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## „Art of Grammar“ by Dionysius Thrax and the Old Georgian Grammatical Thought

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The history of the Georgian grammatical thought has not yet been written. All that has been exposed and studied can merely serve as materials for such history. The names of the ancient Georgian grammarians' are known, but not their writings. The Georgians were well familiar with the Greek grammarians' work, however, their Georgian translations have not survived to our days. For that reason, not so long ago we used to open the history of the Georgian grammatical thought with the XVIIIth century and besides, much more was known about its relation to Armenian (which itself is connected with the Greek) than to the Greek material.

At present, the proximity of the Georgian linguistic knowledge to the mediaeval Greek philological thought related to the first grammar called „Art of Grammar“ (Τέχνη γραμματική), is undoubtful. The author of this first systemic manual is traditionally considered to be Dionysius Thrax, the representative of the Alexandrian school.

As known, „Art of Grammar“ has been basics for a number of European grammars created in subsequent ages, and although modern linguistics poses and examines a lot of issues in different manner, the writing has not lost its significance neither in general terms, nor in terms of Georgian reality. This very grammar with its valuable references remains as the key for the proper understanding of the old Georgian grammatical thought, and as the reference-point for its historic development.

Dionysius Thrax's „Art of Grammar“ might have been known either directly or through commentaries in old Georgian literature too, but the complete translation of the text has not reached our days and it yet remains arguable whether this translation has existed at all or not. However, plenty of facts ascertain that Greek grammatical theories were not alien to the Georgian scholars and their philological perfection covered all the necessary knowledge implied in the Byzantine civilization of that period.

„It seems that the Georgian schools were familiar with Dionysius Thrax' „Art of Grammar“, states academician Simon Kaukhchishvili alluding to „Shatberdi Codex“ written in the Xth century, in which the work by Dionysius' commentators is used. In particular, it is written according to the chapter about Greek alphabet.

Famous Georgian translators of the XIth-XIIth centuries set themselves a goal to translate the Greek texts from the original. This required a thorough knowledge of the structure and the peculiarities of Greek and

Georgian languages. In the „Studyings“ (sheistsaveebi) reproduced from Greek by Ephrem Mtsire (Ephrem the Young, XIth century), each word or grammatical construction was interpreted in the way comprehensible for the Georgian translators knowing Greek language and the Greek grammatical teaching and necessitated just plain explanation for the Georgian readers.

The practical issue, namely the definition of the essence of „article“ (artroni) which emerged when translating one of the ecclesiastic writings, laid down the foundation for the first Georgian original grammatical Treatise – „Discourse on Articles“, published by professor M. Shanidze in 1990<sup>1</sup>.

This work created in the XI-XIIth centuries authenticated, that the Georgian lingual studies of the XVIIth-XVIIIth centuries are based on the Greek related researching traditions existent in Georgia in the XIth-XIIth centuries.

The author of the Treatise, who in M. Shanidze's opinion should have been the representative of Ephrem Mtsire's school, explains the meaning and designation of the article in Greek and, taking into consideration the Georgian data, draws significant conclusions. The treatise provides terms denoting gender, case, number and other grammatical categories.

1. The author of Georgian grammatical Treatise, like Dionysius Thrax, has marked out three genders: „Masculine (mamal), feminine (dedali) and neutral (sashuali). These Georgian terms correspond to the Greek ones: ἀρσενικόν (masculine), θηλυκόν (feminine), οὐδέτερον (neutral).

2. Five cases are given for Greek articles: I. Advilobiti, like nominative; II. Shobilobiti or natesaobiti, like genitive; III. Mitsemiti, like dative; IV. Mizezobiti, like accusative; V. Tsodebiti, like vocative.

The succession and the names of the cases come precisely from Thrax.

I. The old grammatical term „advilobiti“ – easiness is the exact translation of Greek εὐθεία. Such equivalent of this Greek term has been reflected in the Georgian and Armenian terminologies independently from each other. Latin does not possess its equivalent and subsequently the latinized grammars are devoid of it as well. This confers a peculiar value to Georgian grammatical term not only for Georgian, but in general for the history of grammatical thought too.

