

## UNCLE AND NEPHEW

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The problem why mother's brother is called *avunculus*, derived from *avus* 'grandfather', and why *nepos* means 'nephew' as well as 'grandson', was explained by Benveniste through a father's sister's daughter marriage. This theory is in all respects improbable. Friedrich's theory of an Omaha terminology is probably not correct and certainly not helpful. It is stressed that Lat. *nepos* 'nephew' is very late. It is pointed out that PIE had no word for father's brother, that Gr. *metrōs* is of PIE origin. The *avunculus* words must be explained from the relation ego — mother's brother which is comparable to that of ego — grandfather.

1.1 (Problem) One of the major problem of PIE kinship terminology is formed by the words for uncle and nephew, more precisely, for mother's brother (henceforth MoBr) and sister's son (SiSo).<sup>1</sup>

The word for 'uncle', sometimes specially MoBr, is often derived from the word for 'grandfather', PIE *\*a<sub>u</sub>os* (for the sake of simplicity I shall write *\*a<sub>u</sub>os*, not *\*h<sub>2</sub>eu<sub>h</sub>2os* as it should be). These forms are: OCS *ujb* < *\*a<sub>u</sub>iōs*, OPr. *awis* < *\*a<sub>u</sub>iōs*, Lith. *avýnas* ('MoBr'), W. *ewythr*, Bret. *eontr*, Ocorn. *enitor* < *\*a<sub>u</sub>en-tro-*, Lat. *avunculus* 'MoBr', OHG *ōheim* 'MoBr', OE *eam* < *\*a<sub>u</sub>un-haimaz*.

The word for 'nephew', sometimes specially 'SiSo', is the same as that for 'grandson'. The meaning 'nephew' for PIE *\*népōts* is attested for: Lith. *nep(u)otis*, RCS *netii*, Serb. *nećak* 'SiSo', Lat. *nepos*, OBret. *nith*, OIr. (gen.) *neth* 'SiSo', OE *nefa*, OHG *nevo* (and Gr. *anepsiós* 'cousin' if from 'co-nephew'; see 4.7).

1. For advice on kinship terminologies I am indebted to J.F. Holleman, P.E. de Josselin de Jong, D. Miles and A.A. Trouwborst. When I had completed a first draft of this article, I learned that J. Bremmer had collected very much material on fosterage and the relation with MoBr. We decided to publish the two articles together and reduce overlaps. Therefore I can refer at times to Bremmer's article, which follows this one.

The question is how this is to be explained within the PIE kinship system.

1.2 (Explanations) The old interpretation of this fact is that *\*aṃos* must have meant 'mother's father' (MoFa). E.g. Delbrück 1889: 104. Then, as the forms of the different languages do not agree exactly, it is assumed that either in PIE *\*aṃos* itself indicated both 'MoFa' and 'MoBr', or that it was exactly the derivation that expressed the meaning 'MoBr' (both apud Delbrück 1889: 123).

Recently two other explanations have been advanced. Benveniste (1969) assumed that a cross-cousin marriage, and specially with father's sister's daughter (FaSiDa), was frequent. Friedrich (1966), who is followed by Gates (1971), supposed that the PIE system was of the type known as Omaha.

2.1 (Benveniste's theory) Benveniste (1969: 223-235), who thinks that *\*aṃos* was 'FaFa' only, assumes that cross-cousin marriage was frequent, and that a man normally married his father's sister's daughter (FaSiDa). This would explain our problem, because for the son born from these parents his FaFa is the same as his MoMoBr.

The difficulty that remains, to get from MoMoBr to MoBr, is passed over with the following words (227): "En partant de EGO, le frère de sa mère, son *avunculus*, est le fils de la soeur du père de son père, de son *avus*. . . . Dans ce système, la parenté s'établit entre frère et fils de soeur, entre oncle maternel et neveu, tandis qu'en filiation agnatique elle s'établit de père en fils. Dès lors . . . l'oncle maternel pourra être dit: '*petit avus*', ou *avunculus*."

It must be remarked immediately that this is one of the critical points in the theory. "Dans ce système . . .". It is well known that there exist systems where "la parenté s'établit entre frère et fils de soeur", but here it is a new assumption. It is typical for a matrilineal society – in fact it is the best characteristic for it. On p. 253 Benveniste openly speaks of a 'filiation matrilineaire' (in a context which is full of contradictions). He bases this assumption – accepted at present by nobody – on two things. The first is the old argument provided by the Greek terms for 'brother', *adelphós* and *kasígnētos*. That these terms, designating the brother as 'from the same mother' point to a matrilineal society has long since been given up. Cf. Gonda

1962: 390-2. The other argument is the importance of MoBr (on which we shall return below). Benveniste writes: "c'est toujours de l'oncle [maternel] au neveu que se transmet l'héritage". This would be good evidence for a matrilineal society, but there is no evidence for it. In fact, Tacitus adds to his statement on the affectionate relation between MoBr and SiSo: *Heredes tamen successorumque sui cuique liberi, et nullum testamentum. Si liberi non sunt, proxima gradus in possessione fratres, patruum, avunculi*. There is, then, no argument for matriliney — in fact everything points to patriliney — and therefore Benveniste's explanation must be abandoned.

The type of marriage assumed also brings about that for FaFa his SoSo is the same as his SiDaSo. Here the difficulty to get from SiDaSo to SiSo is treated in these words (233f): "De même que *avus* . . . produit le diminutif *avunculus* . . . , de même et corrélativement, le nom du petit-fils peut désigner *en même temps* celui qui est le neveu du frère de la mère." (cursives mine). Where in the case of MoMoBr > MoBr the diminutive was essential (and only sufficient if *en passant* a matrilineal system was accepted), there is here nothing to explain why SiDaSo is replaced by SiSo.

