DISINTEGRATION OF THE NOMINAL INFLECTION IN ANGLIAN: THE CASE OF *I*-STEMS

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ABSTRACT

An evident tendency which can be observed in the behaviour of the Old English nouns belonging originally to the *i*-stem type is that they reveal a marked fluctuation between the inherited and the innovative (productive) paradigm, manifested in their adopting the inflectional endings of both. The apparent hesitation between the two types of inflection can be seen, for instance, in forms of the nominative and accusative plural of masculine paradigm, where alongside the expected OE -*e* ending, forms in -*as*, extended from the productive *a*-stems paradigm, are attested (e.g. OE *wine* ~ *winas* 'friends'). It is believed that through various phonological processes actively operating within the paradigm and leading to a generalisation of a single ending (-*e*), this declensional type very early lost its communicative function and was ready to appropriate endings from the stronger, more influential paradigms, i.e. *a*-stems and *ō*-stems. The present analysis is a qualitative and quantitative study of the *i*-declension in the Anglian dialects, known for displaying considerable confusion in the inflectional system. Aimed at presenting a systematic account of the steady disintegration of the nominal paradigm in this dialect, the investigation seeks to determine the exact pattern of dissemination of the productive inflectional endings in nouns belonging to the historical *i*-stem type.

1. Introductory remarks

The Old English *i*-stem nominal paradigm, though abundantly attested, represents one of the minor declensional types, deemed entirely unproductive in the Old English times. The tendency which can be observed in the behaviour of nouns belonging originally to this declension is that they display a marked fluctuation between the inherited, unproductive paradigm and the innovative, productive one, shown in their adopting the inflectional endings of both.[1] This well

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[1] The terms "productive" and "unproductive" are employed here in line with the definition of

evinced tendency is one of the prominent features of the early Germanic nominal inflection, revealed in general by nouns considered minor (e.g. *u*-stems, *nd*-stems, root consonant stems or nouns of relationship).[2]

The present paper is devoted specifically to the investigation of nouns belonging originally to *i*-declension in the Anglian variety, in which the inflectional system displays considerable confusion. Although the value of the textual material of Anglian provenance need not be articulated or affirmed here, let just the brief but lucid statement by Hogg (1997) serve as a justification of the choice of the material for the present analysis: "It is, of course, true that Anglian texts are a minority in the Old English period, but in a wider historical framework they are fundamental to the core development of English" (Hogg 1997: 98). Accordingly, the material from this particular dialect is hoped to shed some more light on the developments in progress in the early inflectional system of English. Aimed at presenting a systematic account of the steady disintegration of the nominal paradigm in Anglian, the analysis seeks to determine the exact pattern of dissemination of the productive inflectional endings in nouns belonging to the historical *i*-stem type. It attempts to trace the tendencies and peculiarities characteristic of the process of gradual morphological restructuring operating within the *i*-stem paradigm, which in the end resulted in a large-scale transfer from the minor unproductive to the major productive declensional type and brought about an eventual demise of the *i*-declension as well as other minor declensional types in Old English.

Although it is not the aim of the present paper to question the validity of the traditional classification of nominal paradigms or reject the traditional model as found in standard historical grammars, ideologically it does stay in line with some opinions voiced by Kastovsky (1995), Lass (1997) and Krygier (2002, 2004), who advocate the need for a new non-standard approach to Old English nominal morphology, entailing a total reclassification of the system.

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productivity provided by Wurzel (1989: 149), who gives the following criteria for defining a productive inflectional class: (a) ability to acquire new words (borrowings and neologisms), (b) ability to attract words from other inflectional classes, and (c) resistance to lose words to other inflectional classes. In contrast, an unproductive inflectional class is one which does not meet any of the abovementioned criteria.

[2] With regard to this instability of declensional types in Germanic, Ramat (1981: 61) observes: "... Es kann daher nicht erstaunen, daß im Germ. einige Flexionstypen zu Gunsten anderer, häufigerer Typen durch Analogie aufgegeben wurden. So wurde nicht nur der heteroklitische Typus (der schon in der idg. Epoche nicht mehr produktiv war) wie in allen anderen Sprachen derselben Familie aufgegeben... sondern auch die Deklination der *i*-Stämme nimmt viele Formen der *a*-Stämme auf, die *u*-Deklination weist zahlreiche Formen der *i*- bzw. *a*-Deklination. auf, usw."

2. The origin of inflectional endings and the constitution of *i*-declension in Old English

The *i*-declension, which included all nouns containing a thematic *-i-* vowel, was one of the most numerous declensional types in Germanic. It was originally comprised of short- and long-stemmed nouns of masculine, feminine and neuter gender, and such state of affairs continued essentially into the Old English times, where the declension appears to be less stable gender-wise. Frequent migrations between gender classes involved particularly neuter nouns which tended to adopt masculine inflection (e.g. *mere* 'lake', *mene* 'mind', *ele* 'oil', *bere* 'barley', *ege* 'ache', *hete* 'hate', *sige* 'victory'), as well as feminine nouns, attracted, in turn, by the otherwise diminishing neuter type (e.g. *gehygd* 'thought', *gemynd* 'memory') (Brunner 1965: 220, 222). The group of masculine nouns, both short- and long-stemmed is certainly the largest of the three and well attested. The neuter subtype appears to be the least stable and rather poorly represented due to the frequent fluctuations of its members between gender types. Hardly any short stem feminine nouns are attested in the Old English times, and they can be distinguished (i.e. recognised as original *i*-stems) only by the mutated root vowel. Such a situation can be partly accounted for by their early transfer to the *ō*-stem paradigm, dated to prehistoric times (Brunner 1965: 226; Campbell 1959: 242; Wright – Wright 1908: 188).