II. „Natesaobiti“-genitive is a translation of Greek term γενική. In our opinion, in the generation of the term „shobilobiti“, the discussion of Thrax' commentator about the etymology of γενική is reflected. It bears the name

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<sup>1</sup> A short version of this writing was published in English in the magazine „Bedi Kartlisa“, Revue de Kartvîlogie, v-42, Paris, 1984.

γενική, „natesaobiti“-genitive because it is the generator, the parent of oblique cases (compare with Russian „raditelni“).

III. The name of the third case „mitsemiti“-dative, as in almost all languages, is related to the verb „to give“ δοτική (δίδωμι „to give“) Latin „dativus“, < dare „give“, Russian – „datelni“ < „give“).

IV. The Latin equivalent of Greek „Aitiatike“ (αἰτιατική) accusativus provoked the spreading of Latin term „braldebiti“-accusative (Russ. vinitelni). The latin term implies the following etymology of Greek word αἰτιατική ← αἰτίαομαι. „Brals mdeben“ - I am accused. According to the opinion of modern scientists it should be rather related to „cause“ than to „accuse“. It is interesting, that Georgian grammatical treatise agrees with the latter opinion: αἰτιατική is the equivalent of „mizezobiti“ (causative).

V. The name of the fifth case „tsodebiti“-vocative is the equivalent of Greek term κλητική. Dionysius Thrax gives ὦ for the vocative case of the article, which is interjection according to the modern grammar. The author of the treatise transfers it as interjection – [oj].

In Georgian grammatical treatise the term „dreka“ (bending) is used both for declination and for case. In one place for the term „sakhelis dreka“ (bending of noun) is used to signify the case.

This term is the translation of Greek κλίσις. It means the inflective changes of words (declination and conjugation) in general. This term is given in the same form in Dionysius Thrax' „Art of Grammar“.

The author of the treatise seems to have known the meaning of the term and possibly used the term „word-bending“ since „dreka“(to bend) in general means the change of the verb form as well.

To fully comprehend the importance of this grammatical work for the history of Georgian grammatical thought, we should summarize the author's observations on the Georgian language.

1. Georgian language has no article.

2. Georgian language has no dual number.

3. Greek Dative and Aitiatike cases are transferred into Georgian language in one form.

These scientific conclusions ascertain, that the Georgian scholar did not transfer spontaneously those grammatical norms, canons (κανόνες) that had been formed many centuries ago by Alexandrian scientists; he has changed and replenished them in accordance with the peculiarities and nature of Georgian language. The main importance of his work is, that it has preserved the old Georgian grammatical terminology.

„No work is performed without pain“, with these words does the author close his tremendously significant grammatical work in which not only his wide and profound insight in Thrax' grammar and generally Greek grammatical system is revealed, but also a great talent to reproduce the knowledge in plain, intelligible language.

Joané Petritsi's ( the second half of the XIth and the beginning of the XIIth century) work has greatly contributed to the development of Georgian grammatical thought. Petritsi is also ascribed the authorship of a grammar, although it has not been discovered yet.

Joané Petritsi was educated in Byzantium. He worked in the philosophical circle led first by Mikael Pselos and later by John Italos. This philosophical school was aimed at renovating some old Greek heathen ideas and, therefore, was persecuted. Pselos yielded his stand and John Italos and his followers were trialed and damned under Alexander Komnen's initiative by the church (in 1082-1094). Joané Petritsi seems to have been Italos' apprentice in Constantinople up to 1083. After the trial Italos was exiled from Constantinople. When the persecution of Italos' followers began in 1083, Joané Petritsi should have come to the Petritsoni cloister. It is supposed, that his title „Petritsi“ originates from the place-name.

