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TYPOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT OF RECONSTRUCTION: DID INDO-EUROPEAN HAVE INCLUSIVE AND EXCLUSIVE FIRST PERSON PLURAL PERSONAL PRONOUNS?

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This brief article attempts to apply current typological theory about the structure of person-marking paradigms to reconstructions of early Indo-European personal pronoun declension and early Indo-European verbal conjugation in order to determine whether or not such application can shed light on the traditional debate about whether or not an inclusive/exclusive opposition can be ascribed to the proto-language. Despite the demonstrated positive value of typology in assessing the plausibility of reconstructions, the conclusion reached here is that current typological theory is very limited in its ability to resolve this particular issue of historical/comparative Indo-European linguistics.

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In the reconstruction of the early Indo-European personal pronominal paradigm, a matter of contention has been whether or not the opposition of *inclusive* and *exclusive* first person plural forms should be ascribed to the proto-language. As MALLORY & ADAMS (1997: 454) point out, “The presence of *w- in both the first and second persons plural [i.e., 1st pl. nom. *we-: Skt. *vayám*, OCS *vě*; 2nd pl acc. *w(e/o)s: Aeol. *úmme*, OCS *vasь*) has suggested to some [e.g., PROKOSCH 1939: 282] that at some very early stage of Indo-European there may have been a distinction, as there is in many languages, between a first person plural *exclusive* (‘we’, i.e., ‘I and some others but not you’) whose form would be *we-, and a first person *inclusive* (‘we’. i.e., ‘I and you’) whose form would be *ne- [e.g., 1st pl. acc. Lat. *nōs*, OCS *nasь*). According to this hypothesis, when the inclusive/exclusive distinction collapsed, the form *we- was reassigned as both a first person plural (nominative) and a second person plural (non-nominative)”. Recently scholars like GAMKRELIDZE & IVANOV (1995: 253) and LEHMANN (2002: 189) have endorsed this proposal because of their positing an original “active” syntactic structure for early Indo-European and because of the association of active languages with the inclusive/exclusive opposition. On the other hand, other Indo-Europeanists like MEIER-BRÜGGER (2003: 251–252) emphatically assert that, in the absence of more direct evidence, “the distinction between the inclusive first person plural [...] and exclusive

first person plural [...] cannot be reconstructed in Proto-Indo-European”. In recent years it has become widely accepted that “linguistic typology can profitably be utilized in order to determine the possibility or probability of reconstructions” (SONG 2001: 305). In this brief paper I wish to explore the plausibility of reconstructing inclusive and exclusive first person plural personal pronouns as part of the early Indo-European pronoun inventory in light of important new research on the typology of person-marking paradigms. This typological assessment focuses on my own reconstruction of the number of person/number oppositions within the early Indo-European personal pronoun paradigm and Michael CYSOUW’s identification of significant typological generalizations (2003) based on such oppositions.

For two decades I have written extensively about the structure of the early Indo-European personal pronoun system and its development into the dialects (cf., e.g., SHIELDS 1986, 1987a, b, 1993a, b, 1994, 1998, 1999a, b, 2001a, b, c, Forthcoming), and the starting point for my analyses has consistently been a paradigm reconstructed as follows:

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

According to my view, in this paradigm “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). From a typological perspective, this reconstructed pronominal system is what FORSCHHEIMER (1953: 53–54) characterizes as IIIA, “with a lexical plural in the first person and no plural in the other persons and in nouns”. A detailed justification for this reconstruction appears in SHIELDS (1986), but I nevertheless wish to address here some conspicuous structural features of my hypothesis which potentially play a key role in the typological assessment of ascribing an inclusive/exclusive opposition to the reconstructed pronominal paradigm.

