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**Constraining "Inflectional Contamination": On the *i*-stem Inflection of Latin *cîvis***

The *i*-stem inflection of Lat. *cîvis* ‘citizen’ is historically anomalous: the underlying *\*k'éywo-* (cf. Ved. *s'éva-* ‘dear’) should have resulted in an *o*-stem Lat. <sup>x</sup>*cîuos*. There is no solution via inflectional morphology, since no close ties connect *o*-stem and *i*-stem inflection in Latin. Nor is there an obvious derivational account: *o*-stem and *i*-stem patterns sometimes alternate synchronically, but these alternations involve well-defined derivational relationships (e.g. compound *inermis* beside simplex *arma*); nor does *cîvis* fall into any known class of Latin secondary *i*-stems (as in the adjectival type *leuis*, *grauis*, etc., continuing old *u*-stems). Faced with such a conundrum, there is apparently little recourse but to a “contamination” analysis; i.e., a semantically related *i*-stem may have exerted sufficient pressure to induce the form’s change of inflectional class. This is the solution found in all Latin handbooks: the alleged culprit is Lat. *hostis* ‘(public) enemy’, well-attested in paired collocations with *cîvis*, as often noted.

Apart from the troubling absence of any evidence for a thematic <sup>x</sup>*cîuos* in Latin, this account is superficially attractive, given the commonplace assumption that antonymic pairs are often involved in “contamination” developments. Yet no standard treatment of lexical contamination cites a case precisely like Lat. “<sup>x</sup>*cîuos* X *hostis* &mdash;> *cîvis*”, in which the lexeme undergoing influence by contamination ends up in an unrelated inflectional class. There is also a semantic complication, never considered heretofore: the Latin *i*-stem underlying *hostis* preserves a meaning very different from ‘enemy’ or ‘stranger’ (namely ‘[something given in] exchange’, cf. *hostia* ‘sacrificial victim’ and *hostîre* ‘compensate’, closer to the inherited meaning of PIE *\*g<sup>h</sup>es-*, cf. OHitt. *kâssas* ‘in exchange for’); thus a pre-Latin <sup>x</sup>*keywo-* will have been in contact with a pre-Latin *\*hosti-* that covered a broader semantic range than simply ‘enemy, stranger’. One may thus entertain legitimate doubts about this traditional method of accounting for the *i*-stem inflection of *cîvis* as the result of a simplistic (and possibly questionable) “inflectional contamination”.

A more satisfactory alternative relies on a derivational source in an inherited *i*-stem, namely *i*-stem abstracts formed to *o*-stem adjectives, an inherited pattern well-attested in Latin. The original *o*-stem adjective *\*k'éywo-* ‘socially close’ would have had a regular *i*-stem abstract *\*k'éywi-* ‘societal closeness’, i.e. (abstract) ‘society’ (“socially close relationship”), whence also a concretized ‘society’ (“socially close group of people; the members of a society”). It is this form (and its associated adjectives *\*k'eywiko-*, *\*k'eywîli-*) which, under influence from *hostis* (and *hosticus*, *hostîlis*) could have back-formed a “singulative” sense ‘(fellow) citizen’, essentially as a semantic Kontrârbildung to *hostis*. The older sense of *\*k'eywi-* was then replaced with *\*k'eywi-tât-* (*cîuitâs*). This conception points to the advisability of constraining “inflectional contamination” accounts in general, and suggests reconsideration of other such cases in Latin and elsewhere.