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## THE QUANTITY OF FINAL -U IN THE NOMINATIVE–ACCUSATIVE SINGULAR OF LATIN U-STEM NEUTER NOUNS

**Summary:** The opinion of traditional grammars and the hypothetical derived PIE form is inconsistent as concerns the quantity of the sing. nominative–accusative ending of Latin u-stem neuters. Since the received scholarly opinion holds that the quantity cannot be determined from the available sources, certain scholars have stated that the ending is a short -u. A comprehensive re-examination of the ancient grammatical opinion and the relevant metrical texts demonstrates that on the basis of two passages, namely *Aen.* XI 859 and *nux* 106, the truth of the traditional view, i.e., that the sing. nom.–acc. of u-stem neuters is long, can be confirmed.

**Key words:** Latin morphology, u-stem nouns, Roman grammarians, diptota, monoptota, quantity of -u.

### 1. THE PROBLEM AND ITS PREVIOUS SOLUTIONS

The progress of Latin linguistics inevitably brings a re-examination and re-evaluation of previously accepted facts. This is true as well of the teaching of the accepted grammars on the quantity of final -u in the nominative, accusative, and vocative cases of Latin fourth declension neuters. Though the traditional opinion – taught also in the schools and ultimately stemming from the authority of Priscian – is that this final -u is long, one would expect, on the ground of comparative Indo-European linguistics, a short -u.<sup>1</sup> A change from short to long is theoretically impossible.

There are two major ways for scholars to make this contradiction clear. The first is to deny that the quantity of final -u is long, claiming that the cases where it is are artificial, the result of prosodical lengthening<sup>2</sup> or *poetica licentia*.<sup>3</sup> In extreme cases this method leads to a total denial of the presence of nominative, accusative or vocative u-stem neuter forms in the metrical texts,<sup>4</sup> which places long final -u in the realm of grammatical fantasy. Those scholars who choose the second method have

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Lat. *genū* ~ Gr. *γόνυ*, Skt. *jānu*.

<sup>2</sup> Before caesurae, see M. LEUMANN, *Lateinische Laut- und Formenlehre*. München 1977<sup>5</sup>. p. 441.

<sup>3</sup> A. ERNOUT, *Morphologie historique du latin*. Paris 1953. pp. 64–65.

<sup>4</sup> This is the most recent point of view, the one of P. M. SUÁREZ MARTÍNEZ, “La quantité de -u chez les neutres de quatrième déclinaison latine.” In: H. ROSÉN (ed.), *Aspects of Latin. Papers from the Seventh International Colloquium on Latin Linguistics, Jerusalem, April 1993*. Innsbruck 1996. pp. 91–98.

attempted to construct an explanation as to how these words evolved from other Indo-European morphological categories: from the dual<sup>5</sup>, or possibly from an original collective plural.<sup>6</sup>

But before we commit to one theory or the other, or begin to create a new one, an essential question must be answered: *is* there any contradiction at all, or are we in fact dealing with a pseudo-problem? The conclusion of Suárez Martínez<sup>7</sup> makes sense: it *is* possible that we cannot find any arguments for the existence of long -ū in u-stem neuters in the available texts. And if we do not find any, what is the consequence? Should we accept that short -u is the most probable answer, or should we simply admit that we have no evidence for the quantity of -u? Or, if we *can* find evidence, is it really relevant?

Before we can answer these questions, we need first to discuss other problems connected with the u-stem neuters. In Latin these words are very few indeed: *cornu*, *gelu*, *genu*, *pecu*, and *veru*. Because they “*sunt perpauca*”<sup>8</sup>, this group of words is actually scarcely attested in the literature, and tends to variation in its forms.<sup>9</sup> Sometimes even other u-stem neuters appear as variants of words originally from other declinations.<sup>10</sup> Thus the main problem is twofold: quantitative and qualitative. What are the precise limits of the set of Latin u-stem neuters; what is their origin; how can a small and rather unsubstantial group of words be grasped?