Some of the treatises of the Constantinople high school professor John Italos (most of them are the lectures delivered to the students) are in the form of answers to the questions put by someone. He sometimes mentions the name of the person to whom the written explanation is addressed. The 64<sup>th</sup> treatise is a reply sent to the Abasg grammarian – „A Letter to Abasg Grammarian about some Difficult Grammatical Issues (Πρὸς τὸν Ἀβασγὸν γραμματικὸν ἀπορίαι περὶ τίνων τῆς γραμματικῆς). The reply is rather vast. In the first part he praises the Abasg grammarian, demonstrating his respect and friendly feelings. In the next part John Italos converses with him about noun (ὄνομα), declination, verb tenses and conjugation.

As supposed, the addressee of this letter is a Georgian scientist Joané Petritsi. The contents of the letter demonstrates clearly that John Italos' addressee was very well familiar with the Greek philosophy and grammatical teaching, and in particular, with the grammar of Dionysius Thrax.

Joané Petritsi's good insight of Dionysius Thrax's „Art of Grammar“ has been manifested by Academician Simon Kaukhchishvili. Joané Petritsi uses the tennets from that writing as well as the argumentation of its

commentators.

Terms formed by Joané Petritsi are utilized in the modern Georgian grammatical terminology. The characterization of the Georgian grammatical thought of that period could have expanded by the data of the works by Ammonius (Hermeiou), the leader of the Alexandrian school, (V-VI), translated into Georgian by the Gelati school representative in the XIIth century<sup>1</sup>. In this case, we are interested in the meaning of Georgian equivalent of the terms from Thrax's grammar and not in the fact itself, that Ammonsius knew Dionysius Thrax's grammatical system, which is quite natural a phenomena for the Alexandrian school philosopher.

From the viewpoint of grammatical terminology, the terms expressing case and declension are of special interest. The inflexion is reproduced by two terms: „dakuetva“ and „ptosi“. The old Georgian term „dakuetva“ meaning „to fall“ is the equivalent of the Greek term πτωσις, for the term πτωσις basis being the verb „to fall“ πίπτω.

In Ammonius's Georgian translations the following case names are given: Evtia, Katevtia, Orti; Natesaobiti – „Genitive“, Geniki, Mitsemiti – „Dative“, Dotiki; Mizezobiti – „Causative“.

These case names, except for Katevtia (the equal Greek as term is not found), are used in Georgian grammatical treatise as well. Thus, the Georgian literary circles in the XIth-XIIth centuries used grammatical terminology elaborated by Georgian translators. This terminology was gradually being improved and supplemented.

The main principle of the translating activities in the XIth-XIIth centuries are well reflected in Eprem Mtsire's statement saying that he chose the Greeks own child. These words also define the nature of the old Georgian grammatical thought. It was under this very principle that the Georgians created the most significant Georgian grammatical terminology directly related to the Greek, which was picked up by Europe only through the latinized forms.

Mongolian invasion suspended Georgia's relations with Byzantium. Later other invasions followed, causing the obstruction of the development of the science, the art as well as of the linguistics in the XIIIth-XIVth centuries. Its revival began in the XVIIth century. However, there is an apparent distinction in the nature of the Georgian grammatical thought

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<sup>1</sup> „Ammonii in Porphyrii Isagogen, five voices“ and „Ammonius in Aristotle's Categoriae Commentarium“.

between these two periods due to the historic conditions. If in the XIth-XIIth centuries the Georgian grammatical thought is related to Greek owing to Georgia's relations with Byzantium, in the XVIIth-XVIIIth centuries the West European cultural and literary influence is obvious. This was true not only for Georgia. After the fall of Constantinople and the collapse of Byzantine Empire, the latinized Europe became the guide of the civilized world.

In the mediaeval Western Europe the Catholic Church held the leading position in education. The language for the church and science was Latin. The main manuals of Latin grammar were the writings of the Roman grammarians Donatus (IVth century) and Priscianus (VIth century), based upon Greek linguistic teaching. Greek linguistic theories became known to the whole Europe through Priscianus' and Donatus' writings. The grammatical terminology of European languages was formed on the basis of their work.