In the first place, I maintain that dual forms were absent in the early Indo-European set of personal pronouns. In SHIELDS (1982: 64–72) and (1992: 65–83), I argue at length that the dual inflectional category emerged at a very late date – an argument based, in part, on the attested underdevelopment of specific inflectional forms and the variety of attested dual markers. Indeed, I follow LEHMANN (1974: 201–202) in asserting that the marking of the non-singular in general “was not consistently applied in late PIE and the early dialects. Subsequently application became more regular, and number congruence was carried out for both substantives and verbs”. If an inflectional plural was a late development, then the dual was later still since, according to the “Number Hierarchy”, “no language has a dual unless it has a plural” (GREENBERG 1966: 94; cf. CROFT 1990: 98–100). Of course, the lack of an obligatory inflectional non-singular category does not preclude the existence of dual pronouns since early Indo-European personal pronouns marked non-singularity suppletively, not inflectionally. However, the failure of nouns and verbs to manifest specific non-singular forms would imply that the formal realization of non-singularity in pronouns was conservative. Such an interpretation is suggested by the fact that the plural and the dual personal pronouns of the historical dialects are very similar formally, apparently belying a common etymo-

logical source (cf., e.g., 1st pl. nom. **we-*: Skt. *vayám*; Go. *weis*; 1st du. nom. **we-* [with lengthened vowel]: Ved. *vám*, OCS *vě*). In SHIELDS (2004) I demonstrate that attested dual personal pronouns like Lith. *vėdu* ‘we two’ and OE *wit* ‘we two’ “are derivable from [...] the [plural] pronoun stem plus a variant of the numeral ‘2’” (25) – a development consistent with the important typological principle that “the primary exponents of the dual generally bear an etymological connection to the numeral ‘2’” (SHIELDS 2004: 22; cf. CORBETT 2000: 267–268). A final very compelling piece of evidence that no dual personal pronouns are to be reconstructed for early Indo-European is that the most conservative of Indo-European dialects – Hittite – shows no trace of dual personal pronouns.

Secondly, I do not believe that early Indo-European had a special second person plural personal pronoun which contrasted with the second person singular form in **te-*. The significant variety in attested second person plural personal pronouns is indicative of the late emergence of such a lexical item. Thus, in reconstructing a common Indo-European etymon for the second person plural personal pronoun, BEEKES (1995: 209) acknowledges such dialectal variety and bemoans the fact that “the forms of ‘you’ (pl.) present us with the greatest number of problems” in arriving at a reasonable etymology. However, despite this apparent variety, I follow SZEMERÉNYI (1996: 217–218) in recognizing an interesting formal parallel between the second person singular and the second person plural, implying once again a common etymological source. The variant plural in **we/os* (cf., e.g., OCS acc.-gen. *vasъ*, Lat. gen. *vostrī*) “is itself simplified from **twes*, the regular plural of **tu* (cf. **mes* from **em-es*); this is confirmed by the verbal ending *-tes*, which represents a simplification in internal position of **twes*.” In SHIELDS (1986: 18–19) I derive the second person singular pronoun in **twe-* from a contamination of stem-alternates in **te-* and **tu*, the latter being “created from the following proportional analogy:

$$\begin{array}{l} *t\bar{e} (< *te + \text{deictic particle } *i) : *te \\ *t\bar{u} (< *te + \text{deictic particle } *u) : x.^{1} \end{array}$$

In other words, as the pronominal system evolved, various stem-alternates appeared through the affixation of deictic particles to derive emphatic forms (SHIELDS 1994) and through processes of sound change and analogy; and these newly-emerging stem-alternates were specialized in somewhat different ways in later Indo-European and the historical dialects. It was to the second person (singular) stem-alternate in **twe-* that an inflectional (and therefore late-appearing) plural marker in *-(*e/o*)*s* was added. As far as the “simplification” of second person plural **twes* to **wes* is concerned, SZEMERÉNYI (1978: 277) points out that “since in Indo-European many words ended in a dental stop, the initial **wes* was deglutinated, i.e. a sequence **k^wit-twes* for instance reduced to **k^wit-wes* and from such collocations an independent **wes* was generalized”.

