J. H. Jasanoff

LANGUAGE AND GENDER IN THE TARIM BASIN:
THE TOCHARIAN 1 SG. PRONOUN

§1. The pronoun of the first person singular in Tocharian is given by
Krause and Thomas (1960: 162) as follows:[1]

	A	B
nom. / obl.	**näṣ** m., **ñuk** f.	**ñäṣ** (**ñiṣ**)
gen.	**ñi** m., **nāñi** f.	**ñi**
suffixed	**-ñi**	**-ñ**

This paradigm shows three remarkable and problematic features: 1) the
characteristic initial consonant is **ñ-** or **n-**, and not **m-** as in the other IE
languages (cf. Ved. **mā**, **me**, etc.; Gk. (**'ε**)**μέ**, (**'ε**)**μοί**, etc.; Lat. **mē**, **mihi**, etc.);
2) the B nom. / obl. form **ñäṣ** cannot be reconciled with either of the
corresponding nom. / obl. forms in A (**näṣ**, **ñuk**) under the normal
Tocharian sound laws; and 3) the opposition of gender seen in A **näṣ**, **ñi**
(masc.) vs. **ñuk**, **nāñi** (fem.) is unparalleled elsewhere in Indo-European.
These anomalies make a detailed historical account of the attested forms
difficult, even though their ultimate connection with the familiar PIE **ego** :
me pronoun can hardly be doubted. In the discussion that follows we will
take up each problem in turn, reserving for last what is surely the most
puzzling — the contrast between distinct masculine and feminine forms.

§2. **The source of ñ- and n-**. There is fairly wide agreement that
the initial consonant of the 1 sg. pronoun is in some way connected with
the *-**n-** that appears in the Iranian and Balto-Slavic genitives YAv. **mana**,
OP **manā**, OCS **mene** and Lith. **manę̃s** (younger **màno**) "mei".[2] A form of
this type must once have existed in Tocharian as well, since the Tocharian
2 sg. and reflexive genitives A **tñi**, **ṣñi**, B **tañ**, **ṣañ** imply preforms *****tene**

(or *tune) and *sene, which could only have been created on the model of an inherited *mene. The relationship of *mene to the attested gen. sg. AB ñi is evidently the same as that of *tene (*tune) and *sene to A tñi (< CT *t(ä)ñäi) and ṣñi (< CT *ṣ(ä)ñäi). The etymological final diphthong of the latter forms probably represents a secondary added case ending, perhaps the i-stem gen. sg. in *-eis; unextended *-ne is still preserved in B tañ, ṣañ. Under the usual assumptions about Tocharian phonology, a refashioned *meneis (*vel sim.*) would first have given *m'äñäi, whence, by syncope and subsequent cluster reduction, *m'ñäi, *ñäi, and ultimately AB ñi. Once established in the genitive, CT *ñ- would have been in a position to spread to other forms, such as the enclitics *-ñäi (A -ñi; cf. Gk. μοι) and *-ñä (B -ñ; cf. Gk. με), and the more obscure antecedents of A ñuk and B ñäṣ.

This is fundamentally the explanation of ñ- offered by G. Schmidt in his study of the PIE personal pronouns (1978: 28-9, 87-8).[3] Its main weakness is phonological: since Schmidt assumes palatalization to have preceded syncope of *ä and syncope of *ä to have preceded cluster reduction of *m'ñ- to *ñ-, he is unable to explain the presence of unpalatalized n- in A näṣ and näñi. As we will see below, this problem is illusory for näṣ but real enough for näñi, a form which must go back to an innovated feminine "ā-stem" genitive of the type *māne(is). If all the forms of the 1 sg. pronoun in fact acquired their initial consonant from the gen. sg. masc. *ñäi < *m'ñäi < *mene(is), then the gen. sg. fem. *māñi < *māñäi < *māneis should have been remade as *ñäñi, with palatalized *ñ-. The fact that we find rather näñi, with plain n-, suggests that the replacement of *m- took place at a time before palatalization was phonologized, and that Schmidt's chronology needs to be revised.