The Proto-Germanic *i*-stem (masculine) paradigm can be reconstructed as follows (after Bammesberger 1992: 125; Krahe 1969: 26-29; Ringe 2006: 272):

Table 1. A reconstructed Proto-Germanic *i*-stem paradigm

singular	plural
N. **gastiz*	N. **gastijiz* (> **gastīz*)
G. **gastīza*	G. **gastijô^n*
D. **gastai*, (*-ī*)	D. **gastimiz*
A. **gasti^n*	A. **gastinz*
I. **gastī*	—

The original thematic vowel *-i-* left essentially two reflexes in Old English: (a) the presence of *i*-umlaut in the root, which is a major feature which makes this group of nouns distinct from *a*- and *ō*-stems (not from *-ja-* and *-jō-* stems though), and (b) the contrast between nominative sg. *-e* ending in short-stemmed nouns and lack of any inflectional marker in long-stemmed formations, as in: *wine* (**wen-i-z*) 'friend', *byre* (**ber-i-z*) 'son' vs. *ġiest*, *gast* 'ghost' (< **gast-i-z*), *wyrm* 'worm' (< **wurm-i-z*).[3]

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[3]   An exception here is a tiny group of nouns which display no traces of *i*-mutation, yet are

The endings of the genitive and dative pl. were extended from the productive *a*-declension already in prehistoric times. The genitive pl. -*a* ending is assumed to represent a Germanic formation in heavy syllable stems, however, in light-syllable stems it can be traced back to the combined influence of the long-stem paradigm and other declensional types (Campbell 1959: 241). Among the Old English relics of the original pattern are short stem masculine forms without an ending (preserving the inherited -*e* marker) in nominative and accusative pl. (*wine*, *byre*), the genitive pl. -*iġa*, which survives in poetic texts exclusively (*winiġa*, *Deniġa*), and the feminine accusative sg. without an ending (*wēn* 'hope').[4] Early textual material testifies to the presence of -*i*, later -*e*, as a marker of nominative and accusative pl., frequent especially in onomastic data, as in: *Ediluini*, *Osuini*, *Hedeshamstedi*, as well as of nominative and accusative sg., attested primarily in early Mercian texts, e.g. *cyri* 'choice', *caeli* 'keel', *meri* 'lake'.[5]

One of the features of the *i*-declension, significant when it comes to investigating the restructuring pattern within this declensional type, is the remarkable heterogeneity of its etymological constitution. A number of nouns classified from the synchronic Old English perspective as *i*-stems originated in some other declensional types. Accordingly, the light masculine stems: *bere* 'barley', *ege* 'terror', *hete* 'hate', *sele* 'hall', and *sege* 'victory' were derived from *-*es*/-*os* stems, which can be proven by the attested cognate forms in Gothic.[6] The *-*es*/ -*os* origin can also be traced down in nouns of the type of *gecynd* 'race', which

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formally classified as *i*-stems. These include the masculine tribe name *Seaxe* 'Saxons', feminine *ġesceaft* (*gesæft*) 'creature', *ġeðeaht* 'idea, thought', *meaht* (alongside umlauted *mieht*) 'might, power' and *sliht* 'blow' (beside umlauted -*slæht*). The *i*-stem membership of *ġesceaft* and *ġeðeaht* can be established on the basis of endingless accusative singular. The relative chronology of the operation of *i*-mutation and the transfer of *i*-stems to productive types has been adduced to account for such a circumstance, and accordingly, the substitution of inflectional endings is treated as prior to the operation of *i*-mutation (Brunner 1965: 220; Campbell 1959: 84, 244).

[4]   The usage of the archaic genitive formations in -*iġa* can be illustrated by the following sentences found in the *Dictionary of Old English electronic corpus* (Healey 2000):

a) Beo ðu on ofeste, hat in gan seon sibbegedriht samod ætgædere; gesaga him eac wordum þæt hie sint wilcuman *Deniga*\nleodum [*Beowulf* (Dobbie 1953: 3-98)].

b) Is hlaford min, beorna bealdor, ond broþor þin, se selesta bi sæm tweonum þara þe we on Engle æfre gefrunen acennedne\n þurh cildes had gumena cynnes, to godes dome, werigra wraþu, worulddreamum\nof, winemæga wyn, in wuldres þrym, gewiten, *winiga* hleo, wica neosan eardes on upweg [*Guthlac* A, B].

[5]   See section 5.2. below for examples found in the analysed corpus.

[6]   The following Gothic forms which can be traced back to the original *-*es*/-*os* stems were attested: *barizeins* (adj.) 'made of barley', *agis* (in fact, OE *egesa* 'terror' and the verb *egsian* 'terrify' also testify to an original *s*-stem (Bammesberger 1990: 134, 211)), *hatis* 'hatred', *sigis* 'victory'; interestingly, all of these forms are traditionally classified as strong neuter nouns (*a*-stems) in Gothic (Wright 1957: 87). The *-*es*/-*os* origin of *sele* can be confirmed, in turn, by the OE variant *salor* 'hall, palace'.

reflect the alternation between mutated and unmutated root vowel, e.g. *gefēg ~ gefōg* 'joint', *geheald ~ gehyld* 'guard', *gewealc ~ gewylc* 'rolling' (Campbell 1959: 244-245). Finally, the OE *hæle* 'man, hero' is believed to have originated as a consonantal stem in the poorly attested class of stems terminated in *-þ* (OE *hæleþ*, cognate with OHG *helid*) (Wright – Wright 1908: 186, 198). This evident lack of etymological uniformity may point to the fact that the *i*-declension, containing a considerable number of nouns deriving from other declensional types, could have been, to some extent, productive at its very early stage of development. This is what has been suggested by Bammesberger (1990) who, with reference to the quantitative profile of *i*-declension, states: "Wegen der hohen Zahl der Mitglieder bei dieser Klasse ist anzunehmen, dass die Bildungsweise im Urgermanischen produktiv war" (Bammesberger 1990: 128).

Given that genetic uniformity essentially encourages the internal stability of a paradigm, its lack can be viewed as a factor motivating the morphological reorganisation in this declensional type.

