characteristically and typically the least marked, naturally unmarked, member of the paradigm. With respect to personal desinences universally, the 1st pers. sg. is perhaps the most stable and the 2nd pers. pl. perhaps the least stable, while the 3rd pers. sg. occupies some intermediary position on this stability/instability scale.

Historically, it is clear that  $-(V)th$  (e.g. *hath*, *goeth*) is a well pedigreed inheritance from Gmc.  $*-iþ$  (cf. Goth.  $-iþ$ ), in turn from an IE primary ending  $*-e-ti$ , that is,  $-t$  plus  $-i$  as a *hic et nunc* particle vs. the bare, so-called "secondary" ending  $-t$  which figured prominently in the IE injunctive as a nuclear source of IE personal desinences.

With the exceptions of Northumbrian Old English and North Germanic generally, from the earliest attestations to the present day,  $*-iþ$  and its dia-

lectal successors is uniquely, persistently, and typically the sign of the 3rd sg. pres. indicative in Germanic.

Facultatively, the 3rd sg. pres. indic. of Northumbrian Old English displayed -s, that is -as (-es) besides -að (-eð), and this sigmatic 3rd sg. is thus identical with the unextended (extended=-st) 2nd sg. pres. indic. desinence. In Old Norse, too, the 2nd sg. and 3rd sg. pres. indic. endings are identical, i.e. -r < \*-iz(i) < IE\* -e-si, e.g. *gefr* 'you sg. give ~s/he gives'.

The earliest English attestations of a 3rd sg. in -s are exclusively Northumbrian, primarily in a continuous gloss known as the "Lindisfarne Gospels" (MS Cotton Nero D. IV=Ker No. 165, British Museum, London). The gospels themselves were illuminated in the late 7th or early 8th century in the Hiberno-Saxon style, and this book was probably prepared for Eadfrith, a Saxon bishop of Lindisfarne from 698 to 721. It reveals a fusion of Irish, classical, and Byzantine elements of manuscript illumination. The continuous interlinear gloss was probably inserted c. 950 by a certain Aldred, son of Alfred, who describes himself as *presbyter indignus et miserimus*, in Durham, the same scribe who prepared the gloss to the so-called "Durham Ritual" (Durham Cathedral, MS A.IV.19) and the collects on p. 167 of the *Ritual*, while only a few notes and scribbles in the latter manuscript can be safely attributed to members of the congregation of St. Cuthbert at Chester-le-Street, see Ker (1943).

Lindisfarne, also known as Holy Island, is a speck two sq. miles in area that is linked to the mainland (2 miles away) by a causeway at low tide off the coast of Northumberland. The monastic foundation at Lindisfarne was established by St. Aidan in the Columban tradition in 635, and the first three abbots (Aidan, Finan, Colman) were Irish in this Irish-sponsored citadel of Insular humanism, an outpost that was set up to convert the Saxons (Angles) and Celts (British) of the area. The artistry that has come down to us from this citadel, the work of scribes, illuminators, and stonecutters, reflects the persistent strength of Irish influence at Lindisfarne long after the Council of Whitby in 664, a date that has long been erroneously accepted as the *terminus ad quem* for such influence, see Dunleavy (1960). This is the cite of the first recorded Viking raid (793), and continued pillaging and threats of further Danish raids caused the monastery to be abandoned in 875, when the monks fled inland with the body of St. Cuthbert (the sixth bishop) to eventually settle at what became the inland cathedral city of Durham in a foundation that incorporated the talents of locals such as Aldred the scribe. There is firm evidence to suggest that Irish influence persisted to the time that Aldred was active as a glossator, see *infra*.