§3.   There are several ways that this can be done. An elegant alternative to Schmidt's scenario, at least in purely formal terms, would be to assume that the basic mechanism for the replacement of *m- by *n- was not cluster reduction but assimilation of *m...n.. to *n...n.. (cf. Skt. māma, with the opposite development of *m...n.. to *m...m..). Starting with genitives *nene and *nãne would dispose of all palatalization-related problems at one stroke. But no confidence can be placed in such preforms; it is not very likely, after all, that *mene and *mãne would have undergone sporadic assimilation to *nene and *nãne at a time when *m- was the characteristic initial consonant not just of the gen. sg., but of all the other oblique cases of the 1 sg. pronoun as well.[4] It is probably better, therefore, to seek a different explanation. The normal Common Tocharian syncope of *ä was later than, or conceivably simultaneous with, the elevation of palatalization to phonemic status; the cluster *śt-, for example, with palatalized *ś (< *k') before unpalatalized *t, was already firmly established in the Common Tocharian word for "four", *śtwær(ä) < *śätwærä < *k'etwores. Pronouns, however, are typologically a special category: their low information content and tendency to pattern as clitics naturally predispose them to exceptional or precocious behavior with respect to sound change. It is thus at least possible that the syncope which produced initial *m'ñ- took place at a linguistic stage when Pre-Tocharian had not yet merged PIE *e and *u in the "Fremdvokal" *ä, but still distinguished between front and back reduced vowels *ь and *ъ. Palatalization would not have been contrastive while the two reduced vowels remained separate: *meneis would have developed via *m'ьñьi(s) and *m'ñьi to *ñьi, but the extension of phonemic /n/ from the masculine genitive *ñьi to the feminine genitive *māñьi would have yielded *näñьi, whence *näñäi and the attested A näñi. Alternatively, we might assume a

still earlier syncope of *mene(is) to *mne(is). What does not seem
necessary or desirable is to follow Van Windekens (e.g., 1979: 263) and
Adams (1988: 152) in assuming *mn-forms of the 1 sg. pronoun for
dialectal Proto-Indo-European itself.[5]

§4. **The formal relationship of B ñäś, A näṣ, ñuk**. Of the three
nom. / obl. forms only B ñäś (ñiś) is structurally clear. The initial
sequence ñä- almost certainly goes back to *me-, presumably the old
accusative (=Gk. (ἐ)μέ) with the regular substitution of *n- for *m-. The
following -ś must accordingly represent a particle or particle-like
element; several candidates have been suggested, including "*-kwe"
(Krause-Thomas, ibid.), *-ḱim (Van Windekens, ibid.) and *-ḱi (Kortlandt
1983: 320). Much likelier than any of these, however, is *-ge (*-ǵe?), the
emphasizing particle that appears as γε in Greek (cf. the complexes
ἔγωγε, ἐμέ γε), and as *-k, fused to the accusative of the personal
pronouns, in Germanic (cf. Go. mik, þuk, sik). The word equation Toch. B
ñäś - Gk. ἐμέ γε - Go. mik is discussed and defended by Schmidt
(1978: 29-30, 55ff.), who further cautiously compares the accusatives
Ven. mego, Arm. is and Hit. ammuk. Earlier, a somewhat similar analysis
of ñäś was proposed by Winter (1965: 203).[6]

§5. A näṣ is more problematic. Neither the unpalatalized n- nor the
"retroflex" -ṣ of this form matches the corresponding segment of B ñäś.
The lack of agreement between A and B has been interpreted in various
ways, with some scholars persisting in efforts to reconcile the two forms
and others comparing näṣ with 1 pl. pronouns of the type Ved. naḥ and
Lat. nōs. The latter approach, which denies a connection between näṣ and
ñäś altogether, will be discussed first.

The strategy of taking näṣ from a form meaning "we, us" is more
than half a century old. In its favor is the -ṣ, which under the normal

Tocharian sound correspondences can only continue an original palatalized
*s, and the specifically masculine gender of näṣ, which has been
attractively explained on the basis of an earlier *plurale majestatis* (cf.
Petersen 1935: 204f.). Everything else, however, argues against a
derivation from the 1 pl. The actual word for "we" in Tocharian is A nom.
/ obl. was, gen. wasäṃ, B nom. / obl. wes, gen. wesi, wesäṃ; there is no
trace of the PIE oblique stem *nĕs- / nŏs- / * n̥s-, except perhaps
indirectly in the vocalism of was, wes, which has sometimes been thought
to reflect the influence of a vanished *nos (cf. Adams, p. 154). Be that as it
may, neither *nos, *nōs, *nes or *nēs could have yielded näṣ directly:
*nŏs and *nēs would have given the wrong vocalism, while *nes would
have led to a form with palatalized *ñ-. The final -ṣ for *-s, presumably
due to a following front vowel, is puzzling as well, especially since there is
no final palatalization in was, wes or its 2 pl. counterpart A yas, B yes.
Schmidt, who accepts the 1 pl. origin of näṣ, attempts to dispose of these
problems by suggesting that "die Palatalisierung des Auslauts (bzw. deren
Ursache) und der Vokal -ä- könnten von einer B ñäś entsprechenden
Form übernommen worden sein" (p. 28). Few will find this an adequate
explanation.