3. Paradigmatic restructuring of *i*-declension

The morphological history of *i*-stems can be perceived as one of analogical transference to other classes (Hogg 1992), and this transfer is well evinced in all dialects of Old English. As has already been observed, the influence of the strong productive declension upon other declensional types may have begun as early as prehistoric times. The genitive and dative sg. as well as the genitive and dative pl. endings seem to corroborate such an assumption as they are not a Germanic continuation of the original PIE forms, but develop analogically on the pattern set by the expansive paradigm of *a*-stems.[7] It is assumed that the *a*-stem declension, comprising by the Old English times roughly 60% of all nouns (Kastovsky 1995: 232), constituted a template for the reformation of other paradigms even prior to the East/North-West Germanic split as the Gothic material testifies to morphological *a*-stems in the singular of nouns originating in *i*-stems.

The gradual morphological restructuring within the *i*-stem paradigm involved bi-directional developments whereby the masculine and neuter *i*-stems had been remodelled on the pattern of the largest masculine and neuter class,

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[7]   The forms of dative sg. are not unanimously viewed as having developed by analogy. According to Fulk (1992: 421), such conclusion can be drawn only on the basis of the material availed by North and East Germanic, but not West Germanic dialects. Accordingly, the dative sg. *-e* ending is assumed to have developed from *-i* which "happens to be the short-stem ending in Old Saxon (cf. long-stemmed *-e*)". Similarly, the short-stemmed dative sg. ending *-i*, attested in the earliest Old High German glossaries alongside *-e*, is viewed as original rather than analogical to the nominative/accusative sg. of *a*-stems. In the present analysis, the forms of dative sg. are, nonetheless, (in accordance with the majority opinion) treated as analogical extensions from the *a*-stem paradigm.

the *a*-stems (< PIE **o*-stems), whereas feminine stems joined the most numerous feminine noun class, namely the productive *ō*-stem declension (< PIE **ā*-stems). It seems that the consistent preservation of gender was a characteristic feature of the process of morphological reanalysis: although the paradigmatic membership of nouns changed, they essentially preserved their original gender. The two mentioned declensional types, though most significant, were not the only absorbents of *i*-stems, as some low-scale migration to the weak declensional type can be observed as well. The weak inflectional endings seem to have been attractive to long-stem masculine nouns denoting people or tribes, which began to display the weak variants already in Early West Saxon (i.e. by the 10th century); hence forms such as: *lēodan* 'people', *Seaxan* 'Saxons', *waran* 'inhabitants', *Wihtwaran* 'inhabitants of the Isle of Wight', etc. which continue well into the Southern and West Midland dialects of Middle English. The impact of weak declension is most evident in forms of the genitive pl., attested in West-Saxon prose texts, where nouns denoting tribal names regularly take either the non-syncopated ending *-ena* (*-ana*, *-ona*) or the syncopated *-na*, as in: *-seaxna*, *Francna*, *Longbeardna*, *Miercna*, *Sumursǣtna*, *Gotena*, *Iudena* (*-ana*) (Brunner 1965: 231) (cf. etymologically weak *gumena*, *tung*(*e*)*na*). The tendency can be illustrated by the following sentences (1)-(5):

1) þær mihton geseon Winceastre *leodan* rancne here. & unearhne. þæt hi be hyra gate to sæ eodon [*ChronE* (Plummer)].

2) mid arfæstum geyppaþ lofum *cæstergewaran* rodorlice singaþ caflice ece geyppað mid lofum [*HyGl 3* (Gneuss)].

3) & on Wiht gehergade\nWulfhere Pending, & gesalde *Wihtwaran* æþelwalde Suþ *Seaxna* cyninge.\nforþon Wulfhere hine onfeng æt fulwihte [*ChronA* (Plummer)].

4) Ond ic wæs mid Eormanrice ealle þrage, þær me *Gotena* cyning gode dohte [*Widsith*].

5) ðurh Albinus swiðost ic geðristlæhte þæt ic dorste þis weorc ongynnan, & eac mid Danieles þæs arwurðan\n*Westseaxna* biscopes, se nu gyt lifigende is [*BedePref*].

The disparate behaviour of the short- and long-stem nouns with respect to morphological restructuring can be well illustrated by the masculine type. While the former still display relics of the original structure of *i*-stem paradigm, hesitating between the archaic and innovative paradigms, the latter lose their "minor" identity, showing the productive *-as* plural ending throughout, (e.g. the monster

words *wyrmas* 'dragons', *entas* 'giants', *þyrsas* 'wizards, demons'). Granted that even the earliest Old English texts bear witness to the presence of an expansive -*as* ending in the nominative and accusative pl. of heavy base *i*-stems, the onset of restructuring in this subtype should be dated before the literary period. With regard to relative and absolute chronology of the disintegration process, Hogg (1992: 132) states:

> [w]e might suggest that the merger of the *i*-stem feminines with the *ō*-stems was the first real class merger and that it happened after *i*-mutation but before the time of the earliest texts, say, in the seventh century. The other *i*-stems perhaps merged with their *a*-stem counterparts during the eighth century, since there are early eighth century texts with the phonologically expected forms,

concluding that given the Late West Saxon material and the inconsistencies found there, the reorganisation process must have been a feature of the ninth and tenth centuries.

The only long-syllable masculine *i*-stems which retained the inherited nominative/accusative pl. -*e* marker were the plural names of peoples and tribes (e.g. *Myrce* 'Mercians', *Seaxe* 'Saxons', *Norþhymbre* 'Northumbrians'), the collectives denoting people *lēode* 'people'[8], *ylde* (Anglian *ælde*) 'men', as well as the suffixes denoting dwellers -*sæte*, -*ware* (*Cantware*, *Wihtware*) and the lone noun *ælf*.[9] Interestingly, the pattern was followed by loanwords such as *Egypte* 'Egyptians', *Beornice* 'Bernicians', *Dēre* 'Deirans', *Perse* 'Persians', which, paradoxically, testify to productivity of an otherwise unproductive long-stemmed masculine type, confined however to nouns denoting people or peoples.[10] The pattern can be illustrated with the following sentences (6)-(8):[11]

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[8]   A possibility of an early transfer of *lēode* to other inflectional class, namely to strong feminine declension has been postulated by Royster (1908) who based his argument on the absence of the expected umlauted vowel in the stem of *lēod*: "It is entirely possible that *lēod* very early went over to the *ō*-declension, thereby escaping the possibility of umlaut, and employed -*e* for the nom. acc. pl...." (Royster 1908: 122) (cf. Brunner 1965: 220, on *Halbumlaut* in *līode*).