On the basis of its uniquely Northumbrian initial attestation and periodic canvassings of subsequent chronologically and geographically ordered Middle English attestations, it is generally agreed that -s originated in the North and gradually spread southward throughout the medieval period until it reached Oxbridge and London and eventually became accepted as the standard writ-

ten and spoken desinence in the course of the 18th century. In the modern dialects, unmarked (*do* vs. *does*) third singulars are well represented only in Norfolk, East Anglia, and the Southwest, while the standard (in -s) predominates everywhere else, see Map M 34 in Orton-Sanderson-Widdowson (1978). After a thorough survey of the 17th century evidence, the period just prior to generalization as the standard, Dieter Stein (presentation 1987) has convincingly concluded that -th was hypercorrect: while -s predominated in the spoken language, in writing it was still generally regarded as substandard, non-honorable, and/or reserved for use by women, in addressing children, and as a sign of intimacy by both men and women. By the 17th century -th was part of an artefactual register.

The conventional handbook wisdom, traditionally reiterated without debate, question, or further suggestions, is that the original 3rd sg. in -iþ (OE -Vð) was simply replaced by the 2nd sg. in -is (OE -Vs), so recently yet again by Neilsen (1981: 118) and *sic* Sievers-Brunner (1965: Art. 357, Anm. 1), Noreen (1970: Art. 530, Anm. 3), and for a fuller bibliography of such reiterations, see Brunner (1962: 2. 177). Thus, the uniformity of both the 2nd sg. and 3rd sg. in both Old Norse and Northumbrian Old English is consistently and unquestionably interpreted as the result of a transfer from the 2nd sg. to the 3rd sg. and the replacement of the latter (-iþ) by the former (-is become -r in Old Norse). Apparently, then, this interpretation has been accepted as canonical and conveniently incorporated into the handbooks to be mouthed as dogma by succeeding generations of Anglicists. (For competing interpretations sometimes cited, albeit highly disparagingly, in the handbooks, see *infra*.)

The more or less traditional derivation of the "classical" Old Norse paradigm may be schematically indicated as follows:

Old Norse Present Indicative Desinences (Thematic)

Singular	Plural
1. -∅ < -u < *-ō < IE *-oH-i	1. -um < *-am < IE *-o-me
2. -r < *-iz(i) < IE *-e-si	2. -ið < *-ið(i) < IE *-e-te
↓	
3. -r < *-iz(i) : -iþ < IE -e-ti	3. -a < *-an(n) < -anþ(i) < IE *-o-nti

Cf. the uniform Ingvaenic (1, 2, 3 persons) plural in -Vð.

We infer that Northumbrian was well on the way toward generalizing -s as a present tense-person marker throughout the paradigm. It was obviously not restricted to the 3rd sg., and it presumably spread from the 3rd sg. to the 3rd pl. (cf. the Baltic situation, see fn. 3) It was then extended throughout the plural, formerly uniformly marked with -Vð, and it was then introduced in the 2nd sg. Only English-based creoles, particularly in the Caribbean Basin, have generalized -s throughout the paradigm. Note the following paradigm

we have recorded (fieldwork, February 1980) for Caymanian, a variety of English that is usually considered too decreolized to be of any interest for linguists:

Caymanian Copula With Personal Pronouns

Sg.	Pl.
2. <i>ai bis</i>	2. <i>vi bis</i>
2. <i>yu bis</i>	3. <i>una bis</i> (with <i>una</i> from West African)
3. <i>i bis</i>	3. <i>dey bis</i>

Other than English-based creoles, some varieties of Black English, and sub-standard short forms (1. *ais* 'I is', 2. *yus* 'you is, etc.'), a 3rd sg. *bis* is known only from Anglo-Irish, a form that is wholly isomorphic with OIr. *bís*, cf. Breton *bez.* the 3rd sg. relative, consuetudinal present, of the substantive verb. Anglo-Irish influence on the formation of Caribbean Creoles has long been documented and is well rehearsed in the literature. Note the influx of Irish into Jamaica in the post-Cromwellian period. A reiteration of bibliography on this topic is unnecessary here. However, it is significant to note that translation carry-over is a hallmark of Anglo-Irish: Irish semantics are mapped onto English, rather than the other way around. For example, Irish lack of *have* as a tense auxiliary is reflected in Anglo-Irish translationese:

Angl.-Ir. *I am after coming in* 'I have just come in'

=

Mod. Ir. *taim tar eis teacht isteach*  
(I am after VN-coming in)