There are two areas that any examination of u-stem neuters must cover. First, we need to examine the various opinions of the Roman grammarians. Second, we must find the relevant places in the Latin metrical texts where the quantity of -u can be determined.<sup>11</sup> The main criterion of examination is the demand for completeness both in the set of u-stem neuters – including the *hapax legomena* mentioned above – and in the selection of texts. There is no room to pick and choose. Not all texts have been examined previously.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>5</sup> This is an ingenious theory of F. Sommer on the ground that *cornu* and *genu* usually mean parts of the body: F. SOMMER, *Kritische Erläuterungen zur lateinischen Laut- und Formenlehre*. Heidelberg 1914. p. 96. A critique of this theory is formulated by A. L. SIHLER, *New Comparative Grammar of Greek and Latin*. New York–Oxford 1995. p. 323.

<sup>6</sup> From the semantic change of PIE \**pek'u* ‘single animal’ – \**pek'ū* ‘cattle’: J. SCHMIDT, *Die Pluralbildungen der indogermanischen Neutra*. Weimar 1889. p. 49.

<sup>7</sup> SUÁREZ MARTÍNEZ (n. 4), p. 98.

<sup>8</sup> Phoc. GL V p. 414, 12–13 KEIL.

<sup>9</sup> There are a number of formal variants in other declinations; e.g., u-stem masculine nouns: *cornus* (Varro *Men.* 131 ASTBURY; acc. *cornum* Ter. *Eun.* 775; Lucr. II 388; Ov. *met.* II 874, V 383; Avien. *Arat.* 437), *gelus* (Acc. *trag.* 376 DANGEL; Afr. *com.* 109 DAVIAULT); o-stem neuters: *cornum* (see above), *gelum* (Lucr. VI 877), *verum* (Plaut. *Rud.* 1302, 1304; *Truc.* 628); s-stem neuters: *genus* (Lucil. 166 KRENKEL; Cic. *Arat.* 27, 45, 46, 254, 375, 399, 403, fr. 21 SOUBIRAN; Ov. *Arat.* 1 COURTNEY).

<sup>10</sup> The greater part of these words are cited by grammarians and not from the surviving texts: *algu*, *artu*, *ossu*, *penu*, *seru*, *specu*, *testu*, and *tonitru*. Cf. F. NEUE–C. WAGENER, *Formenlehre der lateinischen sprache*. Vol. I. Berlin 1902. pp. 531–535.

<sup>11</sup> On the theoretical level the third area would be the investigation of the development of the words in the Romance languages, but the phonological and morphological changes do not help to determine the exact quantitative value of -u.

<sup>12</sup> This is my first counter-argument against the work of SUÁREZ MARTÍNEZ who – although does not examine all relevant passages – makes his conclusion in such a way that one would first of all expect the use of all available material.

## 2. THE OPINIONS OF THE ROMAN GRAMMARIANS

As Suárez Martínez has stated,<sup>13</sup> the opinions of the ancient grammarians on the quantity of final -u in fact vary.<sup>14</sup> While the author of *De ultimis syllabis* (GL IV p. 224, 22–32) and Priscian in his *Institutio* (GL II p. 362, 6–11; also in other books: p. 187, 16–17 and p. 210, 14–15) claims it is long, a larger group of grammarians, namely Diomedes (GL I p. 308, 13–17; similarly on p. 309, 3–6), Pompeius (GL V p. 185, 1–4; similarly on p. 172, 3–4), Servius (GL IV p. 451, 27–28), Martianus Capella (*De nuptiis* p. 76, 14–15 Willis; the same on p. 78, 8–9) and Probus (GL IV p. 31, 23–27; the same on p. 32, 30–33) assert the contrary, i.e., the ending of the u-stem neuters in the nominative, accusative and vocative cases is short. To the latter group of grammarians belongs also Sacerdos (GL VI p. 482, 29–483, 1); and the authors of *De finalibus metrorum* (GL VI p. 231, 4–8; perhaps the work of Metrorius) and of the *Explanatio in Donatum* (GL IV p. 544, 28–31) should also be added.<sup>15</sup>