[9]   Hogg (1980) mentions in this context also a single occurrence of the long-stemmed *dǣle* 'part', attested in the early *Corpus Glossary* in the phrase *gelimplice dǣle* 'suitable parts' (Hogg 1980: 283).

[10]   It is believed that the morphology of the long-stemmed masculine *i*-paradigm was reorganised after the separation of Old English from the Continental West Germanic dialect continuum, as these dialects preserved the long *i*-stem masculine type (Braune 1987: §214-216; Gallée 1993: §319-320), and after the onset of front mutation. The restructuring process within the long-stemmed masculine paradigm must have ended by the time of the first written attestations, i.e. by the second half of the 7th century.

[11]   It is possible that the preservation of the final -*i* in tribal names may have a part of a broader tendency present in non-Germanic languages too, as many ancient tribal names seem to have followed the *i*-stem declension, e.g. many Latin names inflect according to the second declension with nominative sg. -*us* and nominative pl. -*i*.

6) Swyðe fela hi me sædon fram gehwylcum biscopum, & hwylcum cyninga
    tidum *Eastseaxe* & *Westseaxe* & *Eastengle* &\n*Norðanhumbre* þære gife
    onfengon Cristes geleafan [*BedePref*].
7) þanon untydras ealle onwocon, eotenas ond *ylfe* ond orcneas, swylce
    (CORR gigantas, þa wið gode wunnon lange þrage; he him ðæs lean
    forgeald [*Beo*]
8) Swelce eac mid þisses cyninges geornisse þa twa mægða Norðhymbra,
    Dere & *Beornice*, þa ðe oð þæt him\nbetweoh ungeþwære & ungesibbe
    wæron, in ane sibbe... [*Bede 3*].

As regards the productivity of the Old English *a*-declension several factors
may be held responsible for the dominance of this paradigmatic pattern. Of
prime importance here is the quantitative preponderance of *a*-declension, com-
prising (the aforementioned) close to 60% of Old English lexical stock, as well
as a lack of case syncretism of the nominative/accusative pl. and other cases,
which prevented potential ambiguity and the blurring of the opposition between
singular and plural (which could not be prevented, e.g. in short-syllable *i*-stems,
where the -*e* ending served as an inflectional marker for nominative, accusative
and dative sg. as well as nominative and accusative pl.).

Finally, crucial for the spread of the *as*-plural inflection in the northern dia-
lects was probably also the early loss of inflectional -*n*, whereby the weak
nouns lost their plural marker, constituting so far the only truly competitive
form for the marking of plurality (*hanan* > *hane*).

4. The *i*-declension in Anglian: A general profile

The declensional system of Anglian, especially that of Late Northumbrian
shows considerable amount of confusion, manifested in the presence of a strong
and progressive tendency to reduce the nominal inflection, which can be best
seen in the 10th century texts of *Lindisfarne Gospels* and *Durham Ritual*.[12]
Given that Anglian is the variety of early English which was in very many re-
spects (i.e. phonologically, morphologically) remarkably ahead of its West
Saxon counterpart, it may be expected that the dialect was also more advanced
with regard to the spread of the disintegrative tendencies in the inflectional sys-
tem. Among the most important features of Anglian inflection, testifying to an
evident instability of this system, Campbell (1959) mentions the following: (a)
the extension of the genitive sg. -*es* marker from the *a*-stem nouns and its usage
alongside the conservative forms in most of the other classes, e.g. in *ō*-stem

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[12]   For details on the phonological and morphological constitution of the northern variety of
early English, see some early analyses by Füchsel (1901), Lea (1894), and later Ross (1934),
Pheifer (1974).

nouns and weak nouns, (b) the extension of the nominative and accusative plural -*as* marker from masculine *a*-stem nouns to neuters and to other declensions, (c) the spread of the nominative and accusative plural neuter -*o* and -*a* markers from short-syllable neuter *a*-stems to long-syllable stems, (d) the disappearance of the distinction in the nominative singular of masculine and feminine weak nouns, following the loss of the final nasal -*n*, whereupon both terminated prevailingly in -*a*, whereas the neuters in -*o* and -*u* in all singular cases and in nominative and accusative plural (Campbell 1959: 222). All of these features of Anglian inflection bear witness to the presence of the disintegrative processes in the nominal paradigm as well as to the ongoing reorganisation of the early English declensional system.

As regards the spread of the disintegrative tendencies in the *i*-declension, much in compliance with the tendency present in other Old English dialects, the Anglian *i*-stems lend themselves to the gradual, yet growing influence of the productive masculine type, manifested especially in the expansion of the nominative/accusative plural -*as* marker. At the same time, however, a prominent feature of the *i*-stem declension is that the short syllable *i*-stems follow the pattern of strong -*ja*- declension in that they tend to display double consonants in forms of nominative and accusative sg. and pl. (e.g. *mete* ~ *mette*, *hyse* ~ *hysse*), but also occasionally in forms of genitive sg. (as in *hysses*) and dative sg. (e.g. *hysse*).[13]

The two rival paradigms of short-stem masculine nouns in Anglian are presented in Table 2 below:

Table 2. The competing paradigms of the Anglian short masculine *i*-stems

	archaic		innovative	
	singular	plural	singular	plural
nominative	*mete*	*mete*	*met(t)*	*metas*, *met(t)*
genitive	*metes*	*meta*	*met(t)es*	*met(t)a*
dative	*mete*	*metum*	*met(t)e*	*met(t)um*
accusative	*mete*	*mete*	*met(t)*	*met(t)as*, *met(t)*

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[13]   When given a closer look, the relation between the *i*-stems and *ja*-stems turns out to be quite complex, granted their early (pre-)history. The early Germanic data testify to the presence of related, parallel forms, deriving from original -*i* and -*a* stem extensions: e.g. **gard-i/gard-a-* > Go. *gards* 'house, family' (*i*-stem with dative pl. *gardim*) vs. OE *geard*, ON *garðr* (*a*-stems); **sangw-i-/sangw-a-* > Go. *saggws* 'song' (*i*-stem with dative pl. *saggwim*) vs. OE *sang* (*a*-stem). (Bjorvand 1995: 3; Bammesberger 1992: 128). Bammesberger (1992) goes as far as to postulate their common origin in the PIE **s*-stems, whereby the *a*-stems are based on the original (PIE) nominative **-os* (> PGmc. **-az*), whereas *i*-stems on the original oblique **-es-* (> PGmc. **-ez-* > -*iz*-) (Bammesberger 1992: 138-139).