As for the origin of Nhb. 3rd sg. *-s*, the arguments traditionally advanced by Anglicists are, as we have seen, unsatisfactory: (1) transfer of the 2nd sg. to the 3rd sg., (2) analogy with the copula, 3rd sg. pres. *is*, (3) Norse influence, presumably from some dialect that mysteriously remained exempt from rhotacism, that is, a dialect that preserved *-Vs* in the 3rd sg. and was influential enough to replace a native *-Vþ*. In a carefully reasoned discussion which Anglicists seem to have consistently overlooked, Watkins (1962: 97–106) traces the origin and diffusion of IE *-s-*, originally a root enlargement, a simple phonetic component with no real functional value that was subsequently reinterpreted and grammaticalized as an early 3rd sg. desinence (intransitive): *\*(e)-si*. It was eventually ousted by *\*(e)-ti*, but may be reflected by *-s(i)*=2nd sg. in the latest period of Common Indo-European. The formal identity of *-s* with the sign of the nom. sg. (and marked nominatives are, typologically speaking, distinct rarities) may point to an original nominal genesis of this archaic verbal desinence. We find this interpretation highly persuasive. Watkins (1962: 104) concludes that a vestigial 3rd sg.

*\*(e)-si* is reflected as a "primary" ending in but two Indo-European dialects, namely, Tocharian (A) and Germanic: Toch. A *pālkās* < *\*bhlg-si* 3rd sg., ON *brýtr* < *\*breutiz*, Nhb. *findes*, cf. Krause-Thomas (1960: 258–259). In Old Norse, *-r* < *\*-si* spread to the 2nd sg. from the 3rd sg., and the same transfer also took place in Northumbrian and Tocharian. Derivation of Gk. *φερε* < *\*bher-e-si* 3rd sg., as some scholars have suggested, or attempts at relationship with Lith. *-ėi*, are unwarranted, see Chantraine (1964: 296–297). Watkins (1969: 121–123) contends that Gk. 3rd sg. *-ei* consists of a bare thematic stem+Ø-ending which was then obligatorily supplied with the deictic (*hic et nunc*) particle *-i*, a particle that was facultatively applied to the original 3rd sg. imperative, i.e. *-e*, see Wackernagel (1950: 106). Further, on the affinity of the indicative and the imperative, note OHG *-mēs* 1st. pl. pres. indic. and imper., originally solely imper., a desinence that vanishes by the time of Notker (c. 1000).

From the textual and inscriptional evidence, it is clear that *-iþ* < *\*-e-ti* 3rd sg. and *-is* < *\*-e-si* 3rd sg. must have coexisted for some time in North Germanic, particularly, so it seems, in East Norse, quite plausibly in proximity to the *Urheimat* of speakers whose descendants would become the Anglian settlers of Britain (post c. 420–450 AD). Note, too, that *-þ* is presumably reflected in the Old Swedish mediopassive in *-z* (e. g. *sætiz*, *dǫpiz*, etc.): an *-sk* 3rd sg. mediopassive ending, such as we regularly find in Old Icelandic, is only feebly (3×) attested runically in Sweden, see Noreen (1904: Art. 570.2, Ann. 2.).

We might hypothesize that the Anglian settlers of Northumbria (c. 450–550) stem from a dialect area that was akin to East Norse and brought *-Vs* (besides *-Vþ*) with them prior to the completion of rhotacism in Scandinavian (c. 550–600). By 600, the Angles were certainly in control of Bernica, and, as related in the *Gododdin*, they secured Deira (Yorkshire) with the victory over Mynyddog at Catterick in 600, see Jackson (1953: 211–221, 1955, 1969).

There are numerous archaisms in Northumbrian that have analogues only in Norse, particularly East Norse: e. g. traces of *u*-umlaut, prefix '4' in compounds with the dental (Lindisfarne *feodor-* = OSw. *fioþer-*), inflection of '4' (Rit. *fēoro* gen. = OSw. *fūra*), similarities in the development of the copula (*arð* 2nd sg. = OSw. *ar*), dem. dat. pl. *ðām* = OSw. *þom* (that is, without reflection of *-ai-*), and so on.