It is clear that the question cannot be decided in accordance with majority opinion, chiefly as there is a grammarian, the author of the *Explanatio*, who is inconsistent on the point. Thus, first the arguments of the grammarians must be scrutinized.<sup>16</sup> To begin with the majority position, two arguments are given. First, all final vowels are short in the nominative, including the -u ending<sup>17</sup>; hence in the case of neuters the same is true of the accusative and vocative cases. This could be the effect of analogy: as the -a, -o and -e endings are beyond doubt short, in a dubious situation the quantity of -u easily can be settled as short too.<sup>18</sup> The second type of argument is a comparison of cases: in the genitive,<sup>19</sup> dative and ablative the -u is long (*productio*), while in the other cases it is short (*correptio*). As Diomedes says (GL I p. 308, 13–17), „*bipertita est quae altera casuum productione et correptione variatur, ut genu cornu*

<sup>13</sup> SUÁREZ MARTÍNEZ (n. 4), p. 92–93.

<sup>14</sup> None of the grammarians antedate the end of the 3rd cent. AD. Thus the cause of the difference of views could be the late date as well, when it had become difficult to determine the proper usage, especially in the case of a group of words which is small and apt to suffer both phonological and morphological alteration.

<sup>15</sup> The so-called *Ars anonyma Berniensis* echoes the opinion of older grammarians, who contrast the cases with short and long -u endings (GL Suppl. p. 127, 5–12); but curiously it not only cites Priscian's argumentation for long -u in all cases (p. 127, 13–16), but at the beginning of the discussion it also deals with this group of words in this very way (p. 126, 35–127, 3). Thus the author of this grammatical summary accepted the opinion of Priscian, not only from his authority, while carefully alluding to the opinion of the opposing party.

<sup>16</sup> I call 'arguments' the motivations from which the members of the opposing parties formulate their opinions. In this manner a declaration that „the -u is short” (*u terminatus brevis est, ut cornu*; Mart. Cap. p. 76, 14–15 WILLIS) does not contain any argument, because it reveals nothing about its author's motivation.

<sup>17</sup> Serv. GL IV p. 451, 27–28: „*Nominativus singularis has habet breves, a ut Musa, e ut sedile, o ut virgo, u ut cornu...*” Similarly “Metrorius” who adds the group of words with long -i suffix (e.g., *frugi*), which is not originally nominative and obviously indeclinable, precisely as the corrector of his Palatine codex (9th cent.) remarks too.

<sup>18</sup> Of course, only the -a ending can provide a parallel if we deal with the long-short contrast.

<sup>19</sup> It is peculiar that all grammarians equally regard the ending of the genitive as -ū, instead of -ūs. Cf. F. SOMMER, *Handbuch der lateinischen Laut- und Formenlehre*. Heidelberg 1914. p. 389. It has nothing to do with our problem, just for the understanding of grammatical terminology.

*gelu. haec enim duobus modis tantum in declinatione variantur, quod quidem productione et correptione distinguimus. nam in nominativo accusativo vocativo correpta u proferuntur, in genetivo dativo ablativo producta.*"<sup>20</sup> Diomedes here defines a technical term. In this way the *bipertitum* term is applicable to words which have only two forms that, in the case of u-stem neuters, are distinguished by quantity.