An alternative approach would be to start from a non-canonical
preform *n̥sé, which could then be further used to derive Go. uns and
Luv. anza.[7] The initial *n̥- of *n̥sé would first have developed via *un-
to *än- in Tocharian; left undisturbed, *än- would have given CT *æn- by
regular sound change (cf. the privative prefix A a(n)-, B e(n)- < *n̥-). An
intermediate form *unse, however, would have been inherently unstable:
the influence of *nos and other full-grade forms would have been apt to
induce a "morphological" metathesis of *unse to *nuse, just as in
Germanic the influence of forms like Ger. Nase (< *nas-) led to a

metathesis of **uns-** (< ***ŋs-**) to ***nus-** in OE **nosu** "nose". Pre-Toch. ***nuse**, of course, would have given A **näṣ** directly.

§6. There are many possible ways to vary this scenario, all involving different mixtures of analogy and speculative reconstruction. No mere manipulation of asterisked forms, however, can make up for the fundamental defect of the 1 pl. theory — its inefficient and counterintuitive separation of the **n-** of **näṣ** from the **n-** (**ñ-**) of **ñuk, ñäś, ñi** and **näñi**. Most recent writers have therefore preferred to emphasize the similarities rather than the differences between **näṣ** and the other forms. Nearly a half century ago Pedersen (1941: 135) assumed a pre-Toch. A ***ñäṣ**, the ***ñ-** of which was subsequently dissimilated to **n-** under the influence of the following palatalized ***-ṣ**. This idea is cited approvingly by Winter (1965: 203) and Adams (1988: 153), but neither scholar is able to account satisfactorily for the final sibilant. Adams sets up a particle ***-se**, which he evidently regards as a kind of parallel to the ***-ge** of B **ñäś**; in the same vein, Van Windekens (ibid.) operates with an attached ***-sēm**. These are obvious *ad hoc* constructions, the only real effect of which is to replace an unexplained morpheme in Tocharian A by an equally unintelligible sequence of two (or three) morphemes in dialectal Indo-European. Particle etymologies of this kind are seductive; it is easier to invent ultrashort elements of a given phonological shape than to ground them securely in comparative data. In the present case, there is simply no good evidence for a PIE element of the form ***s** + *front vowel* (+ *consonant*) that would have lent itself to attachment to the nominative or accusative of the 1 sg. pronoun.[8] Despite the obvious phonological difficulties, therefore, the possibility should not be excluded *a priori* that the **-ṣ** of **näṣ** goes back not to ***-se** or the like, but to the one PIE enclitic that demonstrably did have the requisite morphosyntactic properties in the parent language — ***-ge** itself.

§7. The analysis that will be suggested here is in effect an extension of Pedersen's derivation of the **n-** of **näṣ** from a secondarily depalatalized ***ñ-**. I propose to go one step further than Pedersen and derive the **-ṣ** of **näṣ** from a similarly depalatalized ***-ś**. The Common Tocharian ancestor of both A **näṣ** and B **ñäś** was in my view ***ñäś**, homophonous with the B form: the subsequent phonetic change of ***ñäś** to **näś** was due not to dissimilation, but to a process of sporadic depalatalization in unstressed words, comparable to the depalatalization seen, e.g. in Pol. **bez** "without" (plain **b-**) for regular ***bioz** (or ***bióz**) < ***biez** (palatalized ***b'-**), or OIr. **amal** "as" (plain **-l**) for archaic **amail** (palatalized ***-l'**), 3 pl. rel. **ata** "which are" (plain **-d-**) for theoretically expected ***ite** (palatalized ***-d'-**; cf. Thurneysen 1946: 105). That the 1 sg. pronoun was often unstressed in Common Tocharian is itself hardly in doubt, given the retained Fremdvokal of B **ñäś**.

The key question, of course, is whether a secondary depalatalization of pre-Toch. A ***ś** would have yielded **ṣ** rather than **s** (or **k** or **ts**). We are not well-informed about the exact phonetic nature of the Tocharian sibilants. Certain facts, however, are clear. **ṣ** was historically the palatalization product of ***s**; in Tocharian A, therefore, it must either still have been a palatalized [s'] or a development of [s'], such as a palatal (and redundantly palatalized) fricative [ç(')], a palatalized hushing sibilant [š'], or an unpalatalized hushing sibilant [š]. But **ṣ** has a secondary origin as well, which argues strongly against a palatalized or "soft" pronunciation: it is the regular Tocharian A reflex of CT ***s** before ***t**, as e.g., in **waṣt** "house" beside B **ost**, or **ṣtām** "tree" beside B **stām**. It is inconceivable that the change of ***s** to **ṣ** in this environment could have involved the acquisition of a feature of palatalization; rather, the obvious phonetic interpretation of the ***s** to **ṣ** rule is that it converted [s] to simple

(unpalatalized) [š], in just the same way that a similar but more general rule changed [s] to [š] before consonants in German (cf. **Stein**, **Spur**, **Schlange**, etc.).[8a] Synchronically, at least, A **näṣ** was probably simply [nɨš].