Thus, it might be argued that, among the Anglo-Saxon dialects of Britain, the Anglian of Northumbria stemmed from an Ingwaeonic group that had been closely related to what later emerged as East Norse and that they thereby happened to have preserved alternative 3rd singulars (*-s* and *-þ*). After all, the dialect differentiation of North and West Germanic must have been very slender: they must have been only mildly distinguished as dialects

and easily mutually intelligible for some appreciable time. Even after geographical separation, however lengthy, the early dialects continued to maintain items that confirm earlier affinities. Consider, for example, the oft-cited exclusively Anglo-Saxon/Langobardian lexical similarities, e. g. Lgb. *fulcfree* = OE *folcfrj*, Lgb. *uarigang* = OE *vergenga*, Lgb. *vantepero* = OE *vōðbora*, see Bruckner (1895: 24–32). However, unless preservation was supported in some way, then there would be every reason for replacement of *-s* by *-þ* (*-th*) in line with the speech of all the other Anglo-Saxon areas. (The medieval and early modern expansion of *-s* is quite another matter, cf. Dieter Stein's remarks cited above.). Clearly, an infusion of Scandinavian settlers would not have favored preservation.

Support for a sigmatic 3rd sg. in Northumbrian and persistent marking of the member of a paradigm that is more naturally left unmarked could well have come from Celtic. In reality, 3rd sg. *-s* is a case of hypermarking, and instances of hypermarking are well known from diglossal situations.

As we have seen, the Irish were instrumental in establishing and conducting the religious foundations of the region. The Angles of Deira and Bernica were converted in 627 by Paulinus from Caterbury, but reverted to paganism five years later until they were reconverted by Aidan's mission from Iona in 634. The Latin original of the Rushworth text that was glossed by Owun had been scripted in the 8th–9th century by the Irish MacRegol. The Irish held the kingdom of Argyll until they were defeated by King Aethelfrith in 603, and it was not until c. 650 that the Angles found themselves in control of most of Southeast Scotland. But Irish monastics and clerics would not have been the only source of Celtic influence in early Northumbria.

All too often Anglicists lead us to believe that the Britain the Anglo-Saxons settled was a *tabula rasa* and/or that the Celtic British were either catatonic or opted for English overnight or somehow linguistically vanished without trace in the twinkling of an eye. They also seem to want to believe that, contrary to any historically documented situation, there was no miscegenation in the wake of the Anglo-Saxon conquest. No allowance is made for admixture, or fusion, or creolization (however partial). What we find advocated in the handbooks is a sort of pur-pak Anglo-Saxon wholly exempt from substratal influence. Anglicists all too readily forget that the British (Brittonic, Brythonic) peoples lived under Roman occupation for about as long as North America has been settled by Whites (43 AD to c. 410 AD), and, just as they had remained largely impervious to Latin influence, they might well have long remained impervious to Anglo-Saxon influence. After a thorough investigation, Jackson (1953: 261) astutely concludes as follows:

The result of the present enquiry shows that in fact in no single instance is there any positive and irrefutable evidence that an English name was taken from speakers of Latin, just as there is no really convincing proof that any Latin words in Anglo-

*-Saxon* must have been adopted in Britain from natives talking Latin, though a few may have been. Not only does the phonology of British names in Anglo-Saxon show indications of the normal British Latin sound-system as contrasted with British, but also it gives no support for the theory that any significant body of people survived at the time of the Conquest who used the ordinary Continental Vulgar Latin as distinct from the more archaic language of the Romano-British upper classes. Like Ekwall and Förster, then, we shall proceed on the assumption that British names were taken into Anglo-Saxon from speakers of Brittonic; and though it does not prove anything for certain, the heavy accumulation of negative evidence does seem to suggest strongly that the English met very few people who talked any sort of Latin at all during the course of the occupation of Britain.

The traditional arguments from silence in favor of a pur-pak Anglo-Saxon are just as fallacious and myopic as the traditional arguments in favor of a wholly Germanic Bavarian *Landnahm* that make no allowances for the presence of Latin, see Mayerthaler (1984).