2.2 (Marriage with FaSiDa) There are several other objections to Benveniste's theory.

Cross-cousin marriage as an institution, of course, is well-known, but the question is whether there is evidence that it was normal or frequent in PIE times.

Gates (1971: 43) simply says that there is no factual evidence for it. Indeed, one might have expected some clear traces of this type of cross-cousin marriage in conservative IE groups. But there is nothing.

From Greece evidence for marriage with cousins was recently collected by W.E. Thompson (1967). He counts four instances of marriage with FaBrDa, three with MoSiDa, and three with MoBrDa. There would be none with FaSiDa, but his second case is an instance of it (Hipponikos marrying the daughter of Hipparete, the sister of his father Kallios).

For Iran Mazahéri (1938: 194) states that marriage with FaBrDa (a parallel-cousin!) is ideal: "(le fils de l'oncle paternel) . . . sa soeur, la *tuirya-duḫḍar* (FaBrDa), est toute désignée pour devenir la femme de l'Iranien". He gives, however,

no sources.

For India Ghurye (1962: 278-87) gives much evidence for real cross-cousin marriage. It seems, however, that it was particularly characteristic for the South and the East and that "the custom was not current in the orthodox region of Brahmanism". The same is the conclusion of I. Karve 1968: 117, 178 ff, etc. This might indicate that it was taken over from non-Indo-European peoples in India, as is the opinion of Gates (1971: 43). Ghurye thinks this is not a necessary assumption. Important for our purpose is that marriage with MoBrDa was decidedly much more frequent than that with FaSiDa.

Also it should be kept in mind that exactly where we do have evidence for cross-cousin marriage we do not find terms of the type *avunculus*. Friedrich (1966: 28) is very short: "I will not discuss marriage with the FaSiDa because it is so unlikely as the dominant or prescribed form in conjunction with patriliney (Needham, *Structure and Sentiment*, Chicago 1962, 101-21)". The argument is not decisive, for it is found among the Monguor in Central Asia, see Krader 1963: 303 ff.

The conclusion must be that there is not much evidence for cross-cousin marriage for the Indo-Europeans, and that where it occurs more frequently it seems to have been taken over from non-Indo-European peoples, that there marriage with MoBrDa is more frequent than with FaSiDa, and that exactly there no word of the type *avunculus* exists.

D. Miles points out to me that an equation grandson (SoSo) = nephew, specially SiSo, is very improbable with FaSiDa marriage. This type of marriage implies that a group A receives brides from a group B in one generation but gives brides to B in the next generation. In such a situation the SiSo belongs to A when ego and his SoSo belong to B. This implies that there would be a strong distinction between SoSo (or SiDaSo) and SiSo. In this system, then, *\*népōts* could never have meant both grandson (SoSo) and nephew (SiSo).

2.3 (Benveniste's theory rejected) It is hardly necessary to say that Benveniste's theory is not acceptable. The theory implies an older matrilineal phase (cf. also 2.1), which is very improbable. Cross-cousin marriage with FaSiDa has not been proven, in fact is improbable because of the absence, and even resistance against it in India.

Also FaSiDa marriage exactly implies a system in which SiSo and SoSo cannot be equated. Then Lat. *nepos* probably gets the meaning 'nephew' only in the second century A.D., so that the whole problem at least is not a PIE one, as we shall see.

3.1 (The Omaha theory) Friedrich (1966), followed by Gates (1971), holds that both problems are to be explained as characteristic of an Omaha-type kinship terminology. The essential thing in this type of terminology is that certain relatives are equated with certain others in a given way. The difficulty is that neither author gives clear and concrete parallels but only speaks in general terms, while they do not follow exactly the same line.

Friedrich states that the essential rule is that MoBr was classified with MoFa, SiSo with DaSo. According to Gates the most important rule is that brothers of females are shifted to an older generation, sisters of males to a younger one.

According to Fox (1967, IX 4), who studied the system himself, the essential rule is  $\text{MoBr} = \text{MoBrSo} = \text{MoBrSoSo}$ . We find the same thing in the description of Omaha systems as given by Lounsbury (1964). He describes four types, of which II and III have each one "rule" more than I, and IV has both these additional rules. The essential thing is the treatment of cross-cousins: MoBrSo is equated with MoBr; and FaSiSo is equated with SiSo. These rules are characteristic of Omaha, the other types have *more* rules.

3.2 (Criticism) The question now is whether PIE terminology corresponds to this type. To my mind we have no evidence for these rules. We shall discuss the PIE cross-cousin terms in the next paragraph.

It is important to note the following observation by Irawati Karve, 1968: 38 on ancient India: "the words father, mother, brother . . . are all used in a classificatory sense for a wide range of relatives, but they *never transgress the principle of arrangement in generations* (cursives of the authoress!)." This is in the strongest contradiction to the Omaha rules, where transgressing the generations is very frequent.

In Lounsbury's table I we do not find the rules we are looking for ( $\text{MoBr} = \text{MoFa}$ ,  $\text{SiSo} = \text{DaSo}$ ). They are found in type III (and IV). But together with MoBr goes his son, as indicated above ( $\text{MoBrSo} \rightarrow \text{MoBr}$ ). This means that one cross-

cousin, MoBrSo, is equated with (a) grandfather just as MoBr. In the same way FaSiSo, equated already in type I with SiSo, goes to DaSo. Of this, again, there is no trace in the PIE terminology.