The traces of innovation which seem to be well entrenched into the paradigm by the Old English times, namely the genitive and dative inflectional endings which acquired the productive endings in the prehistoric stage, do not testify to any synchronic alternation indicative of the operation of the disintegrating processes underway, and hence were not included in the quantitative analysis (cf. section 5.2.).

The term *innovative* in the present investigation will refer not only to traces of the masculine *a*-stem inflection, but also of the *-ja-* inflection, which brought about the occasional loss of ending in the nominative/accusative sg. and pl. The forms containing a geminate consonant, frequently attested in the analysed corpus, can be attributed precisely to the influence of *ja*-stems, in which the stem formative occasions doubling of the root final consonant in line with the process of West Germanic Gemination, e.g. *mettas* 'food', *hyssas* 'youths', *illas* 'soles of foot'. In fact, the interpretation of forms with geminated consonant in Anglian is not very straightforward and transparent. It has been suggested that given that: (a) both forms with and without geminated consonants are attested in Northern texts (i.e. *mett* ~ *met*, *stydd* ~ *styd*), and that (b) the etymological final double consonants were consistently preserved in the northern texts, the phenomenon could be explained as resulting from an analogical influence of the long-stem inflection, where no final vowel has been attested (Ross 1937: 76). Moreover, granted the similar structure of *i*-stems and *ja*-stems (both affected by *i*-umlaut at an early stage), coupled with the existence of parallel formations of the type *dyn(n)* (*ja*-stem) vs. *dyne* (*i*-stem) 'noise', it becomes evident that the border line between the original *i*-stems and *ja*-stems is very much blurred and obscure.

The present interpretation of the above-mentioned forms, however, following essentially the majority stance (notably Brunner 1965; Wright – Wright 1908; Hogg 1992), treats the appearance of geminated forms in word final position as being a direct result of the expanding influence of the *a*-stem declension; hence, such geminated forms, though could be viewed as *ja*-stems from purely synchronic perspective, are considered to be a trace of innovation in the present investigation.[14]

Finally, it is possible that the paradigm of *i*-stems, in particular of masculine short-stemmed nouns, may have been occasionally influenced by the inflection of *īn*-stems, which constituted the largest class of abstract nouns, and as such tended to affect the abstract nouns of *i*-declension, hence irregularities of the type *cuido* (as in: ðis *soðcuido* & gedd &cuæð 'hoc prouerbium dixit' [*Jn* 10, 6]; here also *tocymo* and *fyrihto*) (Ross 1937: 75, 102).

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[14] Brunner (1965) has been quite explicit with regard to the treatment of such forms: "Einige Wörter treten mehr oder minder in die *jo*-Deklination über, indem sie den einfachen Konsonanten am Ende der Wurzelsilbe verdoppeln ... und nach der dadurch langgewordenen Silbe da -*e* im Nom. Akk. Sing. fallen lassen" (Brunner 1965: 222).

5. Qualitative and quantitative analysis

5.1. The corpus

The present investigation was conducted on a collection of selected texts of Northumbrian and Mercian provenance as edited in the *Dictionary of Old English electronic corpus* (Healey 2000). These included among others the early Northumbrian sources, namely: *Cædmon's Hymn* (8th c.), Bede's *Death Song* (8th c.), the *Leiden Riddle* (8th c.), and late Northumbrian interlinear glosses to *Rushworth Gospels* (*Ru*²), *Lindisfarne Gospels* (*Li*) and *Durham Ritual* (*Dur-Rit*), all dated to late 10th c. The Mercian sources comprised the early glossaries: *Épinal Glosssary* (*EpGl*) (8th c.), *Erfurt Glossary* (*ErGl*) (9th c.) and *Corpus Glossary* (*CorpGl*) (9th c.), *Lorica Glosses* (*LorGl*) (9th c.), *Vespasian Psalter* (including the *Canticles* of the Psalter) (*PsGlA*) (9th c.) and the Mercian additions to *Rushworth Gospels* (*Ru*¹), dated to the 10th c. Due to the impressive size of the *i*-declensional type, the quantitative analysis has been restricted for the purpose of the present paper to a subgroup of *i*-stems, namely masculine short-stem nouns, which by the Old English times had not been totally absorbed by the productive type, but still displayed interparadigmatic fluctuation, testifying thus to the process of morphological restructuring in the making.

5.2. The analysis and results

The list of *i*-stems which were included in the quantitative analysis was compiled on the basis of the information found in standard historical grammars: Campbell (1959) and Brunner (1965), and was subsequently checked against a list of Proto-Germanic stems provided by Bammesberger (1992: 128-149). Only words unambiguous etymologically, i.e. those which can be traced back to the Proto-Germanic (not PIE though) *i*-declension, were included in the study and their etymology was verified by recourse to the information found in the *Oxford English dictionary* (*OED*). The following nouns were included in the analysis, not all of which, however, were attested in the analysed corpus: *bere* 'barley', *bite* 'bite', *blice* 'glance', *bryce* 'use, service', *bryne* 'flame', *byge* 'turning', *byre* 'youth, son'[15], *cwide* 'speech', *cyme* 'coming, approach', *cyre* 'choice', *dene* 'valley'[16], *Dene* 'Dane', *dile* 'dill', *drepe* (*drype*) 'blow', *dryre* 'decline',

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[15]   Bammesberger (1990) points to at least three other meanings of the OE *byre* (Go. *baúr* 'son'); these are: (a) 'time, occasion', (b) 'hill, mound', (c) 'gale', and attributes this multiplicity of meanings to the polysemic development of the PGmc **bur-i* (Bammesberger 1990: 132).

