THE NOMINATIVE SINGULAR OF r-STEMS

Witold Mańczak¹ will perhaps be somewhat relieved to learn that I now no longer believe that the truly original PIE form of the nominative singular was *-ē. But I continue to find it much too costly a solution to choose immediately the route of independant innovations in the separate branches, even if it were only in Balto-Slavic and Indo-Nuristani-Iranian that we needed the solution. Entia non multiplicanda sunt... Moreover, we must first bend every effort to relate the behaviour of these kindred branches and also that of the partially identical r- and nasal-stems. Only if our reasoning meets with direct empirical or principled refutation may we abandon a unified explanation. Secondly, I cannot on principle subscribe to an argument of irregularity; in the spirit of Leskien, which continues today also in properly understood variationist theory, I insist that we must discover the intersecting context which conserves the principle of regularity.

Mańczak will see² that I find the most inclusive and explanatory formulation of the relevant phenomena to be the assumption that pre-IE *-VRs > *-V:R, that with recessive accent the vocalism surfaced as *o, and that when not oxytone the final resonant in these overlong PIE syllables dropped. The way was then open for dialects (e. g. Helleno-Armenian) to restore the final *-R, as I have stated elsewhere, either from *-ē:R or from the underlying lexical *R. The condition remaining to be specified is the retraction of the accent in *bhrāHte:, i. e. *bhrāHter-, guaranteed by Indic, Greek, and Germanic.

Baltic and Slavic, on the other hand, generalized the form in *-e: without *-r regardless of the accent.

I do not agree at all with the explanations offered for Slavic brat and bratrę. Of course, brat cannot be a simple reduction of bratrę, at least if we are to preserve any notion of regularity and orderly explanation. I contend that we must here bear in mind two important facts: the merger in the Slavic kinship system of the surface

terms for ‘sibling’ and ‘cousin’, and the parallel anomaly to bratře found in sestrá. The last two must be in origin perfectly regular adjectival or appurtenance formations, *bhrātr-o-s and *sesr-ā, just as I have claimed for Albanian motrē ‘sister’ < *mātr-ā. The Slavic semantics and duplicate form is founded on the merger in kinship terminology, while the Albanian lexical displacement (and truncation of a noun phrase) arises from the social structure and terminology of a Southeast European village. Thus only brat is to be derived ultimately from *bhrāHte: itself.

In discussing the Indic (and Iranian), as well as the Armenian, reflexes of ‘daughter’, Mańczak gives no consideration to the important Prasun and Nuristani forms that I have discussed. Besides, his picture of the Armenian side is incomplete; and he fails to take account of the important new Gaulish evidence in ductir, not to mention Old Irish Der-, on which see MSS 33, 1975, 39–40.

Mańczak’s assumption that my argument has any connexion with Bartoli’s lateral areas is totally misplaced.

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4 Szemerényi’s argument on the duplication of laryngeal reflex has no force since precisely that is found in Indic máhi = Greek μέγα.