Northumbria and the whole of the North is a perfect Celtic substratum, and Cumbric must have persisted for some time, perhaps as late as the 12th century in some isolated pockets, see Price (1984: 146–154 with literature), Jackson (1953, 1955). Recall preservation of the Anglo-Cumbric score, the frequent incidence of Celtic-based place names in the region, and certain elements of local lore and legend such as the terms for ghosts and other spirits of the night. Eric P. Hamp has considered one aspect of the replacement process by suggesting that Anglo-Norse onomastic *thwaite*, concentrated in areas that correspond closely to *Elfed* (Bede's *silva Elmete*), may have replaced a Cumbric *\*uostat* (cf. W *gwastad*, Corn. *gwastas*, Br. *goustad*) in the successor English of the Northwest to cover both 'lowland fields' and 'newly cleared land', see Markey (1985) for details and references. We necessarily conclude that early Northumbria was a staging ground for extensive, multifaceted language contact: Irish (both imported directly and reshaped as Scottish Gaelic), British (Cumbric), Anglo-Saxon (specifically Anglian, itself, as we have inferred, an Ingwaeonic contact language), Latin (liturgically, administratively, ecclesiastically), and, finally, Scandinavian.

Our direct knowledge of Cumbric is restricted to but three glosses in the 11th century *Leges inter Brettos et Scottos* (*galnes* or *galnys* = MW *galanas* 'blood-fine', *mercheta* related to W *merch* 'daughter', and *kelchyn* = W *cylch* 'circuit') and scattered onomastic forms (e. g. Latinized *Nudus*, *Dumnogenus* in the 6th century Yarrowkirk inscription). However, the 10th century re-occupation by the Britons of what had been parts of Rheged must have re-introduced or greatly strengthened Cumbric there until it finally disappeared, perhaps as late as the 12th century.

Just as *-s* was added to the infin. *be* and extended to all persons to yield copular paradigms in some varieties of Anglo-Irish and Caribbean English (see *supra*), presumably on the basis of analogy with the 3rd sg. pres. rel.

(OIr. *bís*), so, too, a Celtic (Irish, Gaelic, Cumbric (?)) sg. rel. in *-s* could have supported preservation of *-s* in early Northumbrian English as the result of contact interference. Indeed, this assumption is far preferable to previous interpretations. Note generalization of *-s* in Manx forms of the relative present-future and replacement of pres.-fut. *-idh* by *-as/-s* (under influence of the relative) and later extension to the 2nd sg. in Northern Scottish Gaelic dialects, see O'Rahilly (1976: 133, 215). In Old Irish, the relative was used for emphasis and the 3rd s.g. predominated, see Lewis-Pedersen (1974: 244–245). For emphasis, nouns were placed as predicates after the copula which was followed by a relative: *is recht nóibas* 'it is the law that sanctifies'. The verb was generally (invariably with the copula) in the 3rd sg. when the relative particle stood as the subject, cf. the Norse situation cited above (fn. 2) and see Thurneysen (1966: Art. 567). The regular form of the OIr. 3rd sg. rel. (e. g. *beres* 'which/that/whom he carries' with *-s* vs. abs. *berid* and conj. *-beir*) must have been modelled on the copula *as*, but only after it had been apocopated (*as* < *\*ase* < *\*ese*), see Watkins (1969: Art. 157), cf. MW *yss-yd* < *\*ijo* < *\*jo* to the IE rel. pron. *\*jo-s*, nom.-acc. sg. nt. *\*jod* and recall ON *er* < *\*es-i*, see Neckel (1900: 14–15).

We may conclude by summarizing as follows. Retention of a marked 3rd sg. pres., particularly in view of loss of desinences elsewhere in the paradigm, is an extraordinary event and must be due to extraordinary circumstances. Engl. 3rd sg. *-s* is truly exceptional. It had its original source as the reflection of an Indo-European archaism (*\*(e)-si* 3rd sg. intransitive) that was preserved in a Germanic subdialect (East Norse, Anglian as an Ingwaeonic contact language) and was later transported to Northumbria alone of the English settlements in Britain. Within Northumbrian, it began to be extended throughout the paradigm of the present (2nd sg. and throughout the plural). It was supported in its retention (vs. competitive *-þ*) and extension in early Northumbrian by Celtic-English contact interference, quite possibly as an hypercorrection at some periods and in some sociolinguistic situations, presumably as a contrastive carry-over, given the prior existence of an isomorphic Celtic analogue, namely a dominant singular relative in *-s*, which was itself extended in later varieties of Celtic in Northern Britain.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> For a review of some of the analogical reciprocities between cardinals and ordinals in Germanic, as well as references to further literature on this topic, see Markey (1984).