A similar form of argumentation based on terminology can be seen in *De ultimis syllabis* (GL IV p. 224, 22–32), but from the other side: „*Nominativum singularem aptoti nominis neutri generis u littera terminatum in poemate aliquo non facilius invenies, ut si facias hoc cornu et hoc genu vel hoc gelu. nam haec nomina apud Vergilium septimo casu inveniuntur. verum tamen si nominativum casum conlocare volueris, ultimam hanc syllabam longam ponito, quoniam necesse est in ablativo eam produci... in ablativo tamen sine ambiguitate producitur.*"<sup>21</sup> Here the applied term is *aptota*, which, in comparison with the meaning of Diomedes' term, is applicable to those words that have only one form in a paradigm, as if indeclinable. There is no quantitative opposition: since in the -u is long sine ambiguitate in the ablativo, it is long in the nominative also. The reference to poetical texts is more explicit in Priscian (GL II p. 362, 6–21), who also criticizes the opinions of older grammarians and quotes a Vergilian and an Ovidian line as documents: „*In u neutrorum, quae et indeclinabilia sunt in singulari numero, ut hoc genu huius genu, hoc cornu huius cornu, in quibus quamvis quibusdam artium scriptoribus videatur temporum esse differentia – dicunt enim, nominativum quidem et accusativum et vocativum corripere, reliquos vero produci –, ego in usu pariter in omnibus produci invenio casibus haec nomina...*" In Priscian's text the *indeclinabilia* are the same as *aptota*; the terminological equation is directly stated by Augustinus (GL V p. 497, 31–32; similarly in p. 501, 12–13) as well.<sup>22</sup> There are numerous other grammarians, besides the above-mentioned Priscian, Phocas, Augustinus and the anonymous author of *De ultimis syllabis*, whose opinion, that the -u of the u-stem neuters in nominative and accusative is long, is described with the same terms: Charisius<sup>23</sup> (p. 31, 17–21. 40, 15–22. 82, 28–30 Barwick), the author of an *Explanatio*<sup>24</sup> (GL IV p. 541, 23–24) and Cledonius (GL V p. 42, 7–9).<sup>25</sup>

Examining the arguments of the opposing parties, we can summarize that while the opinion of that group which insists on short -u is supported by facts known from

<sup>20</sup> Sacerdos brings a similar argument to bear, but without terminological remarks.

<sup>21</sup> The same term is used by Phocas (GL V p. 414, 11–13) for the u-stem neuters.

<sup>22</sup> Priscian himself in his *Institutio* uses three terms: „*monoptota*" (GL II p. 187, 16), „*aptota*" (GL II p. 210, 14; also in Ps.-Prisc. *De accentibus*, GL III p. 523, 3–4) and „*indeclinabilia*" (GL II p. 362, 7; also in his *Institutio de nomine*, GL III p. 447, 14–15). The use of these terms as synonyms is inconsistent, if the subtle distinction of Cledonius (GL V p. 45, 30–32) is right: „*inter monoptoton et aptoton hoc interest: monoptoton est quod per omnes casus idem significat, ut 'frugi'; aptoton est quod tantum unum casum, quem invenerit, servat et non flectitur, ut 'ab hac dicione'.*" But this kind of subtle distinction is irrelevant for our purposes.

<sup>23</sup> Along with the so-called *Excerpta Bobiensia* (GL I p. 551, 17–19; also in p. 547, 4).

<sup>24</sup> The uncertainty of this author – who may be a certain Sergius – is very conspicuous here, since a little later he argues for the position of Diomedes (see above). There is no acceptable reason; the inconsistency in the same work is more than curious.

<sup>25</sup> From the GL Supplement there are other texts too: the *Ars* of Ps.-Asper (p. 43, 7–13), the *Ars anonyma Berniensis* (see above) and the *Commentum Einsidlense* (p. 240, 4–5).

other declinations – short vowel quantity in final syllables and comparison of long and short endings as in the first declination –, the group of grammarians defending long -u, likewise populous, is not afraid to examine primary sources, i.e., the metrical texts themselves. So our second task is to analyze the poetical texts.

### 3. ANALYSIS OF METRICAL TEXTS

As the group of the -u stem neuters is very small, we can expect that there are few relevant passages from metrical texts relevant to our examination of the quantity of final -u in the nominative or accusative cases. There are only two grammarians, Priscian and the anonymous author of *De ultimis syllabis*, who, trying to demonstrate that this -u is long, use passages from poetical texts.<sup>26</sup> The first passages to be examined are those cited by Priscian.

