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**INDO-EUROPEAN VOWEL GRADATION AND THE
DEVELOPMENT OF DECLENSIONAL MODELS IN THE
ASPECT OF DIACHRONIC TYPOLOGY**

This is the theme of our article published in 1979 in the Proceedings of Tbilisi University¹. Since this article makes a kernel of the deeper investigation, the author should like to acquaint the readers of *Baltistica* with its main theses:

1. The appearance of the thematic declensional type is connected with the history of vocalism and qualitative vowel gradation.

2. The latter in its turn is connected with the evolution of the linguistic structure from fientive (active) to nominative. For the earliest fientive stage syllabicity must be reconstructed (the possibility of syllabism is typologically supported by the similar though independent reconstructions in the field of Semitic and Kartvelian languages, as well as in Aranta, Abkhaz-Adyghe etc.); the subsequent stage was E. Pulblank's bivocalic $\text{ə} - a$. As for consonantism, Th. Gamkrelidze and V. Ivanov's three series of stops [glottalized – voiced (aspirated) – voiceless (aspirated)] are to be recognized.

3. Three laryngeals are enough to be accepted; the primitive syllabeme had a timbre [a] in the neighbourhood of H_2, H_3, G , and [ə] – in the neighbourhood of H_1, Y .

4. The mixed type of the fientive construction (G. Klimov) being formed, the prosodic marking of the fientive case began: the subject in this case appeared at the intonational peak of the sentence, while the direct object in the inertive (inactive) case took enclitic position. Under the constant influence of intonation the most open timbre [a] of the syllabeme was fixed in the final position in fientive, thus contrasting with the neutral timbre [ə] in inertive. As being now associated with cases, the both timbres might appear in the same intonational position. The difference between them was remotivated perceiving the first as a stressed [á] and the second as a reduced unstressed [ə]. Thus intonation lost its grammatical function and the timbres became phonemicized in the primitive vocalic opposition */a/ : */ə/.

5. The accentuational model having appeared, the unstressed ending of the inertive form induced the inner stress there. The unfunctional unstressed -ə was able to be apocopated: fient. *phaṭá (synchronically also *phaṭá) “leg” : inert. *pháṭə, *phaṭ “foot”, “(foot)step”. -ə being apocopated in sonantic stems, in accordance

¹ Труды Тбилисского университета, 1979, № 202, с. 166–181.

with the apocopated inertive (*tʰy = *tʰyəw < **tʰyəwə), the new fientive form arose characterized by the full-grade sonantic vocalism (**tayəw > *tyəw “God”, or *tyāw/*tyēw under the influence of fientives in -á with the non-phonological compensatory length). This full grade became a new marker of fientive in the sonantic stems.

6. All said above conform to Gk. *τομός* of the fientive sense: *τόμος* of the inertive sense, or gen. *ποδός*: nom. -acc. *πέδον*, Skt. gen. *śatro-ḥ*, *agne-ḥ* : acc. *śatru-m*, *agni-m*, nom. -acc. *madhu*, *vāri*. Since the full grade of vocalism in sonantic stems is connected with the primeval stress on it as well, the accentual paradigms reflect the original differentiation between the fientive and inertive forms. The shifts of tone in the “weak” and “strong” cases correspond to the oxytonic fientive and barytonic inertive accentuation. The fixed barytonic paradigm comes from the class of inert nouns, while the fixed oxytonic paradigm is a result of later levelling in accordance with the fientive forms. The mobile and the barytonic paradigms are the oldest.

7. Fientives of different derivation began to be identified by the enclitic article *sa (**phatá sa*, **tyēw sa*) which became the new universal marker of the fientive case.

8. In accordance with the type **tyēwsa*/**tyāwsa* with no stem ending -a, new fientives were formed corresponding to the inertive type **phət*, i. e. **phēt̥sa*/**phātsa*. Everywhere the phonemicizing of length was a result of the disappearance of laryngeals.

9. The former fientive marker -a turned into a thematic vowel in position before the sigmatic ending. Since -a was characteristic of the fientive stems’ final and since -ə was not indispensable in the stem ending of the inertive form, inert nouns became athematic and ə was ousted into thematic paradigms.

10. In the inert nouns the genitive form, as descending from the fientive form, was borrowed from the fientive nouns and therefore was thematic (*φωτός*). Thus all kinds of thematic vowels reflect the original vocalization of the stem final. Their functioning as formants is a result of the later appearance of the analogical derivations.

11. The earliest thematic nouns of the neuter gender came into being due to the lexicalization of the inertive meaning of the inertive-accusative form of the fientive nouns (“footstep” → *πέδον*).

12. The development of the thematic derivatives by the grammaticizing of the vocalization of the stem final before inflexions has a good parallel in the history of the Semitic marker of feminine -a (originally – the facultative vocalization of the stem final in inertive) + glide *t* + case endings. We have only preconditions for the thematization process in Kartvelian where the vocalization of the stem final has not been grammaticized, cf. Georgian *adgil-sa* : *adgila-s*.