<sup>2</sup> Mod. Ic. regularly has: Sg. 1. *Ø*, 2. & 3. *-Vr*; Pl. 1. *-um*, 2. *-id*, 3. *-a*, and the same is true of Mod. Faroese. In Old Norwegian, the 1st sg. in *-Ø* began to assume the 3rd sg. in *-r* (*-Vr*), e. g. *stend* → *stendr*, *hefr ec*, etc.) after ca. 1280, but increasingly so after *-ir/-er* had succeeded in ousting the original 2nd pl. desinence. The 3rd sg. also replaced

the 3rd pl., particularly in relative clauses, especially when the subject pronoun of relatives was construed as singular, e. g. *meder ollum ok lunmyndum er til þæira iarda a at liggia ok leget hefuir* Oslo 1331 (DN 4: 150), see Seip (1955: 198–200, 321–7). Note common occurrence of *er* (3rd sg.) for *ero* (3rd pl.) pres. indic. of the copula in relative clauses.

<sup>3</sup> Transfer of desinences within the same person, but from a member(s) of a subcategory to other categories is well attested. Note *-ð/-t* in the 2nd sg. of the copula (e. g. OE *eart*) from the preterite-presents, see infra fn. 4. In Armenian, thematic *-e-si* 2nd sg. would have yielded a *lautgesetzlich -e* (*\*bher-e-si* > *\*bere*), but *-s* (*beres*) has been transferred to all thematic forms from the copula: *\*es-si* > Arm *es* 2nd sg., cf. *ē* 3rd sg. 'is'. The West Germanic 2nd sg. pret. in *-e* (*-i*) with the vocalism of the pret. pl. vs. North and East Germanic with *-t* and normal vocalism of the singular, the so-called "*nēmi/namti*-isogloss", is a well known crux and has been variously interpreted, often as a revival of the optative, or, alternatively, as an injunctive, see Markey (1976: viii–ix). None of these previous explanations has been entirely satisfactory. Recently, Eric P. Hamp (personal communication) has suggested that what we actually have here, with specific reference to Old English, is analogical transfer from older shapes of the 2nd sg. (singular in general) of the subjunctive of the preterite-presents as they are vestigially found in early West Saxon, e. g. *scyle*, *ðyrfe*, etc. The 3rd sg. and pl. are identical in Baltic (Lith., Latv.), e. g. Latv. *gaida* 'he, she, it/they wait(s)' to *gaidīt* (i. e. *-a*), *dzied* 'he, she, it/they sing(s)' to *dziedāt* (i. e. *-Ø*). As Stang (1966: 412) points out, colascence of the 3rd pl. pres. and pret. would have favored generalization of the 3rd sg., as, too, did the existence of a uniform 3rd pers. copula (Lith. *yrà*, Latv. *ir*), a nonce formation from *\*ir ð*.

<sup>4</sup> A possible dialect-internal instance of extension of the 3rd sg. may be evidenced by the Old English copula.

