

***-gin** Runic:  Pronunciation: /yin/

particle

Function

forms indefinite and negative-polarity adverbs and pronouns, with the sense ‘ever, at all, any, some-’

Etymology

Probably from a Proto-Northwest Germanic suffix, **-gin*, from an earlier postposed clitic **-k^wena*, from Proto-Indo-European **k^we-na*, the formally and semantically weakened clitic counterpart of **k^wó-na*. The latter was a modal or instrumental adverbial derivative of the PIE interrogative-indefinite stem **k^wó-/*k^wí-*, formed with the fossilized adverbial ending **-na* (Dunkel 2014: 481–84). The voiced **g* is from Verner’s Law due to early cliticization. The **i* is from raising of **e* before a tautosyllabic nasal after reduction of the clitic to a closed syllable, i.e. **-g^wen/*-gen* > **-gin*; unreduced **-g^wena* would not itself have triggered this raising (Fulk 2018: 57; Ringe 2017: 173–74). Cognates include Vedic Sanskrit चन (caná) and Avestan 𐬀𐬀𐬀𐬀 (cinā), continuing Indo-Iranian **čana* < PIE **k^wena*. (Dunkel 2014: 482–84). The Gothic suffix -hunn (-hun) is functionally parallel, especially in negative expressions, but formally distinct. It continues PIE **ku-na*, from the local/interrogative particle **kú*.

Usage Note

Used especially after interrogative or relative bases, as in formations meaning ‘anywhere, nowhere, ever, at all’.

Descendants

***-gin** (Proto-West Germanic)

- gin (iowergin, niergen)** (Old Dutch)
 - gen (ergen, nergen)** (Middle Dutch)
 - gens (ergens, nergens)** (Dutch)

***-gin** (Proto-West Germanic)

- ġen (hwerġen, hwærn)** (Old English)

***-gin** (Proto-West Germanic)

- gin (wergin)** (Old High German)
 - gen (irgen)** (Middle High German)
 - irgend** (German)

***-gin** (Proto-West Germanic)

- gin (hwargin, hwergin)** (Old Saxon)
 - gen (irgen, jergen, jerne)** (Middle Low German)

-gi (Old Norse)

- hverken, ingen, ikke, aldrig, ej** (Danish)
 - hvergi, manngi, hvorki, hvorugur, einungis, enginn, vettugi, öldungis** (Icelandic)

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