When I survey the situation I conclude that the most characteristic traits of Omaha terminology cannot be demonstrated for PIE; that the hypothesis was based on two rules that were not the most basic ones, and which have corollaries (MoBrSo  $\rightarrow$  MoFa, FaSiSo  $\rightarrow$  DaSo) that cannot be demonstrated for PIE and are moreover improbable.

Also, as we shall see, one of the two rules (SiSo  $>$  DaSo) is not of PIE date: it is only of the second century A.D. in Latin, and in Indo-Iranian it is not found at all. The other too is probably post-PIE. We must conclude that the theory of a PIE Omaha system was overly hasty devised and must be given up.<sup>2</sup>

But there is more to be said. Firstly the qualification 'Omaha' gives only a parallel, not an explanation.

More essential seems the recent criticism on the Omaha-class. It is sufficient to cite a few lines from Needham 1971: 14f: "Intensive analyses of individual 'Omaha-societies' have repeatedly confirmed the invalidity of the type . . . If, then, an ethnographer reports an Omaha terminology, he tells us nothing of any descriptive value; . . . nor does the assignment to the Omaha type offer any clue to the analysis of the society which employs the terminology. . . . a variety of terminologies all possess this supposedly definitive feature but differ from each other in practically everything else. . . . there is no further sociological property which can be ascribed to members of the class."

This would mean that, when PIE had an Omaha terminology — which I think is improbable — nothing is gained with that observation.

3.3 (PIE cousin terms) It is generally accepted that cousins were considered as brothers. Most interesting of the IE cousin terms, and generally considered the oldest, are the Latin ones. It is interesting to compare the Old-Icelandic terms. We have:

2. It might be noted that Lounsbury 1964: 375 already put that "early Latin and Germanic" were of the Omaha type. The word "early" is a mistake. (Worse is that one point was taken out of its context to base a conclusion upon. For Latin we know very well that MoBrSo was not equated with MoBr = MoFa).

par-co.	FaBrSo <i>frater patrueis</i>	Olc. <i>brœðrungr</i>
	MoSiSo <i>fr. consobrinus</i>	<i>systrungr</i>
cross-co.	FaSiSo <i>amitinus/consobr.</i>	<i>systkinabarn</i>
	MoBrSo <i>amit./consobr./matrueis</i>	<i>systkinabarn</i>

It must be noted that the last two Latin terms are late and generally considered artificial creations of juridical language. Essential seems that both languages have different forms for the parallel cousins, not for the cross-cousins.

We do not have more precise evidence than this. It shows that MoBrSo was classed together with FaSiSo (in both systems if we disregard Lat. *matrueis*) and that both could be designated with the same word as MoSiSo. Nothing suggests, in these languages nor elsewhere, an equation MoBrSo = MoBr which an Omaha terminology requires.

4.1 (Lat. *nepos*) The two modern theories, then, must be given up. We shall first turn to the words for 'nephew'. First an observation must be made on Lat. *nepos*.

While Lat. *avunculus* occurs from the very beginning, *nepos* in the meaning 'nephew' first appears only late, in post-Augustan times, about 200 A.D. This not only proves that the two problems (*avunculus* and *nepos* 'nephew') must be studied apart, but also that the second development occurred in at least one language in the full light of history.

The first occurrence of *nepos* 'nephew' in literature one cites is Suet. *Caes.* 83. This text reads: *tres instituit heredes sororum nepotes, Gaium Octavium . . . , et L. Pinarium et Q. Pedium*. It is not sure that the last two were grandsons of Caesar's sisters (possibly true of Pinarius, most unlikely for Pedius, cf. Münzer, 1936: 226 ff.). In the first place Suetonius might have *thought* that they were (as was Octavius). But *sorum nepotes* can never mean sisters' sons (unless we interpret the text as *Caesaris nepotes per sorores*, which is hardly possible), so that this is no evidence for *nepos* 'nephew'.

The first text following is, according to Heurgon (1940: 181) *Pervigilium Veneris* 74, which he dates — the date is essential for the interpretation as 'nephew' — between 305 and 309.

SHA *Hadr.* 2, 10 has *Sabina nepte per sororem Traiani uxore accepta*, where in fact it means 'grand-niece' (SiDaDa). Eutropius 7, 1 writes *Octavianus . . . Caesaris nepos*, which would also be 'grand-nephew' (SiDaSo) — if it is not simply a mistake of

Eutropius.

Hieronymus, *Chron. Euseb.*, a. 3 1, Ep. 14, 2, 3 and 60, 9, 1 then uses it for 'sister's son'.

In inscriptions, however, the meaning 'nephew' occurs earlier. I know of the following: CIL III 3684, 4321, 6480, V 898, 4332, VI 2977, 3185, 3467, 13.055, VIII 10.330 (same text 10.331, 10.365), XIII 11.737.<sup>3</sup> They are difficult to date: V 4332 may be end II<sup>nd</sup> century, III 4321 from between 238 and 268,<sup>4</sup> VIII 10.330 about 240.

This shows – with or without Suetonius as the first step – that the development started in the second half of the second century A.D. Given our documentation of Latin it seems excluded that *nepos* always had this meaning and that it is only by accident that it appears late in our sources.

It must be noted that almost always the sister's son is meant: *Perv. Ven.*, Hieron. 11. cc.; of the inscriptions some have statements like *nepos fecit* (i.e. this monument) *avunculo*, or *nepoti avunculus*.