First, we note that copular morphology was frequently subjected to reanalysis and reformation in all Germanic dialects, from the earliest periods until the crystallization of standardized national languages in recent times. Not only was there suppletion and coexistence of reflexes of *\*bheu-* and *\*es-*, but also a rich array of associatively promoted transfers. Note, for example, the coexistence of MHG *birn* 1st pl. besides *sin* and *birt* 2nd pl. besides *sit/sint*. In Continental West Germanic, the pattern of *\*bheu-/es-* suppletion eventually assumed the following form: 1st and 2nd sg. *\*bheu-* vs. 3rd sg. *\*es-*, e. g.:

	OHG	MHG	MLG	OFr.	MDu.
Sg. 1.	<i>bim/bin</i>	<i>bin</i>	<i>bin</i>	<i>bim/bin</i>	<i>bem/ben</i>
2.	<i>bis(t)</i>	<i>bist</i>	<i>bist</i>	<i>-Ø-</i>	<i>bes(t)</i>
3.	<i>ist</i>	<i>ist</i>	<i>is (ist)</i>	<i>is (ist)</i>	<i>es</i>

where a 2nd sg. *bist* may be posited for Old Frisian on the basis of what we find in the modern dialects. Remarkably, this pattern is unknown from Gothic, which attests only reflexes of *\*es-*: 1. *em*, 2. *is*, 3. *ist*. On the other hand, Old English attests complete paradigms of both *\*bheu-* and *\*es-* and does not evidence suppletive amalgamation of the two. Absence of the dental (*-t*) in the 3rd sg. is considered an early Ingwaeonic innovation OE *is*, OS (M) *is*, OFr. (W) *is*, MDu. *es/is*. Deletion of *-t* in the 3rd sg. would have permitted isomorphy with an inherited 2nd sg. from *\*es-*: *\*es-ði* > *is* (so Gothic). Loss of the dental is also apparent in North Germanic, e. g. O(West)N *es* 3rd sg. > (post 1100) *er*, cf. OSw. (runic) *is*, Medieval OSw. *ær*, and in Old Swedish the 2nd sg. (*æst*) is frequently employed as the 3rd sg., see Noreen (1904:473-4). As examples of the kinds of transfer interference that frequently obtained between and among members of the copula paradigm, we note:

MLG *bint/bünt* 1st sg. on the analogy of the pl. *sint/sünt*; MLG *binst* 2nd sg. to *bin* 1st sg., see Lasch (1974: 247).

Second, we suggest that loss of *-t* in the 3rd sg., presumably due to frequent occurrence in weakly stressed position, particularly in allegro speech, would have resulted in formal coalescence of the inherited 2nd and 3rd sg. forms: 2nd sg. \**es-si* > *is* (*es*), 3rd sg. \**es-ti* > *is* (*es*). This homonymy was avoided in several ways: suppletive introduction of \**bheu*-forms (e.g. OHG *bis* besides *bist*), or transfer of *-t* to the 2nd sg. on the analogy of the preterite-presents (e.g. OHG *weist*, *moust*, etc.), whereby *es* (*is*) → *est* (*ist*) as in Old Norse, or false segmentation of the post-posed pronominal constellation, e.g. OHG *bis ihu* → *bistu*, which could then be alternatively resegmented as *bist ihu* or *bis ihu*; as we find it in Tatian. In the later stages of Continental Ingwaëonic, particularly in peripherally "Ingwaëonic" dialects, *-t* was facultatively reintroduced in the 3rd sg., either by analogy with the 2nd sg. (*bist*) or via influence from High German, but note *is* in the *Leiden Wiliram* (11th century, North Rhine Frankish). *ist/est* predominate in the later stages of Middle Low German (*e*-vocalism is characteristically Westfalian), and OSw. *æst*, besides normal *ær* (*ar*, *iar*, Gut. *ier*, *ir*), 3rd sg., which was homonomous with the 2nd sg., is presumably due to Low German influence.

Finally, we suggest that pre-Old English may have had \**is* (\**es*) for both the 2nd and 3rd singulars. The usual West Saxon 2nd sg. *is*, of course, *eart*, cf. Angl. *earð*, Nhb. *arð*. Interestingly enough, in addition to these "regular" shapes, Northumbrian (uniquely!) also attests (*h*)*is* as a 2nd sg. (*Lindisfarne Glosses*, *Rushworth Glosses* = c. 970). That *is*, the 3rd sg. appears to have been extended to the 2nd sg., and note *-as* in both the 2nd and 3rd sg. indic., see further Flasdieck (1934), particularly fn. 1, p. 115, where he cites compelling arguments against assuming transfer of the 2nd sg. desinence to the 3rd sg. in Old Norse.

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