[16]   The form *dene* has been attested alongside a parallel short-stemmed feminine formation *denu* 'valley' (Campbell 1959: 242).

dyne 'noise', *ece* 'ache', *ege* 'fear', *ele*[17] 'oil', *flyge* 'flight', *forenyme* 'presumption', *gryre* 'terror', *gyte* 'flood', *hefe* 'weight', *hege* 'hedge', *hete* 'hate', *hryre* 'decay, ruin', *hyge* 'mind', *hype* 'hip', *hyse* 'youth', *gripe* 'grip', (*æt-*, *on-*) *hrine* 'contact', *ile* 'sole', *lyġe* 'lie', *lyre* 'damage', *mene* 'necklace', *mere* 'lake', *mete* 'food', *myne* 'mind', *oftige* 'withholding', *pyle* 'pillow', *ryge* 'rye', *ryne* 'course', *scride* (*scriðe*) 'step', *scyfe* 'instigation', *scyte* 'shooting', *sele* 'room', *sice* 'sigh', *sige* 'victory', *slege* 'blow, beat', *slide* 'fall', *snide* 'slice', *spiwe* 'vomit', *stæpe* 'step', *stede* (*styde*) 'place', *stice* 'puncture', *stige* 'going up or down', *stride* 'stride', *swice* 'smell', *swile* (*swyle*) 'swelling', *sype* 'suction', *ðyle* 'orator, narrator', *wlite* 'beauty', and compounds in *-scipe*, e.g. *bēorscipe* 'feast', *frēondscipe* 'friendship', *wærscipe* 'prudence'. The quantitative analysis investigated the incidence of the original *i*-stem inflectional endings in relation to the innovative *a*-stem endings in the paradigm. The tabulated results of the quantitative analysis of these masculine short *i*-stems are presented in Table 3 below.

Table 3. The distribution of the archaic and innovative inflectional endings in the short masculine *i*-stem paradigm

	archaic		innovative	
	singular	plural	singular	plural
nominative	(37) 58.7%	(4) 44.4%	(26) 41.3%	(5) 55.6%
genitive	–	–	[24] 100%	[5] 100%
dative	–	–	[56] 100%	[9] 100%
accusative	(57) 58.2%	(7) 36.8%	(41) 41.8%	(12) 63.2%

The square brackets were used to present the results for the genitive and dative sg. and pl. which, as had been predicted, due to an early acquisition of the productive inflection, do not show any synchronic alternation. In fact, the expected development of the original genitive and dative forms would have resulted in:

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[17]   Since the history of the word is rather obscure, the preservation of the final *-e* in *oele* has been attributed to the trisyllabic character of this Romance word (**ol-i-um* instead of **ol-jum*, attested by Italian *olio*, Old French *uile*, Spanish *olio*, etc.) (Ross 1937: 77). Just like some other Latin loanwords in West-Germanic, the OE *oele*, *ele* can be accounted for as having involved a replacement of Lat. *-eu-* (> VLat. **-(e)i̯u-*) by the native **-ija-* (a development also to be found in abstract nouns and collectives of the type *lēode*). Of some importance to its interpretation may be the analogy to *cāseus* (~ *-um*) and the fact that *oleum* and *cāseus* were borrowed at roughly the same time: if *cāseus* were adapted as WGmc. **kāsijaz* (WS *cyse*, Ang. *cēse*), *oleum* could have analogically taken the form of **olija > *olī*. Accordingly, the form can be viewed as as an old neuter in **-ija* (having a tendency to move to the masculine paradigm) rather than an original masaculine **i*-stem (Piotr Gąsiorowski, personal communication).

genitive sg. *mete*, genitive pl. *metija* (*metiġa*) and dative pl. *metim* (Hogg 1992: 131). No such form has been attested in the analysed corpus, except for one single formation, the compound *lytisna* 'nearly, within a little' (L. *concedam*), which is believed to be the original genitive sg. of the masculine *i*-stems (< PIE *-isō*), attested in *Erfurt* and *Épinal Glossaries* (cf. Pheifer 1974: 85).

The overall distribution of the *i*-stem vs. *a*-stem inflection in the paradigm of short-stemmed masculine substantives, irrespective of case, is presented in Table 4 below.

Table 4. The overall distribution of short masculine *i*-stem vs. *a*-stem inflection in the analysed material

	i-inflection	*a*-inflection
singular	(94) 58.4%	(67) 41.6%
plural	(11) 39.3%	(17) 60.7%
TOTAL	55.6%	44.4%

The investigated material allows stating that the Old English *i*-stems tend to subvert to the gradual influence of the productive masculine type. The reliability and value of the data for the plural may be limited to a certain extent as relatively few occurrences of these forms have been found in the analysed material and only some tentative conclusions can be drawn to the effect that the expansion of the productive inflectional endings in this category is well advanced, reaching almost 60% for the nominative and over 60% for the accusative. A somewhat different pattern is displayed by the well attested nominative and accusative sg. which, although show an inclination towards the major productive inflection (over 40% of innovative forms), preserve an archaic pattern in close to 60% of the attested forms. The data in Table 4, presenting the overall distribution of archaic and innovative forms in the paradigm, where the former constitute close to 60% and the latter over 40% of the attested forms, indicate clearly that the process of the sway of the productive inflection in the *i*-stem paradigm was well underway in Anglian.

A set of forms representative of the aforementioned tendencies is presented in context in sentences (9)-(29):

9)   gineolicadun twelfe cwedun him forlett ða hergas ðætte\neodun in ða cæstre & lond ðaðe ymb sindun ofcerdun ðæt hi[e]\ngimoettun *metas* forðon her in stowwe woestigre we sindun [*LkGl* (*Ru*)].

10) On ðæm dæge gearuadon hiora *mett* to eastrosymble [*Li Marg Jn*].