4.2 (Etruscan) Here may also be recalled Etruscan *nefts*, *nefs̄*, *nefiš* and *prumts*, *prumavš*. These have been interpreted as 'nephew' and 'great-nephew'. Heurgon, however, has discussed the occurrences in the *Scritti in onore di Bonfante*<sup>5</sup> and concludes that everything points to their meaning 'grandson' and 'great-grandson' and that there is no difficulty in assuming that they are loans from Latin *nepos*, *pronepos*. Of course, they prove no more than that they were taken over as '(great-)grandson', not as 'nephew'.

4.3 (The Romance languages) Further evidence may be found in Spanish. While in the other Romance languages the representative of *nepos* means 'nephew', Spanish *nieto*, as Portuguese *neto*, always only had the meaning 'grandson'. Only in Navarro-Aragonese, that is in the East, in an area close to France and Italy, the meaning 'nephew' is found until the XV<sup>th</sup> century. Given the position of this dialect at one end of the Latin territory the most probable interpretation is that the development

3. I am indebted to the director of the Thesaurus, Dr. P. Fleury, for some of these references.

4. See Heurgon 1940: 181 n. 4.

5. I am indebted to Prof. Heurgon who kindly sent me a copy of his article before publication.



grandson > nephew did not spread far into Spain. This interpretation would confirm that we have here a recent development rather than that the word had the two meanings from the beginning. It is well-known that Spanish not seldom continues an older situation than Italian.

4.4 ('Spendthrift') *Nepos* also meant 'spendthrift', since Cicero (*Cat.* 2, 4, 7), though as a first step in this direction is considered Plautus, *Mil.* 1413, 1421 *nepotulum*. Benveniste 1969: 233 has: "En tant qu'il désigne le 'neveu', *nepos* comporte souvent une valeur affective: le neveu est un enfant gâté". That a SiSo is spoiled by or has privileges with regard to his MoBr is known from many societies. If this is the explanation it would mean that the meaning 'nephew' is older than appears from the direct evidence. However, there is no evidence that *nepos* 'spendthrift' got that notion from 'nephew'. The only ancient explanation of this word we have is from Festus (164M). From this passage, which is corrupt, Bachofen, 1886: 91ff, concluded that 'nephew' was the starting-point for this meaning, but already Delbrück (1889: 490) pointed out that this was "gegen die Ueberlieferung", where we find mentioned *pater avusque*, which means that for Festus it was the grandson.

Pariente (1943: 60-122) denies that *nepos* 'prodigal' is the same word as *nepos* 'grandson, nephew', because this supposes 'prodigal' < 'spoiled child' and *nepos* never denotes any other aspect of the spoiled child. The argument seems sound but not decisive. He proposes that it contains *potis*, as found in *impos* (cf. *inscius/nescius* etc.). I would consider this explanation not impossible.

It must be admitted that it is possible that PIE *népōts* could designate the 'nephew' and that from that time the notion 'prodigal' dated, that later (in Latin) the use as 'nephew' disappeared but that it got that meaning again much later (in the second century A.D.).

4.5 (*Sobrinus*) Lat. *consobrinus* means 'cousin, specially MoSiSo, never FaBrSo' and *sobrini* are the sons of *consobrini*. It has been pointed out that *consobrinus* must have ousted *sobrinus*, so that *sobrinus* originally was MoSiSo and came to be used for the next generations only when *consobrinus* had come into being. The etymology of the word is clear: *\*suesr-īnos* 'he of the sister'. This makes one suppose that the word originally

meant 'SiSo'. Then it becomes understandable that *consobrinus* was formed to indicate a reciprocal relation, MoSiSo (cf. Gr. *anepsios* in 4.7). For this interpretation see Delbrück 1889: 133 and Benveniste 1965.

This is relevant here, because it would mean that Latin had an old word (it must be pre-classical) for SiSo, so that it is improbable that *nepos* had that meaning at that time. However, the argument may be not valid, because the meaning 'MoSiSo' of *consobrinus* seems to show that *sobrinus* 'SiSo' was only used when a woman was speaking.<sup>6</sup>

Comparable formations are found elsewhere: Lith. *seserėnas* 'SiSo, nephew', Russ. *sestren(n)ica* 'Kusine', Skt. *svasr̥iṇya-* 'SiSo', which are not specially used by women, as far as we know. Arm. *k<sup>c</sup>eri* 'MoBr' continues *\*suesrios*. Benveniste's comment (1969: 231) is not clear: "L'oncle maternel est donc désigné littéralement comme 'celui de la soeur', d'après sa soeur qui est la mère de EGO." However, 'celui de la soeur' can only be 'SiSo'. To indicate MoBr you expect 'celui de la mère'. The explanation can only be that it was originally 'SiSo' but came to be used reciprocally (as e.g. MHG *vetere* 'uncle' and 'nephew' (> *Vetter* 'cousin'), originally 'FaBr'). This means that this word was not only used by women. The restriction, then, might be secondary in Latin.

4.6 (Conclusion) I conclude that in Latin *nepos* came to mean 'nephew' only late, perhaps in the second century A.D. We shall have to consider below what the origin of this development was. It seems sure, however, that for the situation in PIE times it is hardly relevant. Important is that the meaning 'nephew' is not found in Indo-Iranian. The situation in Greek is not sure; see the next paragraph.