"Palatal" **ś**, on the other hand, was in all likelihood actually palatalized. It is the only sibilant in either Tocharian language that can regularly stand before c; the cluster **śc** (whence normally A **śś**) may represent either the palatalization product of original ***st**, as, e.g., in B **päścane**, A **päśśäṃ** "breasts", or an older sequence of the type ***-säc-**, ***-ṣäc-** or ***-śäc-** with syncopated Fremdvokal, as in 2 pl. A **araś**, B **erścer** "you produce" < CT ***ærṣäc-** < ***orsete-**, or B **āścer** "you lead" < ***āśäc-** < ***aǵete-**. The close phonetic relationship between **ś** and c is underscored by the frequent spelling of the final cluster -ñc with -ś in both languages (cf. nom. pl. A **lāṃś**, B **lāś** "kings", A **poñś** - B **poñc** "all"). Like c and ñ, but unlike ṣ, **ś** occasionally induces phonetic fronting of the Fremdvokal, as, e.g., in B **śitkai** "very" beside **śatkai** (cf. Krause-Thomas, p. 49), or B **ñiś** beside **ñäś** in the 1 sg. pronoun itself. All this suggests that ***c**, ***ñ**, and ***ś** constituted a series of "soft" palatals in Common Tocharian, and that the contrast between ***ś** and ***ṣ** was one of palatalized [š'] vs. unpalatalized [š]. The obvious diachronic inference is that CT ***ṣ** was prehistorically depalatalized to [š] everywhere in Tocharian except before ***c** [č']; its place was eventually taken by the palatalization product of ***k** and ***ts**, which lost its stop component and yielded the palatalized sibilant ***ś** [š']. An interesting typological parallel is furnished by the treatment of the corresponding sounds in Russian. Common Slavic ***š**, which was originally "soft", was universally depalatalized in Russian except before ***č**, which remains palatalized to the present day. Russian, unlike Tocharian,

never developed a phonological oppsition between [š] and [š']; in the spoken language, however, **šč** is usually realized phonetically as a "soft" geminate [š'š'] – a simplification strikingly reminiscent of the replacement of **šc** by **šš** in Tocharian A.[9]

There can thus be no purely phonetic objection to the supposition that CT ***ñäś** [ñɨš'], if secondarily depalatalized for any reason, would have yielded A **näṣ** [nɨš]. It would serve no purpose to claim that the phonetic interpretation of the Tocharian sibilants suggested above is the only one possible, or to deny that the assumption of a special phonological change peculiar to unstressed words is a complicating, and hence undesirable, feature of the proposed analysis. Nevertheless, the advantages of deriving both **näṣ** and **ñäś** from a single preform, and of thus dispensing with the need to invoke a 1 pl. pronoun or an unknown particle, are so manifest that the development of PIE ***mege** to CT ***ñäś**, and of ***ñäś** to A **näṣ** and B **ñäś**, can be taken as a safe working hypothesis.

[§8. There is another way – far less likely but worth noting for the sake of completeness – that CT ***ñäś** could have yielded A **näṣ**. Tocharian A seems to have had a right-to-left sibilant assimilation rule, the effects of which can be seen in A **säksäk** "sixty" beside B **ṣkaska** and A **śiśäk** "lion" beside B **ṣecake**. There was thus at least one morphological environment in which pre-Toch. A ***ñäś** would regularly have substituted ***-ṣ** for ***-ś**, namely, before the suffix -äṣ of the ablative case (< PIE ***-(e)ti**; cf. Jasanoff 1987: 109f.). But the assimilated ablative form ***ñṣ-äṣ** (< ***ñäṣ-äṣ** < ***ñäś-äṣ**) would in turn have been subject to another phonetic process of Tocharian A – the well-known tendency of ñ- to undergo depalatalization before non-palatalized consonants (cf. **nkiñc** "silver" beside B **ñkante**, **nmuk** "ninety" beside B **ñumka**). The resulting **nṣäṣ** is in fact attested, and it is just conceivable that the simplex **näṣ** had

its origin here, despite the typological unnaturalness of assuming the transformation of an entire paradigm on the basis of a single oblique case form. At the very least, the existence of an ablative in *nṣ- could have helped to stabilize the position of an independently depalatalized *näṣ < *ñäś that arose in the manner described in §7.]

