The never-ending analysis of Pasiego Vowel Harmony

The analysis of Pasiego Vowel Harmony has still not to our idea been fully analysed. Various questions are involved, firstly:

      a.   What is vowel harmony (VH)?
      b.   What is metaphony (MP)?

Can we define a difference between these two phenomena? Conceivably a distinction is possible, if we define features in privative terms, as is increasingly becoming accepted (cf. McCarthy 2009). We would define VH as involving a addition to target vowels of a feature present on a trigger vowel. The possible types of VH will then be constrained by the content of the vowel features adopted in any theory.

Vowel Harmony
In Dependency Phonology (DP), one possible set of features is defined by basic features or elements [I, U, A]. In terms of whether these in a Head position or a Dependent position different phonetic interpretations will be assigned, giving a total of six types of VH:

1. Harmony on the basis of head features:
          Front/Palatal Harmony (I)
          Back/Velar Harmony (U)
          Low Harmony (A)

2. Harmony on the basis of dependent features:
          ATR Harmony (I)
          Round/Labial Harmony (U)
          RTR/Pharyngeal Harmony (A)

Metaphony
We will assume that Metaphony covers other types of "assimilatory effects", including the addition of features not present on a trigger vowel, or subtractive effects.

Pasiego VH
In Pasiego VH two different "assimilatory"processes appear to occur:
          a. what has been frequently described in the literature as "laxing" harmony, but has been correctly identified by (Hualde 1987) as involving retraction of the tongue root (RTR).
          b. "raising" harmony, involving the raising of mid-vowels to high vowels.

In Dependency terms the first type involves the "spreading"/VH of an RTR feature (Dependent [A]) leftwards from a word-final trigger.
The second type involves the loss of a feature, and is therefore defined in our terms as metaphony (MP).
Both types may be present simultaneously.

Vowel structures
The non-RTR vowels is Pasiego are represented as follows:

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/i/          /u/          /e/          /o/          /a/
 |            |            |            |            |
 I            I            I            U            A
                           |            |
                           A            A
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The corresponding RTR vowels (except for RTR-/E/ which is excluded) are represented with a dependent [A], eg.

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/I/
| \
I A            (We represent RTR vowels here with capital letters)
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Examples
The following exemplify MP and VH

a.   MP alone.
        be'b-er   'to drink'
        bi'b-ia   'I was drinking'

b.   MP & VH
        le'xer-o   'light' masc. count noun
        lI'xIr-U   'light' masc.sg. mass noun

Derivational effects
Further, erivational effects can be observed as follows:

1.   'lobos   'lUbU
                      lO'b-AcU
as against
2.   'puños   'pUñU
                      pUñ-e'tAθU

where the forms in the second row are derived forms which cannot be explained without reference to the basic forms of the roots.

Conclusion
The time is ripe for a re-analysis of this fascinating system - much more complex than we have been able to illustrate in the space of this abstract.