4.7 (*Anepsios*) The interpretation of the Greek evidence is not clear. Gr. *anepsios* means 'cousin', and it has been assumed that it derives from *\*ha-neptio-* 'co-nephew', *ha-* indicating that

6. H.S. Versnel draws my attention to the festival of the Matralia, where women pray for their sisters' children. Cf. Dumézil 1956: 9-43. If Dumézil's hypothesis is correct, that this ritual expresses the idea that the sisters Night and Dawn are mother of the Sun, it is not relevant here. However, I agree with Versnel, who points out that it is improbable that a myth of this kind can give rise to a ritual. F.B.J. Kuiper is of the same opinion. Rather, therefore, the Roman ritual points to the relation that existed between sisters and their children in early Roman society, and perhaps in PIE times. In this picture fits well the existence of a very archaic PIE word for MoSi; see 5.1.

the relation is reciprocally, symmetrical. That we have *ha-* in this sense here is made probable by its absence in the gloss *neóptrai* (probably standing for *\*nepotrai* or *neptrai*, derived from *\*nep(o)t-*: *huiōn ē < thugatērōn > thugatères*.<sup>7</sup> That words changed their meaning from 'nephew' to 'cousin' is observed frequently. The relevance in this context is that it would mean that *\*nepot-* came to mean 'nephew' very early in Greek, at least about 1000 B.C.

However, Gates (1971: 23) thinks that it rather originated from 'co-grandson', because PIE *\*nepot-* probably included all grandchildren but not all types of nephews. I doubt that *\*nepot-* meant 'nephew' in PIE, so I cannot accept the argument, but the suggestion 'co-grandchildren' seems as good as 'co-nephews'. Perhaps it is less frequent: I know only one parallel, NIr *col ceathar* 'cousin' = 'relationship four'. The fact that the meaning 'grandchild' is found in the gloss while the — more recent — 'nephew' cannot be pointed to cannot be considered a strong argument: that we have the gloss is purely accidental. If Gates' proposal is correct, we need not assume a development grandson > nephew > cousin for Greek with a very early nephew < grandson. But again we have no proof.

4.8 (Lat. *nepos*) For Latin — but there only — it seems as if we can see the development before our eyes. The relevant occurrences in the literature suggest a historical development (see the fine note of Heurgon 1940: 81 n. 4): 1) *sororis nepos* 'sister's grandson' — 2) *nepos per sororem* 'grand-nephew' through the sister = 'sister's grandson' — 3) *nepos* 'grand-nephew = sister's grandson' — 4) *nepos* 'sister's son'. There are two essential steps: 1 — 2, where *nepos* comes to be 'grand-nephew', and 3 — 4, where it goes from 'grand-nephew' to 'nephew'. If this indeed was the development, an explanation of it is not evident. Also, we cannot be sure that the order of the occurrences in literature indeed represents the historical development: the order may simply be a matter of chance. What is necessary is a detailed analysis of the inscriptional evidence, which is not available (and a tremendous enterprise).

4.9 (*\*népōts* 'offspring') If we would not have this Latin evidence, an easy solution to the nephew problem would seem

7. Because of this form I withdraw the suggestion that the *a-* represents a laryngeal, *\*h<sub>2</sub>nept-*, Beekes 1969: 45.

possible.

In a system where FaBrSo was Br (*frater patruelis*) and FaBr was Fa, a nephew (BrSo) would have been simply a son. Compare Serb. *sinovac* 'BrSo', literally 'kind of son'. This system is well-known. This would mean that PIE had no separate word for 'nephew'. It might have had one for SiSo (as opposed to BrSo), but we simply do not know. (Compare also Benveniste 1969: 236, who suggests that Lat. *filius* 'son', literally 'sucking', was in origin an adjective to *\*sullnus* 'son'. The adjective was necessary to distinguish him from the other sons (= nephews). — This also explains Gr. *adelphos* '(brother) from the same mother' and *kasignētos* id. — Note, however, that Lejeune 1967: 67-86 rejects the usual etymology for *filius*).

When now a word for 'nephew' is desired, it is a priori probable that 'grandson' was a candidate, as it denotes a remote descendant.

The representatives of *\*népot-* often mean simply 'offspring, progeny'. This is found specially in Old Indian. Remarkable is the divinity *Apām nápāt*, Av. *apqm napā* 'Son/Offspring of the Waters', where *nápāt* can hardly mean exactly 'grandson'. This divinity may be of PIE date and is perhaps found again in OIc. *sóe var nidr*, with *nidr* (which is not cognate with *\*népot-*) which means 'son, kinsman, relative' (R. Schmitt 1967: 280f.).

There are now two possibilities. Either the wider meaning of *\*népōts*, viz. 'remote descendant', is already PIE and in fact the original meaning of the word, or the wider meaning is later. Both are equally well possible in themselves, but I think two facts point to the latter. Firstly, in Latin the meaning 'nephew' seems recent, that of grandson is old. Secondly, in Sanskrit, where the wider meaning is most clear, it never means 'nephew'. Thirdly, in Slavic we find the use of the word for grandson, ORuss. *vnuk*, in a wider sense, exactly parallel with that of Skt. *nápāt* cited above. In the Song of Igor, the singer Bojan is called 'grandson of (the god) Weles', the winds 'grandsons of (the god) Stribog', the people of Kiev 'grandsons of (the god) Daždbog'. Though the etymology of *vnuk* is not exactly known, it seems sure that it had the exact meaning 'grandson', here used in a wider sense. In the same way I would consider Catullus *magnanimos Remi nepotes* (58,5) as the typical poetic use of a precise term in a wider sense, not as a testimony for an ori-

ginal value 'offspring'. As regards this development, it is well understandable that farther removed relatives were called closer relatives (a grandson is closest to you after your son). Cf. Pariente 1943: 64f. The first possibility, then, seems not what happened.

4.10 (Conclusion) In conclusion I think that the representatives of *\*népōts* got the meaning 'nephew' independently. It seems that it was specially SiSo, but this is not quite sure.<sup>8</sup> Some of the words occur only a few times, so that a high percentage loses its value. Also there might be reasons why a SiSo is mentioned more often than a BrSo.