§9.   There remains to be discussed the A feminine form ñuk, evidently continuing older *ñäk- with secondary rounding of *-ä- to -u-.[10] As might have been predicted, the final -k has often been taken to represent a particle. Van Windekens (*ibid.*) sets up a syntactically and semantically anomalous *mne-kʰäm, parallel to the *mne-kʰim from which he takes B ñäś; Krause and Thomas (p. 162) adopt a formula *me-ku(e), from which they derive both ñuk and ñäś; Adams (*ibid.*) likewise opts for an apocopated *-ku(e), but without reference to the B form. The problematic truncation of *-kʰe "and" to *-ku aside, these derivations are unsatisfactory from almost every point of view other than the purely phonological. More attractive in principle is the approach taken by Schmidt (pp. 29-30), who explains ñuk from a nominative of the ego-type with secondary ñ-; as he points out, there is no reason why Tocharian, which has lost the contrast between nominative and accusative in the 1 sg. pronoun, could not have drawn its actual nom. / obl. forms from both cases. Unfortunately, the particular preform favored by Schmidt is *eǵ(H)om (~ Go. ik, etc.), which would have given A *(ñ)äk rather than ñuk. To account for the attested -u-, he is forced to assume contamination with the pronoun of the 2 sg. (A nom. tu, obl. cu) — an *ad hoc* surrogate for the phonologically regular explanation that Van Windekens, Krause and Thomas, and Adams achieve by reconstructing preforms with a labiovelar.

The advantages of phonological regularity and morphological plausibility can be combined, in my view, by starting from a nom. sg. *eǵō

(*-oh₂). Final *-ō seems to have first given *-u in Common Tocharian, as can be seen from A wu "two (masc.)" < *duō, AB ku "dog" < *k(u)uō, B 1 sg. subj. kelu "I will endure", neku "I will destroy", etc. < thematic *-ō. It is tempting, therefore, to assume a Common Tocharian development of *eǵō to *ñäku (perhaps via *uäku or *m'äku), with subsequent rounding of *ñäk- to *ñuk- and regular loss of the final vowel in Tocharian A. To be sure, there are no exact parallels for the change of *-ä- to *-u- before *-ku, since the only similar cases have *-ku after the affected vowel (cf. uuk "horse", tuñk "love" beside B yakue, tañku; likewise oñk "man" beside B eñkue). But the projected rule is a natural one and there are no serious counterexamples.[11]

§10.   **The source of the gender contrast.**   The picture that emerges thus far is formally very simple. Common Tocharian seems to have inherited two nom. / obl. forms from Proto-Indo-European — *ñäś, whence A näṣ and B ñäś, continuing the old accusative *me-ge; and *ñäku, whence A ñuk, continuing the old nominative *eǵō (*-oh₂). The task that remains is to consider whether and how the straightforward nominative : accusative contrast expressed by these forms in the parent language could have been converted to the virtually unparalleled gender opposition that we find in Common Tocharian. In exploring this question, we will do well to take as our point of departure the one fact that is known about the fate of the ego : me case distinction in Tocharian, namely, that it was lost. At some time in the prehistory of Common Tocharian, speakers ceased to distinguish syntactically between "I", previously expressed by a form of the type *(m)egō, and "me", previously expressed by a form of the type *mege.[12] Like other morphosyntactic changes, this development was probably not completed in a matter of few weeks, months, or even years. Rather, it must have been accompanied by a decades-long period of sociolinguistic variation, during which speakers

would inevitably have fluctuated in their use of the two forms according to age, speech register, social class and, of course, gender. It is against the background of this instability that we must seek to interpret the eventual crystallization of *mege as a masculine, and *(m)egō as a feminine form.

§11. For an illustration, purely typological, of the kind of sociolinguistic effects that might have been induced by the weakening of the ego : me contrast in Common Tocharian, it will be useful to reflect briefly on the consequences of the corresponding weakening in modern English. As is well-known, the "correct" distinction between I and me tends to be lost in spoken English in several syntactic environments, including 1) after the copula, as in It's me (him, her, us, them) for It is I (he, she, we, they); and 2) in compound noun phrases of the type X and I, X and me, which appear in substandard speech as invariant X and me or me and X (cf. Me and Fred are going to the movies, etc.), and in hypercorrect usage as invariant X and I (cf. the very common between you and I). The It's me construction is absolutely normal; it is used in informal speech, at least in America, by speakers of both sexes and almost every educational and socioeconomic background. But It is I, and especially It is he and It is she, have their proper sphere as well. They are high-register variants, appropriate to a formal lecturing style or to polite conversation between educated speakers who are not on informal terms. In some speech situations the choice between It's me (him, etc.) and It is I (he, etc.) may be a matter of conversational strategy: the former is self-consciously colloquial and invites greater intimacy; the latter is aggressively "correct" and asserts social or educational distance. As such, It is I is sometimes associated with an overly careful, priggish, even schoolmarmish way of talking — a style that tends to be stereotyped in the popular mind as a female characteristic. The folk-linguistic view is

apparent in the opening of the song "Barnacle Bill the Sailor", popular with children at American summer camps in the 1950's:

> "Who's that knocking at my door?" (3x)
> said the fair young maiden.
>
> "Fair maid, it's me, I'm home from the sea!"
> said Barnacle Bill the sailor.
>
> "You should never say 'It's me,'" (3x)
> said the fair young maiden.
>
> "Why not?" said he, "It's certainly me,
> I'm Barnacle Bill the sailor!"

. . . . . .

What this exchange offers us, of course, is a concrete illustration of the principle, apparently more often true than not in modern Western societies, that "women, allowing for other variables such as age, education and social class, produce on average linguistic forms which more closely approach those of the standard language or have higher prestige that those produced by men" (Trudgill 1983: 161). Further examples in English are not hard to find.

§12. It is neither necessary nor desirable to press the parallel with English too far. Despite our ignorance of the linguistic, geographic and cultural milieu of Pre-Tocharian, we can be reasonably sure that at the time of the loss of the case distinction between *(m)egō and *mege the ancestors of the Tocharians had neither sailors nor schoolmarms, and that their female children were not restrained from saying It's me, etc., by

their knowledge of the Latinate rule that "the verb **to be** never takes an object." Nevertheless, the fact that the world of the early Tocharians was very different from our own should not blind us to the realization that Pre-Tocharian society, like any normal speech community, must have been characterized by a significant amount of sociolinguistic variation in which gender played a substantial role. There are several theoretically possible scenarios that might explain the attested distribution of forms. Suppose, for example, that the weakening of the nominative : accusative opposition was initially manifested by a tendency to substitute ***mege** for ***(m)egō** in certain syntactic contexts; suppose further that women were on the whole more resistant to this innovation than men. The continued use of the higher-register ***(m)egō** as a subject pronoun could thus in effect have become, in certain situations, a distinctive characteristic — a mannerism, so to speak — of female speech. Under normal circumstances this state of affairs would probably not have lasted very long; in most European languages ***mege** would eventually have replaced ***(m)egō** in the usage of both sexes, just as in English **It is I** will doubtless end by disappearing from the speech of men and women alike.[13] But the Tocharian development was obviously not "normal" by European standards. The presence of an incipient opposition between ***mege**, almost universal in the speech of males, and ***(m)egō**, restricted almost exclusively to the speech of females, evidently answered to a communally felt need, and was accordingly exploited and systematized. Analogy and polarization did the rest: since the new male system made no distinction between ***mege** (nom.) and ***mege** (acc.), the conservative female distinction between ***(m)egō** (nom.) and ***mege** (acc.) was abandoned in favor of the uniform use of ***(m)egō** in both case functions.

Why, we must ask, would the Pre-Tocharians have been so quick to convert a mere stylistic difference between male and female speech into a full-blown grammatical contrast? There can be no certainty on this point,

but the answer is obviously inseparable from the fact that the Tocharians in historical times occupied a territory on the borders of Tibet and China, and that many Sino-Tibetan and other Far Eastern languages exhibit a similar gender contrast in the first person. Thus, Tibetan distinguishes in ordinary conversation between **k´o-wo** (masc.) and **k´o-mo** (fem.; cf. Jäschke 1954: 34), while Burmese polite speech opposes **cuñto** (masc., literally "royal slave") to **cuñmá** (fem., literally "female slave"; cf. Okell 1969: 100).[14] An especially opposite comparison is furnished by Japanese. Here, instead of a gender opposition as such, there is a register contrast between the relatively formal **watasi**, used as the normal 1 sg. pronoun by women, and the lower register **boku**, used as the unmarked 1 sg. pronoun by men. Under appropriately formal circumstances **watasi** may also be employed by men, just as **boku**, under conditions of special informality, sometimes appears in the speech of women. The situation is precisely comparable to the picture we have envisaged for Pre-Tocharian, where the nominative ***(m)egō** was retained, according to our hypothesis, as an upper-register form alongside the innovative and lower-register ***mege**.