In his important book *The Paradigmatic Structure of Person Marking* (2003), Michael Cysouw approaches the structures of personal pronoun (and other person-marking) paradigms in a novel way. Instead of characterizing these paradigms in terms of the simple intersection of number (singular, dual, plural, trial, etc.) and person (first, second, third)

¹ On the affixation of deictic particles to derive emphatic pronominal forms, see SHIELDS (1994). The proposed monophthongization of word-final **-ei* (> **-ē*) and **-eu* (> **-ū*) is based on SCHMALSTIEG (1973, 1980: 21–45). See SHIELDS (1986, 1998) for full details.

(cf., e.g., FORSCHHEIMER 1953), he investigates the possible intersections of person and “speech act participants”. This approach is far more accurate since “semantically, the notion ‘plural’ is not suitable for words like *we* because *we* is not the plural of *I*” (CYSOUW 2003: 296) and since pronominal “plural” can embrace a variety of different “groups of participants”. Within the context of this analysis, he also characterizes paradigms in terms of potential homophonies between persons and numbers (i.e., “groups of participants”). He uses the term “horizontal homophony” to refer to “homophony between two categories, one of which is singular and one of which is non-singular” (2003: 299); the term “vertical homophony” to refer to “homophony between two categories, both of which are non-singular” (2003: 302); and the term “singular homophony” to refer to “a homophony between categories, both of which are singular” (2003: 301). These terms are obviously derived from the classic chart-form presentation of pronoun paradigms. Of special relevance here is CYSOUW’s contention (2003: 161), based on an extensive sample of languages, that “vertical homophony is attested in paradigms with an inclusive/exclusive opposition, although it is rare”, whereas “singular homophony is completely unattested in paradigms without an inclusive/exclusive opposition”. However, horizontal homophony, especially second- and third-person homophony of the so-called “Kwakiutl-type”, is common among languages possessing the inclusive/exclusive opposition.² This kind of homophony is also common among languages lacking this opposition (the so-called “Berik-type”), and such languages may regularly show the presence or absence of vertical and singular homophony (CYSOUW 2003: 161–162), leading to the conclusion that “paradigms without an inclusive/exclusive opposition are much more varied in structure”. Therefore, it would appear that current typological theory involving person-marking paradigms offers little in the way of resolving the dilemma presented to Indo-Europeanists regarding the inclusive/exclusive opposition in personal pronouns since the reconstructed system presented earlier shows only horizontal homophony involving the second and third persons³ – a structural feature characteristic of both inclusive/exclusive languages and non-inclusive/exclusive languages. A more traditional reconstruction of Indo-European personal pronouns (cf. FORTSON 2004: 126–129) would present the same ambiguity since the original presence of a second person plural in **yu-*, duals in **us-* (1st pers.) and **ns-* (2nd pers.), and fully inflected non-singular demonstratives as third person pronouns would result in a paradigm with no homophonies at all.

Although current typological evidence involving the structure of person-marking paradigms yields no firm conclusions about the role of the inclusive/exclusive opposition for early Indo-European independent forms like personal pronouns, I do believe it offers insight into the role of this opposition in dependent person marker paradigms like verbal suffixes, which operate according to the same principles of paradigmatic homophony. In SHIELDS (1992: 14–16), I point out (cf., e.g., WATKINS 1962: 105; ERHART 1970: 113; SCHMALSTIEG 1980: 101) that “the attested tripartite division within the category of person in the verb [...] appears to have developed gradually”. ERHART (1970: 56–58) thus argues that in early Indo-European, “es bestand wohl damals noch kein Unterscheid zwischwen der 2. und der

² The exception to this generalization would be paradigms that distinguish inclusive from exclusive with “a minimal/augmented inclusive opposition”, i.e., the paradigm has separate forms for speaker/listner and speaker/listener/others (SIEWIERSKA 2004: 101).

³ Since demonstrative pronouns at an early date would have lacked inflectional marking for non-singularity, one can assume horizontal homophony of singular and non-singular forms in the third person.