His first example is from Ovid (*met.* IX 298–300):

...dextroque a poplite laevum  
pressa genu digitis inter se pectine iunctis  
sustinuit partus...

This reading can be found at Priscian and this is also the *consensus* of the 11th–12th century codices. But – as Suárez Martínez has noticed<sup>27</sup> – two codices of the same age write *genu et* instead of simple *genu*, and both of these variants are occur in the texts of recent editions. Such a textual problem can cause uncertainty: if we accept the former text, the -u is long; but if we prefer the latter, an *elisis* intervenes<sup>28</sup> and the quantity cannot be determined.

Uncertainty in the text can be found elsewhere too (*met.* IV 339–340):

Tum quoque respiciens, fruticumque recondita silva  
delituit flexuque genu submisit. At ille...

The variants of the *paradosis* are *flexoque*, *flexumque*, and *flexaque*, the published variant is a conjecture by Lachmann. The passage can be relevant only if the correct text is *flexumque* or *flexuque*; but the existence of *flexoque*, in which case the *genu* must be a modal ablative, does not permit us to decide whether the passage is relevant.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>26</sup> This grammarian cites two verses from Cicero (GL IV p. 224, 29 = Cic. Arat. fr. 28, 2 and p. 224, 31 = Arat. 27), from which the second is apparently incorrect, as we can compare its text with the manuscript tradition. Nevertheless, the overall negative opinion of Suárez Martínez (n. 4), p. 93 about the author's trustfulness in citation does not seem to be obviously well-founded, chiefly as he blames the anonymous grammarian for the inconsistency, whereas the works preserved under the name of Probus in GL IV were actually written by various authors.

<sup>27</sup> SUÁREZ MARTÍNEZ (n. 4), p. 93.

<sup>28</sup> Similarly, elision makes the length of final -u in this verse from an 8th century epigraphic poem (ILCV 1625, 1) unverifiable: *Flecte genu, en signum per quod vis victa tirani...*

<sup>29</sup> Cf. SUÁREZ MARTÍNEZ, (n. 4), p. 93. For the sake of completeness two other passages should be mentioned. The first is a piece from a lost work of Afranius. There are two variants of texts, as the

Priscian's other example is from Vergil (*Aen.* I 318–320):

*Namque umeris de more habilem suspenderat arcum  
venatrix dederatque comam diffundere ventis,  
nuda genu nodoque sinus collecta fluentes.*

Both Priscian (GL II p. 362, 20–21) and Servius (ad. loc.) interpret *genu* as *accusativus respectivus*. But Suárez Martínez rightly points out<sup>30</sup> that *genu* here could just as well be *ablativus limitationis*, and thus irrelevant for our purposes.

The question of whether a u-stem neuter is in fact an *accusativus respectivus* or an *ablativus limitationis* cannot be decided definitely. Poetically the former occurs as well.<sup>31</sup>

There are some more passages. Suárez Martínez has examined Ov. *fast.* III 869–870:

*Dicitur infirma cornu tenuisse sinistra  
femina, cum de se nomina fecit aquae.*

His conclusion is that the u-stem neuters in these lines are not nominative or accusative.<sup>32</sup> He formulates his judgement in the same manner in the case of *met.* XII 345–348:<sup>33</sup>

*...tergoque Bienoris alti  
insilit haud solito quemquam portare nisi ipsum;  
opposuitque genu costis prensamque sinistra  
caesariem retinens...*

Apart from the texts already examined, there is another passage from Ovid which must be an example of *cornu* as direct object (*met.* XI 324–325):<sup>34</sup>

opinions of the publisher differ in the acceptation of verse. The first is Ribbeck's (fr. 420): *indignum vero testu <quod> dici solet*. The second is from DAVIAULT (fr. 421): *indignum vero dici solet testu [- - -]*.

Both variants are suspicious. The Ribbeck version cannot be used because there is an editorial conjecture after the nominative *testu*; the same is true for the Daviault version, as this word stands at the end of the incomplete line. Incompleteness is the problem in another epigraphic verse (CIL VIII 20249–50): *sancte tui sp f pli I Vitigator genu f V O mpte tuis f S*.