It is admitted that this conclusion is not too certain. If we assume that *\*népōts* could be used for 'nephew' already in PIE, this would fit in very well with the general meaning 'offspring' attested in Sanskrit; it would explain Lat. *nepos* 'spendthrift' from the affectionate relation with MoBr, which is of PIE date (see below); Gr. *anepsiós* could contain *\*nept(io)-* 'nephew'. Against this interpretation pleads: the absence of the meaning 'nephew' in Indo-Iranian, the same in Latin and the growth of this meaning which seems visible here. The latter difficulty could be resolved by assuming that the inherited use as 'nephew' was lost and much later developed again, a complicated but not at all impossible construction.

5.1 (Gr. *mētrōs*) As to the words for MoBr derived from *\*a<sub>u</sub>os*, we must still discuss the old interpretation. Before that, attention may be called to a probable PIE word for 'MoBr'. The words for 'FaBr', e.g. Gr. *pátrōs*, Lat. *patruus* point to PIE *\*ph<sub>2</sub>trōus*. A parallel for MoBr is found in Gr. *mētrōs*. Because Greek is the only language to have a form that points to PIE *\*méh<sub>2</sub>trōus*, it is generally assumed that the form is a Greek innovation. Of course, this is no definite proof that the word was not of PIE date. I think it can be made probable that the word was PIE. The argumentation, however, is rather complicated.

We must first consider the word *Apatouria*. *Apatour-* must go back to *\*a-pator<sub>u</sub>-*. This form is supposed to contain *a-* from *\*sm-* and *-pator*. Then, however, the *u* is not clear (see e.g. Frisk s.v.). Certainly when the form, which is only found in

8. A misunderstanding seems Benveniste 1969: 323, who says that Joseph Loth 1922: 269-280) proved that *nepos* "en Bretagne" always means sister's son. As far as I understand this very difficult article it discusses two or three inscriptions from England (!) where *nepos* means either nephew or grandson (!).

Ionic and Attic, was first coined in this dialect, the *u* would be not understandable. The stem therefore seems to be older. The only possible connection for the *u* is found in Gr. *pátrōs*, Skt. *pitṛvyā-* etc. < *\*ph<sub>2</sub>trōu-*, *\*ph<sub>2</sub>tru-*. The second element therefore contains a form of *pátrōs*, not of *pátēr*. For the meaning this would be as well possible, as *pátrōs* means 'relative from father's side, agnate'. This is clear also from the adjective *patrōios*.<sup>9</sup> The only possibility to explain *\*patoru-* from *pátrōs* is to start from the oblique stem form *\*ph<sub>2</sub>tru-* (seen in Skt. *pitṛvyā-*). This form develops to *\*patoru-* only in Arcado-Cyprian (Myc.) and Aeolic, which would mean that the word is a loan from (one of) these dialects. This is evidently also the opinion of Schwyzer 1938: 344: "so können allgemein verbreitete Wörter wie die religiösen Termini . . . ion. (att.) *Apatouria* aus *\*-oru-* . . . aus der *o*-Schicht stammen".

If this reconstruction is correct, it is not without importance. It would prove 1) a dialect loan; 2) that the word is older than Ionic-Attic; 3) the existence of the zero grade *\*ph<sub>2</sub>tru-* (from *\*ph<sub>2</sub>trōu-*) also in Greek and 4) its development to *-oru-* in a Greek dialect.

The last point is of importance for the history of *patruiós*, *mētruiá*. It is now evident that these words do not continue *\*-tru-i-*, which would have given *-ta/oru-i-*.<sup>10</sup> Kuiper 1942: 57, already assumed, on the basis of OE *modrige* < PGm. *\*mōdru-uziōn* as against OHG *fatureo* < PGm. *\*faduruian-*, that the basis of *mētruiá* etc. was not *\*meh<sub>2</sub>-trōu-/tru-*, but the feminine of this word, i.e. *\*meh<sub>2</sub>truh<sub>2</sub>-*. We can add Arm. *mauru* <

9. There is a fine discussion of this word by Benveniste 1969: 272-4, who observed that there is the same distinction between *pátrios* and *patrōios* as between Lat. *patrius* and *paternus*. The first of the two pairs means 'of a father as such' and therefore 'of all fathers' (e.g. *patria potestas*), the second 'of my (etc.) father' (e.g. *amicus paternus*). *Patrōios* originally meant 'of the cognates of my father, of my (father's) clan'. This is evident from such expressions as σκήπτρον πατρώιον, τέμενος πατρώιον, πατρώιος τάφος 'tombeau de famille', μητρώιον . . . δῶμα(τ 410 'the house of my mother's clan). Therefore Benveniste's remark (273) "Par une extension inévitable, . . . *patrōios* peut parfois s'appliquer aussi à un personnage plus ancien que le père" is not quite correct. It went the other way round: 'of my father's clan' coincides in fact mostly with 'of my father'. — It is clear that the uncle is not specifically meant in these adjectives. Therefore, Benveniste's remark (274) "la formation de l'adjectif *mētrōios* révèle indirectement l'importance de l'oncle maternel" is decidedly wrong. (Also "*patrius* se réfère seulement à une parenté de type classificatoire" is a conclusion which is not allowed: the basic meaning 'of a father' (> 'of father(s) as such, of all fathers') is sufficient to explain the attested uses).