11) onduarde ða cuoeð his seðe hæfeð tuege cyrtlas seleð ne vel ðæm næb-bende & \nseðe   hæfeð *metto* gelic doað [*Li Lk*].

12) uæs ðonne in þæt *styd* ðer ahoen uæs lehtun & in lehtun ymbfæstnung
    vel\nbyrgenn niuæ in ðæm ne ðagett vel næfra ær ða ænig monn\ngesetted
    uæs [*Li Jn*].

13) se dæg ða ongann gefara vel gebege & geneolecdon ða tuoelfo cuoedon
    him forlet ða\nhergas þætte geeadon in ða ceastra & londo ðaðe ymb
    sint\nofcerdon ðætte hia gemoeton *metto* forðon her in stowe woestig
    woe\nsindon [*Li Lk*].

14) ðæs vel his ðerh ana vel syndrigo woerc wiste vel to uutanne godspelles in
    him gecuoedna tosceada & ðone *ðeodscip* in him\næs þætte oncnewa vel
    were oncnauen þæt godcund þætte oncnewe\nðæt gecynd ða ðe…
    [*MkArgGl (Li)*].

15) he wutudlice to him cwæð ic *mett* hafo ðone ge vel iowih ne wutun [*JnGl
    (Ru)*].

16) mines lichoman leower ealne gefria ðine plæg sceldæ gescyldendum anra
    gehwylc þæt\nþa sweartan dioflu on minre sidan cueccen swa swa ge-
    wuniað *scytas* [*LorGl2*].

17) forðon ne ingað in heorte his ah in womba & inunn utgongum utgaas
    clænsias alle *metas* [*MkGl (Ru)*].

18) ðu soðlice mon anmod ladtow min & cuða min ðu somud mid mec spoet
    nome *mettas* in huse dryhten we eodon mid geðeafunge [*PsGlA*].

19) For ðon fictreo no tobringeð westem & ne bið cneoris in wingeardum. Le-
    gað werc eletres & feldas ne doð *mettas* [*PsCaA 2 (Kuhn)*].

20) & costadon god in heortum heara ðæt hie beden *mettas* sawlum heara &
    yfle spreocende sind bi gode & cwedun ah meg god\ngearwian biod in
    woestenne [*PsGlA*].

21) gildeð him dryhten unrehtwisnisse heara & in *hetas* heara tostrigdeð hie
    dryhten god ur [*PsGlA*]

22) ða ðohtun *heatas* in heortan alne deg gesettun gefeht [*PsGlA*].

23) Settun swe swe eappultun gehaeld settun ða deadlican ðiowa ðinra *mettas*
    fuglum heofenes & flæsc haligra ðinra wildeorum\nneorðan [*PsGlA*].

24) Anetum *dil* [*ErGl*] vs. anetum *dili* [*CorpGl 1*] sycalia *ryg* [*ErGl*] vs. sicalia
    rygi [*CorpGl 1*]

25) wynsvmiað woesten giwynsvmiað vnbyengo iordan' & folc min gisene bið
    heannisse driht'\n & *megewlit* godes [*DurRit*]. [18]

26) eadig monn se ðe gimoete snytre & se ðe from gifl[e]ve *hogascip* betre is
    tosocnvng his cepinge seolferes & goldes þæt clæneste [*DurRit*].

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[18]   The occasionally attested weak forms of *wlite* derive from the weak masculine equivalent
stem: *wlita*, *-an* (Bosworth – Toller 1898) and cannot be attributed to any analogical influence of
the productive weak declensional type.

27) þonan wes ðu byrne sio gehealdfæste ymb lioma mine innoðas þætte þu ascufe from\nme ða ungesewenlican *slegeas* næglas ða fæstniað þa hatiendan [*LorGl*].

28) onginneð heafudweardo vel *forecuido* vel foremercungo aefter marcus [*Li Jn*].

29) Crates *hegas* [*CorpGl*] (the earliest instance of the extended *-as* ending found in the analysed corpus)

When interpreting the results of the present investigation, attention should be drawn to the nature of the analysed collection, which includes some very early texts, such as glossaries to Latin texts, which by nature display grater archaism in their morphological constitution. For instance, in the early Mercian texts forms of nominative (and occasionally accusative) sg. are often recorded with inflectional *-i*, e.g. *cyri* 'choice', *meri* 'lake' and these are forms attested almost exclusively in the early glosses which are likely to exhibit forms which reflect a more conservative state of the language. A number of very rare archaic forms which preserve the original *-i* ending, found in the analysed material, are presented in sentences (30)-(35) below:

30) Passus faeðm uel tuegen *stridi* [*CorpGl*]

31) stagnum staeg uel *meri* [*ErGl*]

32) Rostrum neb uel scipes *caeli*[*ErGl*]

33) Anetum *dili* [*CorpGl 1*]

34) Delectum *cyri* [*CorpGl 1*]

35) sicalia *rygi* [*CorpGl 1*]

The nouns ending in *-scipe* which have been attested without the final *-e* in the nominative and accusative sg., deserve perhaps some more consideration here. The loss of the final *-e* marker in these formations has been attributed to their trisyllabic structure rather than analogical influence of other declensional type: as trisyllabic formations, they tended to lose the final *-e* marker regularly. Yet, the fact that the final *-e* seems to have been rather consistently preserved in the dative sg. proves that such a phonological explanation can hardly be satisfactory. Accordingly, in the present investigation such endingless forms have been interpreted as indicative of innovation and interparadigmatic reanalysis.[19]

Finally, it must be noted that the dative sg. has been sporadically attested without the expected inflectional *-e* as in the following sentence:

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[19]   Alternatively, Ross (1937: 77-78) claims that the endingless forms are due to a regular phonological development, whereupon the final *-i* had been lost in polysyllabic forms and accordingly, the forms which do contain an ending in the nominative and accusative sg. and not the endingless ones require an explanation.