<sup>30</sup> SUÁREZ MARTÍNEZ (n. 4), pp. 95–96.

<sup>31</sup> The grammars refer to another passage from Ovid (*met.* IX 96–97): "...*vultus Achelous agrestes / et lacerum cornu mediis caput abdidit undis*." Again we cannot decide the question, the text can be interpreted in either way.

<sup>32</sup> SUÁREZ MARTÍNEZ (n. 4), p. 94. His argument ("nous sommes ... en présence d'un usage intransitif ou absolu [more rightly: middle-voice – L. L.] de *teneo*, dans le sens qu'il n'est pas nécessaire d'expliquer son objet direct, du fait qu'il coïncide avec le sujet: *se tenuisse*") is not convincing, as this interpretation is far more complicated than the traditional one.

<sup>33</sup> SUÁREZ MARTÍNEZ (n. 4), p. 95. If we accept his reasoning, we may get a more difficult interpretation: instead of the simple "he (Theseus) pushed his knees to the ribs (of Bienor)", the result can be "he pushed himself to the ribs with his knees" (medial sense) or "he was pushed to the ribs with his knees" (the so-called absolute sense). I find these explanations untenable: the author is apparently fighting to secure his opinion on the missing nominative or accusative u-stem neuters at any cost.

<sup>34</sup> Similarly, there are two more passages in which *cornu* is indisputably nominative or accusative. For the former (Cic. *Arat.* 28, 2): *iam Tauri laevum cornu dexterque simul pes*. For the latter (Phaedr. app. 22, 1): *pastor capellae cornu baculo fregerat*.

*Nec mora, curvavit cornu<sup>35</sup> nervoque sagittam  
inpulit et meritam traiecit harundine linguam.*

As Klingenschmitt has demonstrated, all of these examples are problematic, because the u-stem neuters stand before the caesura.<sup>36</sup> As we know, not only syllables at the end of a verse can be *syllaba anceps*, but also those originally short syllables which fall before a caesura. This is called prosodical lengthening,<sup>37</sup> and is quite frequent in the poetical texts. If we assume that lengthening is present in our passages, the implication must be their exclusion from the set of possibly relevant examples. With the utmost caution we must accept the testimony only of those texts in which u-stem neuters do not stand before caesura. Fortunately, there are two passages that fulfil this criterion.

The first is from Vergil (*Aen.* XI 858–860):

*Dixit, et aurata volucrem Threissa sagittam  
deprompsit pharetra cornuque infensa tetendit  
et duxit longe...*

The labiovelar stop in the enclitic *-que* cannot be taken as a consonant cluster and so cannot cause *syllaba positione longa*. Similarly, the lengthening cannot be interpreted as a result of caesura *semiseptenaria* – in the Latin literature there are very few examples of caesura in a syllable with elision.

Suárez Martínez chose an interpretation of *cornuque* here as well, according to which it is not accusative. He claims that the direct object is the elliptic *sagittam*, while *cornu* is a local adverbial phrase.<sup>38</sup> This argumentation is a consequence of the author's *a priori* line of thought: the text relates how the Thracian woman draws forth an arrow from her quiver, then draws her bow and holds the bowstring taut. Even if the *sagittam* added in thought could be the direct object of *tetendit*, it would not be of *duxit*, as for archery, not the arrow but the bowstring pulled.<sup>39</sup> In this manner *cornuque* has to be a direct object, and consequently accusative.

The last, Pseudo-Ovidian passage is far less problematic (*nux* 105–106):

*At mihi nec grando, duris invisā colonis,  
nec ventus fraudi solve geluē fuit.*

<sup>35</sup> Cf. *met.* V 383: *curvavit flexile cornum*.