The above scenario, of course, is merely a theoretical possibility. We can construct others; it is perfectly thinkable, for example, that the specialization of ***(m)egō** as a feminine form was due not to the greater willingness of males to employ ***mege** in the nominative, but to the greater willingness of females, perhaps as a hypercorrection, to extend the use of ***(m)egō** from the nominative to the accusative. The detailed developments are not in principle recoverable. The essential point is that the gradual loss of the nominative : accusative opposition in the 1 sg. pronoun would inevitably have led to a period of variation between ***(m)egō** and ***mege**, and that *any* resulting sociolinguistic preference of women for ***(m)egō**, and / or of men for ***mege**, would have provided an

acceptable starting point for the attested gender contrast.

§13. The strongest indication that the opposition between masc. *ñäṣ (< *mege) and fem. *ñäku (< *(m)egō) is of Common Tocharian date comes from the feminine genitive A nāñi. We have seen in §3 that this form must go back to a preform of the type *măne(is), and that the replacement of *m- by (unpalatalized) *n- must have taken place before the phonologization of the Common Tocharian palatalization rule. This implies a relatively early date for the creation of *măne(is), and an earlier date still for the reinterpretation of the *(m)egō : *mege contrast as one of gender. The a-vowel of *măne(is) likewise points to an early entrenchment of the masculine : feminine distinction. A feminine genitive *măne could only have come into being at a time when the corresponding masculine form *mene was felt to consist synchronically of a stem *me/o- followed by a case ending *-ne: the stem of the 1 sg. pronoun was treated as a thematic noun or adjective and fitted out with the appropriate feminine forms in *mă- (cf. B masc. -ṣṣe, fem. -ṣṣa "belonging to ..." < *-sḱijos, *-sḱijă).[15] It is as if an early IE language like Greek, having in the course of its prehistory reinterpreted the old accusative ἐμέ as a masculine nom. / acc. and the old nominative ἐγώ as a feminine nom. / acc., were to have equipped the genitive ἐμεῖο (ἐμέο), the "ablative" ἐμέθεν and the dative ἐμοί with new feminine counterparts *ἐμᾱο, *ἐμᾱθεν and *ἐμαί. None of this would have been inherently implausible once the masculine : feminine opposition was established, but the morphological prerequisites for the creation of the new forms in *-ă- were lost well before the end of the Common Tocharian period.

§14. It is time to summarize our findings. The 1 sg. pronoun presents a confusing variety of forms in the two Tocharian languages, but closer

inspection reveals that the seemingly irreconcilable nom. / acc. A näṣ (masc.), ñuk (fem.) and B ñäṣ go back to a simple Common Tocharian system consisting of a masculine nom. / acc. *ñäṣ (> näṣ, ñäṣ) and a feminine nom. / acc. *ñäku (> ñuk). The unfamiliar-looking *ñ- of these forms is deceptive; as has long been suspected, it is an intrusive feature from the masculine genitive CT *ñäi (AB ñi), where it represents the reflex of inherited *men-. Stripped of this initial accretion, CT *ñäṣ and *ñäku emerge as nothing more than the old accusative and nominative, respectively, of the PIE ego : me pronoun. The reinterpretation of what was once an opposition of case as an opposition of gender is without a doubt the most remarkable individual development in the extended series of changes surveyed in the preceding pages. In the last analysis, however, the emergence of grammatical gender in the 1 sg. pronoun only underscores the relevance of a truism that we ignore at our peril — that linguistic change is a social fact which may influence, and be influenced by, the operation of other social forces in the speech community.

Jay H. Jasanoff

Dept. of Mod. Lang. and Linguistics

Cornell University

Ithaca, NY 14853

information and further suggestions. Needless to say, none of these scholars necessarily endorses the analysis offered here.

2. Note also Welsh **fy** (nasalizing), presumably continuing an apocopated *men'. Ved. **máma** can hardly be anything but an innovation for *mána (cf. below); according to Morgenstierne (1945: 251), an Indic form in *-n- is directly attested in Shumashti (Dardic) **mono**.

3. Schmidt, however, prefers to derive the *-äi of **ñi** and the "long" genitives A **tñi**, **ṣñi** from the dative ending *-ei, in support of which he adduces OPr. **mennei** "mihi". The identity of the final diphthong is of no immediate relevance here.

4. It is true that we could avoid this problem by positing an early extension of *men- from the genitive to some or all of the other cases, as in Balto-Slavic; it would then be possible to regard the assimilation of *m...n.. to *n...n.. as a paradigm-wide change and not simply as an isolated rule affecting a single case form. But the fact that *t...n.. is confined to the genitive in the parallel forms of the second person makes this very unlikely.

5. It is hard to view the OCS dialectal gen. / acc. **mne** (Psalt., Euch.) as anything but a precociously syncopated form of the normal gen. / acc. **mene**. The regular OCS dat. / loc. **mьně** and instr. **mьnojǫ**, which do not point to *mn- in any case, are clearly Slavic innovations.