\**mātruuiā* as against *yauray* < \**ph<sub>2</sub>trui-*. We must then assume in Greek a development *-uh<sub>2i</sub>-* > *-ui-*, as does Lejeune, 1972: 169 § 172, who mentions *mētruiā* < \**mātr-uw-yā* without explaining the origin of *-uw-* (see n. 10). Therefore Gr. *mētruiā*, Arm. *mauru* and OE *modrige* point to a feminine form with \**-uh<sub>2</sub>*.

This means, first, that *mētruiā* etc. have a PIE base, and also that \**meh<sub>2</sub>trōus* was of PIE date, because \**meh<sub>2</sub>truh<sub>2</sub>-* can only be understood as a derivation from \**meh<sub>2</sub>trōus*. Also *mētrōs* is attested in Greek.

If we would now conclude that PIE had a word for 'MoBr', we might make the same mistake as is generally made in the case of 'FaBr'. In Greek *pātrōs* does not mean 'FaBr', but 'agnate, specially (of course) FaFa and FaBr'. This is what we might expect from a derivative of the word for 'father', i.e. a word with a basic meaning 'he from father'. This must have been the PIE meaning, exactly preserved in Greek. (This again suggests that Gr. *mētrōs* too is an archaism, not an innovation). \**Ph<sub>2</sub>trōus*, then, did not mean (simply) 'FaBr', and PIE had no word for 'FaBr'. This is not an annoying fact. On the contrary, we would expect that in the PIE kinship terminology FaBr was simply a 'father' and that there was no special word for him.

For MoBr the situation is different: he belongs to mother's lineage, not to father's, so he could not be a 'father'.

5.2 (Old interpretation of *avunculus* etc.) The old interpretation is that PIE \**ayōs* meant MoFa and, as the different forms do not agree exactly, that either \**ayōs* indicated both MoFa and MoBr, or that it was exactly the derivation that expressed the meaning MoBr (Delbrück 1889: 104 and 123).

As to the basis of this theory, if \**ayōs* was 'MoFa', what was 'father's father' (FaFa)? A suggestion was made by Risch (1944), that FaFa did not have a separate designation, because it was not necessary: in the extended family he was and remained simply '(the) father'. When confusion had to be avoided, he was distinguished as the 'great father' (as in Skt. *pitā-*

10. Even if we are allowed to assume a differently vocalized variant *-tru-i-*, it is not possible that this resulted in *-ui-*. Lejeune, 1972: 168 § 170 n. 2 (\**suju-* gives *viu-* after the oblique stem \**suju-*; on the inflection of this word see Beekes 1973: 239f) implies that it could not, but I know no sure evidence. — The explanation would perhaps be easier, if it was \**-tr-uh<sub>2</sub>-iHo-* (>\**-tru(u)i(i)o-*) as in *pitryā-*.

*mahá-*) or the 'old father' (Lith. *tėvas senàsis*, OE *ealda faeder*, OIr. *senathir*); cf. in (modern) Frisian *oarreheit*, literally 'the other father' (it also means 'stepfather').

Benveniste 1969: 226, rejects the idea by citing the *Origines* of Isidorus of Sevilla, who states: *avus pater patris est*. I do not think that this is enough to settle the question. As Latin had only one word for 'grandfather', it is probable that it was used also for 'MoFa'.

In fact we cannot decide this question. *\*A<sub>u</sub>os* can have been FaFa or MoFa or both. However, we have no evidence that it was only or specially MoFa, and that it was both is not probable in a strongly patrilineal society. And there is evidence that it is, one would say "of course", FaFa. An argument might be the forms Lat. *pro-*, *ab-*, *at-*, *tritavus* for 'great-grandfather' etc. This system seems old because of parallel forms elsewhere (Benveniste 1965). They show that *\*a<sub>u</sub>os* belonged to father's lineage. It seems therefore not allowed to start from a meaning MoFa.

The fact that the derivations are not identical can be most simply explained by assuming that they were formed independently. This would mean that the words are post-PIE. It is possible, but mere hypothesis, that they replace a PIE derivation, e.g. *\*a<sub>u</sub>ios*, cf. OPr. *awis* etc. (or even PIE *\*a<sub>u</sub>os* itself in the meaning MoBr).

5.3 (The position of MoBr) Benveniste (1969: 227-36) speaks of the special position of MoBr, but it is not clear what his conclusion is. One explanation is that it is an old matrilineal element. This explanation was rejected above. The indications given for a special affectionate relation with MoBr are important.

Not all his evidence is cogent. When the Gaulish king Ambigatus sends his two sisters' sons to lead part of his tribe to new settlements (Livy 5, 34), what is the conclusion? We should first know whether the king had sons. And if so, why exactly the command was given to his nephews. Maybe his sons were to take over the power of their father, and what is then the relevance for our problem? When it is said (231) that "Dans l'Iliade, les deux seuls exemples du terme *métrōs* (MoBr) prennent un relief particulier", we must be careful. When there is no evidence that in ancient Greek society MoBr had a special position, we cannot be sure of the relief.



The testimony of Tacitus is one of the clearest. In his *Germania* 20,5 he says of the Germanic peoples: *Sorum filiis idem apud avunculum qui apud patrem honor; quidam sanctiorem artioremque hunc nexum sanguinis arbitrantur et in accipiendis obsidibus magis exigunt tanquam et animam firmitus et domum latius teneant*. It seems probable that the very cordial relation to MoBr found in the Old French chansons de geste is an outcome of the situation described by Tacitus. See e.g. W.O. Farnsworth 1913. He assumed that it was a survival of a matrilineal society. At the time he wrote, this was the only possible interpretation. In fact we find the 'fosterage': a young man was sent for training to his (maternal) uncle whom he follows in war and whose death he avenges. This suggests indeed that MoBr had the authority of a father, which is the main characteristic of a matrilineal society, but in fact it seems that the relation was in the first place one of cordiality. Also there are some indications that the nephew had a right to the inheritance of his uncle, but it seems an exception. I would suppose, then, that a cordial relation to MoBr came to be combined with the institution of fosterage, a situation which comes close to that typical for the position of MoBr in a matrilineal situation.

