

## OLD IRISH *INNE*

DISCUSSING Liam Breatnach's explanation<sup>1</sup> of Old Irish *inne* 'quality; nature, etc.' as an *iā*-abstract from the preposition *in*, E. P. Hamp, in this journal,<sup>2</sup> writes: 'Breatnach, in a footnote, is diffident on the old and sure spelling *-nn-*; it is, in fact, the "lectio difficilior", and must be accepted and respected. The definite article itself teaches us that we must not conflate the development of *nn* in proclitics with that in stressed words nor seek a flow of transfer between these two accentual classes where the conditions for analogy do not obtain'.<sup>3</sup>

However, Hamp's own reconstructions (*\*endīn-iā* > *\*indīniā* > *\*indīneia* > *\*īnd'īn'e* > *\*īndr'e* > *īn'e*)<sup>4</sup> being in obvious conflict with Old Irish phonological rules, do not 'respect' *inne* as the 'lectio difficilior': well attested forms such as Wb. 10a21 *indnite* (2 sg. imperative), Wb. 4a19 *indnide*, 23b27 *indnidu* (verbal noun) (from a stem *\*indi-ni-sed-*), show beyond doubt that a (stressed) preform of the shape *\*indi-niyā* would have given Classical Old Irish *\*indne*. Since, for the reasons given by Hamp, the idea that the *-nn-* in the stressed word *inne* has been taken over from the proclitic form of the preposition *inn* seems unlikely, the old spelling *-nn-* remains puzzling.<sup>5</sup>

Supposing that the spelling *-nn-* here means [-N-], a simple explanation of the origin of *inne* (e.g. Wb. 7c1, 27b27, acc. *inni* 12d5) can be found along the following lines. Non-ambiguous evidence shows that the suffix *\*-no-* could be used to form adjectives from prepositions and adverbs in many Indo-European languages,<sup>6</sup> e.g. *\*pr-no* (< *\*pr-*, cf. Skt. *purā*, Goth. *faur* 'before') in Old Icelandic *forn* 'old', *\*per-no-* (< *\*per-*, cf. Skt. *par-* in *par-ūt* 'last year') in Gothic *af fairnin jera* 'of last year', Lith. (adv.) *pėrnai* 'last year', Goth. *fairneis*, OHG *firni* 'old' (*\*-iyo-*stem). A further example is *\*kom-no-* in Oscan (substantivized) *comono* (acc. pl. neut.) 'comitia', *comenei* (loc. sg.) from *com* 'cum'.

On purely theoretical grounds it is thus possible to speculate whether, in the case of the preposition *\*en*, there might not have been an adjective of the shape *\*en-no-* 'inner, interior' in pre-Celtic, structurally identical with the *\*kom-no-* seen in Osc. *comono*: an *iā*-abstract 'the interior' from this adjective would have had the shape *\*en-n-iyā*:<sup>7</sup> the latter form would have given Old Irish *inne* by regular phonetic development.

<sup>1</sup> L. Breatnach, 'On Abstract Nouns from Prepositions in Irish', *Celtica* 15 (1983) 18–19.

<sup>2</sup> E. P. Hamp, 'Varia', *Celtica* 22 (1991) 33–47, p. 33f.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 32. Breatnach, 'On Abstract Nouns from Prepositions in Irish', p. 18, note 1, writes: 'The form *inne* is well attested in the Würzburg Glosses; cf. *DIL s.v.* We should probably expect *\*inde* or perhaps even *\*ine*; see Thurneysen, *Grammar*, 842. I take it that the *-nn-* has been taken over from the form of the preposition *inn*, which is found in the earlier period before proclitics beginning with a vowel; cf. *DIL*, I col. 1.'

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. p. 33.

<sup>5</sup> We would expect the Classical Old Irish reflex of a stressed *iā*-abstract from the two variant forms of this preposition (i.e. *\*en* and *\*eni* to have been *\*ine* < *\*en-iyā*, *\*eni-yā*).

<sup>6</sup> See K. Brugmann and B. Delbrück, *Grundriss der vergleichenden Grammatik der indogermanischen Sprachen* 5 parts (Strassburg 1897–1900) ii2 1, p. 270.

<sup>7</sup> For the form cf. the *iyo*-stem seen in Goth. *fairneis*, OHG *firni*.

The above speculation finds some support in extra-Celtic material: genetically, the supposed pre-Celtic adjective *\*en-no-* 'inner, interior' may, in fact, be identical with the pre-Germanic *\*en-no-* that seems to underlie the adverb Goth. *inna* 'inside, within', OIcel., OE *inne*, OHG *inna*, *inni*, *inne*, etc.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Cf. K. Brugmann, 'Zur nominalen Stammbildung der germanischen Sprachen', *Indogermanische Forschungen* 33 (1913/14) 300–313 p. 304, and see also Hj. Falk og A. Torp, *Etymologisk Ordbog over det norske og danske Sprog* p. 25. Brugmann, *ibid.* p. 304f., however, assuming that an irregular dissimilatory loss of median vowels could occur in some cases in tri- and polysyllabic forms in Germanic, unconvincingly suggests that Goth. *inna* may be from orig. *\*eni-no-*. Feist's assumption of a Germanic *\*enno-* "mit germ. emphatischer Verdoppelung" (S. Feist, *Vergleichendes Wörterbuch der gotischen Sprache* (Leiden 1939) p. 293) is entirely *ad hoc*.