3. Person, zwischen dem Plural und dem Singular usw.” and supports this claim “by noting that the *t(h)*-element which is traditionally ascribed to the third person (singular) (e.g., Skt. *-t*, *-ti*, Gk. *-ti*, Hitt. *-t*, *-zi*, Lat. *-t*) is also attested in the second person singular (e.g., Hitt. *-t*, *-ta*, *-tari*, Toch. AB *-t*, A *-tār*, *-te*, B *-tar*, *-tai*, Skt. *-tha*, *-thās*, Gk. *-thēs*, Go. *-t*) and non-singular (dual-plural) (e.g., Skt. *-ta*, *-tha*, *-tam*, Gk. *-te*, *-ton*, Hitt. *-teni*, Toch. A *-c*, *-cār*, Lat. *-tis*, *-te*, Go. *-þ*, Lith. *-te*, *-ta*) and that ‘in einigen Personalendungen der 2. Person (Sg. u. Pl.) stehen die Elemente *s* [the traditionally reconstructed marker of the second person (singular), cf. Skt. *-s*, *-si*, Gk. *-s*, *-si*, Hitt. *-š*, *-ši*, Lat. *-s*] and *t(h)* nebeneinander: gr. *stha*, het. *šta*, *šten(i)*, toch. A *st*, B *sta*, lat. *istī*, *istis*” (SHIELDS 1992: 14–15). ERHART (1970: 58) concludes that “die Endungen der 2. Person (aller drei Numeri) enthalten zum Teil denselben Kern [...] wie die meisten Endungen der 3. Person Sing. Der Unterscheid *t* (3. u. 2. Ps.) : *th* (nur 2. Ps.) ist vielleicht in der Weise zu deuten, dass die schon seit der pie. Periode bestehende phonetische Variation *t* ~ *th* später zur sekundären Differenzierung grammatischer Formen ausgenützt worden ist”. As additional evidence in support of this hypothesis involving the original functional identity of **-s* and **-t(h)*, **-s* is attested in certain third person (singular) suffixes (e.g., Hitt. *daiš* ‘he placed,’ Toch. A *prākās*, B *preksa* ‘he asked,’ Skt. *bhūyās* ‘he should have been’, *dhās* ‘he put’, OPers. *āiš* ‘he went’, ON *brýtr* (< **breutiz*) ‘he breaks’) (SHIELDS 1992: 15). In short, it would seem, then, that early Indo-European verb inflection contrasted a personal (first person) category and a non-personal (second/third person) category marked by both **-s* and **-t(h)* and that the differentiation of the latter into a specifically second and a specifically third person was a later development. Thus, it would also seem to be the case that at the stage of development when person-marking verbal inflection began to appear in Indo-European, there existed a vertical homophony between the second and third person – an homophony generally inconsistent with an inclusive/exclusive opposition in its paradigm. In regard to vertical homophony in the paradigms of languages with an inclusive/exclusive distinction, CYSOUW (2003: 161) emphasizes that “the 2/3-homophony is especially rare, being almost unattested”. Now it is common for dependent person markers to “involve less encoding than independent ones” (SIEWIERSKA 2004: 46), so the lack of an inclusive/exclusive opposition in verbal paradigms has no ramifications for its appearance in pronouns. Still, typological considerations would suggest that, if early Indo-European did indeed manifest the inclusive/exclusive distinction at all, it was most likely limited to personal pronouns and never realized in verbal paradigms. Although variation exists in the attested forms of verbal suffixes in Indo-European dialects, this variation should not be and generally has not been associated etymologically with an original inclusive/exclusive opposition.

My scholarship through the years has consistently endorsed the utility of subjecting reconstructions of proto-languages to tests of typological plausibility (cf., e.g., SHIELDS 1992: 4–10). However, despite a general recognition on the part of many Indo-Europeanists that typology is a useful tool for historical/comparative linguistics (cf. FOX 1995: 247–274), current theory about the typology of person-marking paradigms cannot seem to resolve the question about whether or not Indo-European first person personal pronouns had inclusive and exclusive variants.⁴

⁴ Of course, the “population typology” approach pioneered by NICHOLS (1992) sheds some light on this issue since it demonstrates that the inclusive/exclusive opposition is not characteristic of Old World language groups like Indo-European (NICHOLS 1992: 196–200).

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