For Rome the explanation Festus gives of *avunculus* seems to contain some genuine information: *quod (avi locum optineat et) proximitate tueatur sororis filiam* "because (he holds the place of (a) grandfather and) protects through his close relation his sister's daughter". That specially sister's *daughter* is mentioned proves that this is a fact; theoretical speculation would hardly have chosen specially the daughter.

That MoBr did have a special position in PIE society, is now quite clear from the evidence collected by Bremmer in the article following hereafter.

5.4 (Conclusion) There is, then, clear evidence for a special friendly relation to MoBr in PIE society, and for theoretical reasons this may be expected. It is well known that in a patrilineal society authority is vested in the father while MoBr has the position of a friendly counsellor. This situation was described by A.R. Radcliffe-Brown (1952). We find it also with the Mongol-Turkic peoples of Central Asia, whose kinship systems closely resemble that reconstructed for PIE. See Krader 1963 passim, e.g. 351-6.

When we assume this friendly relation with MoBr, it is not difficult to explain the words of the type *avunculus*, while maintaining that *\*ayos* was FaFa. It seems correct that FaFa, as long as he lived was the head of the family, was simply 'the father' and had the authority of a father, but only in relation to his children. To his grandchildren he was not the father. As often the relation towards grandchildren may have been one of kindness, tenderness and indulgence.

The derivatives of *\*ayos* may be essential. If they meant 'a kind of, another grandfather', MoBr was called thus because he was characterized through the same relation of kindness. This may be expressed by Festus' explanation: *quod avi locum optineat*, but we do not know in what way this was meant.

I do not think, then, that *\*ayos* originally must have been MoFa. We have discussed the lack of a word for FaFa, in that case. Also it is not clear why MoBr would have been named in relation to his father, the more so as Bremmer points out that the relation with MoBr was perhaps more intimate than with MoFa. It would be rather strange, in this light, that there would have been a special term for MoFa (*\*ayos*) and not for MoBr. On the other hand it seems natural that MoBr, on the basis of his relation, was compared with the member of ego's (paternal) family that showed the closest resemblance.

Fosterage seems not to have been essential. Bremmer pointed out that fosterage outside the direct family meant that a boy was sent to his mother's family. Rather it seems remarkable that the affectionate relation with MoBr (and MoFa) was not broken (as appears from the French Middle Ages) though MoBr (or MoFa) now got the place of a father. It should be investigated, however, what the relevance is of NIr. *garmac* 'grandson, nephew' from MIr *\*gormac* 'foster-son'.

#### Appendix: Gr. *atitállō*

It may be useful to object to Benveniste's theory (1969: 2, 88) that the Greek verb *atitállō* shows that the Greeks knew the institution of 'fosterage', the more so as it is taken over by Cl. Moussy (1972: 157-69).

It is said that *atitállō* is (almost) never used of parents educating their own child and therefore points to an original meaning 'fosterage'. Even if the first would be correct, the con-

clusion is not at all evident: if a language has a special verb for rearing a child which is not your own, this does not at all mean that this society must have the institution of fosterage. But I think that the observation is not correct. First, with one possible exception (below) none of the older uses itself points to fosterage. Then, in two Homeric occurrences (ο 450, τ 354) it is said 'of the nurse (*trophós*). This implies that in this case the child was reared in its own house, and by its own parents (insofar as they did not entrust the task to that member of the household whose task it was, the *trophós*). Benveniste admits that it is used beside *tréphō*. In fact, they occur in a formula, ἐν τρέφον ἢ δ' ἀτίταλλον, occurring four times (Ξ 202 = 303, Π 191, τ 354) while Ω 60 has θρέψα τε καὶ ἀτίτηλα. This means that there was no opposition between the two terms. When we ask what the difference is, it seems that *atitállō* stresses the emotional aspects ('cherish'), while *tréphō* is more objective ('educate, bring up'). As Benveniste also admitted, in γ 250 the verb is used of the mother.

But also in Homer there is a much more eloquent testimony that *atitállein* can be done by the mother, and even that that is the normal case. In σ 323 we read of Penelope with regard to Melanthe that she *παῖδα δὲ ὥς ἀτίταλλε* 'brought (her) up as her own child'. Moussy simply notes that it is not the mother, but Benveniste's comment is hard to understand. It seems to conclude the opposite from what the text says. He says (p. 86): " 'élever comme un enfant', c'est-à-dire comme s'il était de famille, ce qu'il n'est pas en fait". This may be right, but it does not alter the fact that this expression implies that *atitállein* is the right verb for rearing your own child: she *atítalle* her just as <a mother *atitállei*> her own child.

I conclude that there is strong evidence that the verb was properly used of the child's own mother. If sometimes it is not the mother who is mentioned, this seems simply due to the fact that it is more significant to mention that somebody was *not* reared in his own house. The meaning of this verb, then, does not prove that there was fosterage in Greece. Nor does it prove that it did *not* exist, of course. See above 5.3 and 5.4 and the following article of Bremmer.

Addendum.

O. Szemerényi announced an article on the same subject to

appear in the Bulletin de la Société Linguistique de Paris. It seems that he has arrived at largely the same conclusions.

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