6. So too, apparently, Adams (p. 153), who sets up *-g(h)e but cites only Gk. **ἔγωγε**. Krause and Thomas compare Go. **mik** without explaining the relationship between Gmc. *-k and their Pre-Toch. "*-kwe".

7. Such a form could in principle have arisen in either of two ways — by dissimilation from *ṇsmé (preserved in Gk. **ἄμμε**, etc.), or by analogy with the 1 sg. form *me (cf. Go. dat. **unsis** after **mis**, WGmc. acc. *unsik (OHG **unsih**) after *mik (OHG **mih**)).

8. The -s (Gmc. *-z) of Go. **mis** hardly comes into question, since this

form is specifically a dative. OIr. emphatic **messe** is simply **mé** + the 1 sg. *nota augens* **-sai**, **-se**, fully parallel to 2 sg. **tussu**, 3 sg. masc. **(h)é-som**, etc. The lateness of these combinations is shown by the non-lenition of the -s-, which excludes the possibility of any extra-Irish comparisons.

8a. The possibility that the Toch. A *s to ṣ rule operated before stops other than *t is discussed by Hilmarsson (1982/83).

9. Similar low-level realignments of palatalization contrasts can be seen in other Slavic languages, e.g. Belorussian, where š, ž, č and c (= [tˢ]) have all become "hard", but where a new "soft" ć has developed from palatalized t' (cf. Bräuer 1961: 208). The frequent occurrence of ṣ before ñ in Tocharian may be compared phonetically with the non-palatalization of š before "soft" n' in Russian.

10. The underlying Fremdvokal is shown by forms like the irregularly syncopated perlative **ñkä**.

11. The exact conditions under which *-ō gave *-u, and the effects of this development on the vowel of the preceding syllable, are still somewhat controversial; the fullest recent discussion, in the context of a general investigation of rounding-related phenomena in Tocharian, may be found in Hilmarsson (1986). Adams (p. 19) restricts the change of *ō to *u to cases where there was a preceding or following *w, but this will not explain **kelu** and **neku**. An important form is B **ṣukt** "seven", which evidently goes back to pre-Toch. B *ṣäkʷt. The cluster *-kʷt in this word can only have been borrowed from *okʷt(u) "eight", with *-kʷ- < *-k- before *-u < *-ō. There is thus independent reason to think that the *-k- of *ñäku would have been labialized in Common Tocharian, producing the same effect on a preceding Fremdvokal as the *-kw- of *yäkwæ. Cf. Kortlandt (1988: 84).

Separate from the question of whether the change of final *-ō to *-u

was completely general is the question of how the resulting vowel was subsequently treated. **kelu** and **neku** would seem to indicate that *-u was retained in Common Tocharian and Toch. B, but these forms are athematic, and hence possibly derived from remade *-äu (cf. A -äm) rather than simple *-u. The absence of a final vowel in B **okt** "eight" is not conclusive either, since the final syllable of this word could easily have been reshaped to agree with the *-ä(n) of the numerals for "seven", "nine" and "ten". For purposes of the present discussion it is relevant whether the Common Tocharian form was *ñäk" or *ñäku. As a matter of convenience I have opted for the latter.

12. The notations *mege and *(m)egō are adopted for convenience only; we have no way of knowing the actual phonetic shape of the 1 sg. forms at the time of the syntactic merger. The nominative : accusative contrast was also lost in the 1 pl. and 2 pl., though not in the 2 sg.

13. The same development took place in Hittite, where dat. / acc. **ammuk** replaced nom. **uk** within historical times. It is interesting to note that here too there are occasional "wrong" uses of the obsolescent nominative, cf. Sommer (1932: 33). We are not, of course, in a position to draw any conclusions about the sociolinguistic status of the forms during the transition period.

14. The potential relevance of the Tibetan gender distinction was first pointed out by Hofmann (1922: 30f.).

15. The cover symbol *ă reflects our lingering uncertainty about the treatment of PIE *ā (*eh₂) in Tocharian. If, as seems likely, *ā regularly yielded the low rounded vowel CT *å (> A a, B o), then the characteristic "feminine" vowel (CT *ā) of näñi, -ṣṣa, etc., must reflect an earlier short *a or vocalized laryngeal. The latter is in fact most likely: post-PIE *-skiiā probably first developed to pre-Toch. *-ṣṣiiă, but this was altered to CT

*-ṣṣijā under the influence of the **devī**-feminines in CT *-jā < PIE *-ih₂ (B **lāntsa** "queen", etc.; cf. also **śana** "woman" < *-n-h₂). The innovated feminine stem of the 1 sg. pronoun naturally took its vocalism from the productive adjective classes.

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