36) cuoeð forðon se hælend uyrcas vel does þætte ða menn gesitta
    uæs\nuutedlice g[e]rs vel heig micil vel on ðæm *styd* gesetton vel uut-
    edlice\nueras of tal vel getaled suelce fifo ðusendo,

yet such instances were extremely rare in the investigated corpus and were not
included in the quantitative analysis. It may be assumed that they appeared due
to the analogical intraparadigmatic influence of other cases, especially of the
accusative sg., attested frequently without the final inflectional -*e* marker.

6. Concluding remarks

The available data testify to a temporary overlap between the use of conserva-
tive forms and the innovative inflection in the paradigm of *i*-stems. The ab-
sence of forms which would display the original *i*-declensional ending in
heavy stems is indicative of the fact that the transition of long-stemmed nouns
proceeded faster than in the case of short-stem formations where hesitation
between the innovative and archaic inflectional endings can still be observed.
Though the investigated Old English material abounds in competing forms,
indicative of the fact that the system was undergoing a change, the process
certainly cannot be viewed as a sweeping development, affecting the entire
lexical stock. Instead, the frequent and significant fluctuation of forms be-
tween the archaic *i*-stem inflection and the innovative endings of the most
productive declension evinces a slow, but systematic expansion of the latter,
whereby the *i*-declension became gradually unstable. The process conforms
then to the mechanism of restructuring which can be outlined in the following
way: "lexical items are transferred from unstable and stability indifferent
classes towards stable ones, but not the opposite way round…" and "… an
unstable class can be seen as *locus minoris resistentiae* in the system; as such
it is bound to be diachronically eliminated" (Bertacca 2001: 84). The gradual-
ness of the process seems to be corroborated by the fact that it was not until
the end of the 12th century that the *s*-plural declension had been extended to
all declensional classes in the North and North Midland (Roedler 1916: 451;
cf. Brunner 1965; Wright – Wright 1908).
    The very straightforward statement by Lass (1997: 104) to the effect that on
the basis of paradigm structure, "'original' masculine *i*-stems are for the most
part synchronically *a*-stems in Old English…" can certainly be justified if one
takes into consideration the whole class of *i*-stems, including long stems (mas-
culine and feminine) where no synchronic alternation is present any longer. To
apply this statement to the little subgroup of masculine *i*-stems however, would
be an oversimplification as the structure of the original paradigm is still pre-
served here, especially in the singular.

Certainly the factor which must be held responsible for the gradual, yet substantial shift from the minor to major declensional type is the working of analogical process, aimed essentially at leveling the irregularity within the paradigm. Analogy, however, could not be the sole disintegrative factor, and thus, a number of additional factors need be taken into account. In order to explain the motivation behind the transition, Hogg (1980: 283) resorts to functional considerations, drawing attention to functional strength of various inflectional endings. Accordingly, the substitution of the productive -*as* ending for the original, inherited -*i* is viewed as a factor permitting to keep the distinction between the singular and plural in the nominative and accusative cases. The existence of a group of *pluralia tanta* which comprises primarily nouns of tribes and nationalities, preserving the final -*e* in nominative/accusative pl. (e.g. *Myrče, Dene, Seaxe*), is adduced to demonstrate the postulated functional pressure. The operation of analogical process is thus encouraged by the need to mark the functional distinction between singular and plural.

On the other hand, it seems plausible that through various phonological processes actively operating within the paradigm and leading to the generalization of one common -*e* ending, this declensional type lost its communicative function very early and was ready to appropriate endings from the stronger, more influential and expansive paradigms, i.e. *a*-stems and *ō*-stems. In fact, the phonological developments which affected the paradigm of *i*-stems (as well as other paradigms), namely the reduction of the unaccented back vowels to *schwa*, have been perceived as the primary trigger for the restructuring of the Old English nominal system. According to Wurzel (1989), the expansion of the plural marker -*as* was initiated by the loss of the characteristic nominative sg. morpheme -*i*- (alongside -*u*-) in long syllable masculine *i*- and *u*-stems, whereupon these nouns, could no longer be distinguished from the *a*-stems (*wyrm-as*, *feld-as*). The group of long-stem nouns was soon to be followed by short stems of *i*- and *u*- inflectional class (*win-as*, *sun-as*). It is the extramorphological processes then, namely phonological reduction and deletion, so characteristic of the Germanic languages, that were of crucial importance for the spread of *a*-stem plurals (Wurzel 1989: 102-103). Another determinant which may be germane to the gradual obliteration of the morphological structure of nominal inflection, as noticed by Kastovsky (1995), is the change in the status of stem formative, which, provided it was not lost, was reanalysed as a case-number exponent. Accordingly, the reflex of the original *i*-stem formative, the final vowel -*e* (as in OE *cyre*), was reinterpreted as part of the stem (*cyre#*) on the pattern of -*a*, -*ja* stems (*here*) which had no ending in the nominative and accusative singular (referred to as unmarked base form) (Kastovsky 1995: 228;

Keyser – O'Neil 1985: 101).[20] Such restructuring led to a situation where class affiliation "… was therefore no longer marked explicitly by a morphological segment, but became an implicit morphological property of the stem, i.e. was largely unpredictable" (Kastovsky 1995: 228) (cf. Hogg 1980: 282).

The limits of the present study must certainly be recognised when drawing some more general conclusions about the process of reorganisation of the *i*-stem declension, namely the fact that the present analysis has been confined to one subgroup of the *i*-stem class, which still in Old English showed some synchronic variation. Granted that the long-stem nouns, both masculine and feminine, had taken over the productive declension almost entirely by the Old English period, it can be safely assumed that the extent of the influence must have been even greater and more prominent than the present investigation proves. A more comprehensive and detailed study, comprising nouns of all three genders, both short and long-stemmed, would certainly afford a broader perspective on the pattern of developments within the entire *i*-stem declension.

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[20]   The evidence for such an interpretation comes from compounding, e.g. *winescipe* 'friendship, *wineleas* 'friendless', *spereleas* 'without a point', *sperenīþ* 'spear strife', where the first element of the compound, containing the once inflectional ending *-e*, constitutes the stem form (Keyser – O'Neil 1985: 101).

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