<sup>36</sup> G. KLINGENSCHMITT, „Die lateinische Nominalflexion“. In: O. PANAGL–T. KRISCH (Hrsg.), *Latein und Indogermanisch. Akten des Kolloquiums der Indogermanischen Gesellschaft, Salzburg, 23.–26. September 1986*. Innsbruck 1992. pp. 121–122. In the hexameter the following caesurae are found, including dubious passages: *semitemaria* (Verg. *Aen.* I 320), *semiquinaria* (Ov. *met.* IX 97, IX 299, XII 347), *semiseptenaria* (Cic. *Arat.* 28, 2, Ov. *fast.* III 869, *met.* IV 339, XI 324). Even in Phaedrus *cornu* stands before the caesura of the iambic line. Cf. LEUMANN (n. 2), p. 441.

<sup>37</sup> See F. CRUSIUS–H. RUBENBAUER: *Römische Metrik. Eine Einführung*. München 1955<sup>2</sup>. p. 28. More accurately, it is not lengthening in the common sense, but a short pause before the caesura, which can be annexed to the short end syllable of the previous word, and thus produces an effect of long syllable.

<sup>38</sup> SUÁREZ MARTÍNEZ (n. 4), p. 94.

<sup>39</sup> Moreover, *cornu tendere* and *arcum tendere* are common technical expressions for the bending of the bow. Cf. *Aen.* IX 606: *tendere cornu*; VII 164: *tendant arcus*; VIII 707: *arcum intendebat*; IX 665: *intendant ... arcus*; XII 815: *contenderet arcum*.

Just as the other elements of this list – *ventus* and *sol* – are subjects, *gelu* with enclitic *-ve* must also be a subject and so nominative as well. The problem of prosodical lengthening can be totally excluded, as the line is a pentameter and the caesura stands between *fraudi* and *solve*. This and the former example seem to be ground enough to reject the theory of the irrelevance of poetic texts.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

From the data the following inferences can be drawn:

1. Although there is dissension among Roman grammarians, the arguments for long *-u* are better founded than those to the contrary. Passages for illustration are found only in Priscian and Probus. Moreover, the *diptota* category of the grammarians arguing the shortness of *-u* is very obscure: if they use examples, all of their words are *nomina casibus defectiva*, i.e., words which have only two cases.<sup>40</sup> Their employment of this category can only be explained by the need to fill the gap in the terminological line between *monoptota* and *triptota*.<sup>41</sup>

2. There are at least two relevant passages in Latin poetry that show long *-u* in the nominative and accusative cases, and in no place is short *-u* ever attested.<sup>42</sup>

The *argumentatio a contrario* of Suárez Martínez was forced by the expectation of Indo-European short *-u* and the supposed lack of evidence from metre. But since Klingenschmitt has verified that from Celtic parallels the presence of long *-u* in PIE is verifiable as well,<sup>43</sup> and there are evidences for long *-u*, his theory cannot be defended. Apart from the dissension of both authors and grammarians, the *-u* of the singular nominative-accusative form of Latin *u*-stem neuters was unquestionably long.

H-3530 Miskolc  
Avasalja u. 32.

<sup>40</sup> E.g., *fors, forte* (GL II p. 188, 4) and *vicem, vice* (GL Suppl. p. 244, 4–5). The *u*-stem neuters are, however, used in all cases.

<sup>41</sup> This kind of automatic procedure is attested e.g., in Donatus (GL IV p. 377, 23–25): *sunt autem formae casuales sex, ex quibus sunt nomina alia monoptota, alia diptota, alia triptota, alia tetra-ptota, alia pentaptota, alia hexaptota*.

<sup>42</sup> The question of *poetica licentia* remains open. Must we assume that poets had such freedom to use regularly long vowels instead of shorts in metrically neutral positions? It is not likely. And can we accept that various authors always lengthen prosodically the *-u* before the caesura? This is an unsolved problem. I would answer no. I cannot suppose that prosodical lengthening, otherwise rare, became almost universal in the case of *u*-stem neuters.

<sup>43</sup> KLINGENSCHMITT (n. 36), pp. 122–125.