The influence of the great Roman grammarians' writings increased in the following centuries and along with the west, they penetrated into the East as well. A vivid example for it is, that even in Armenia where already in the Vth century Trax' writings were translated directly from Greek, beginning with the XVIIth century the scholars began writing latinized grammars.

Latin language manuals became known in Georgia in the XVIIIth century. From 1625 the catholic missionaries came into Georgia and established schools where Latin, Italian and Georgian languages were taught. Obviously the manual of Latin was either that of Donatus or of Priscianus; the Georgian grammar composed by the missionaries was built in the style of the Roman grammar. The Georgian grammar was written by Italian missionary Francesco Maria Madzo and published in Rome first in 1643 and next in 1670.

In 1724 the Italian-Georgian dictionary was compiled in Gori prefaced with the discription of the Georgian grammar. Since the author is unknown, it is called „The Grammar from Gori“.

From the XVIIth century, the latinized terminology and grammatical paradigms changed by Roman grammarians begin to appear in the Georgian grammatical literature. For example, the sixth case - Ablativus was noticed in Latin by famous Roman thinker Varoni. The sequence of the parts of speech also changed under the influence of Latin language.

There are a lot of important terms in Sulkhan-Saba Orbeliani's (1658-

1725) dictionary. It is significant, that many of them are not found in the literary monuments available today. This indicates, that either Saba used the terminology which has not survived, or he created it himself.

Sulkhan Saba Orbeliani's Georgian dictionary reflects the process of inculcating the latin terms into the Georgian grammatical thought of the XVIIth century and, at the same time, of the revival of the old Georgian terms. On the one hand, Sulkhan-Saba Orbeliani's dictionary has preserved „gramatikata romelobani“ (characters of grammars) which is the Italian reproduction of Latin terms; on the other hand, Saba's dictionary contains the Greek case names, which is the reflection of Georgian grammatical terminology preserved in the literary sources of the XIth-XIIth centuries.

The author of the first Georgian original grammar is Catholicos Anthony. He wrote the grammar manuals twice, first in 1753 and next in 1767.

The significance of Catholicos Anthony's grammar is outstanding. This is the first Georgian grammar which utilizes the grammatical observations and grammatical terminology worked out by the Georgian scholars' basing upon Greek grammatical teaching. At the same time, this is the outcome of European thought founded upon the Greek-Latin grammatical system. Anthony's „Georgian Grammar“ has largely determined the subsequent development of the Georgian grammatical thought.

As Catholicos Anthony in his work many a time mentions the Armenian grammar by Mkhitar Sebastatsi, the researchers used to compare Anthony's grammar only with Mkhitar Sebastatsi's grammar.

When researching Anthony's grammar, Mkhitari's grammar should by all means be taken into consideration. However, there emerges one issue: If assumed, that Anthony reproduced his grammar from the Armenian, then has he also copied whatever was changed and conformed by Armenians in comparison with the Greek. It is clearly apparent in Anthony's grammar, that the author has carefully investigated the grammatical canons of other languages, which are those of the Alexandrian school itself. Therefore, to determine what did Anthony pick up from the other language grammars, primarily from the main source of these grammars - Dionysius Thrax's „Art of Grammar“, it is paramount to consider the whole European grammatical thought founded upon it.

Dionysius Thrax's grammar was much changed by the time when the first Georgian grammar was written. Nevertheless, the comparison of

Catholicos Anthony's and Dionysius Thrax's grammars would undoubtedly reveal interesting results, and would more clearly manifest the distinct changes that Dionysius Thrax's philological grammar underwent during time; it would also expose in what shape did it reach up to the first old Georgian grammar. The results of our investigation are as follow: In respect of determining the number and order of the categories of noun and verb, also in accordance with the nature of selecting appropriate terms, Anthony's grammar displays resemblance and relation with Dionysius Thrax' grammar; moreover, follows it, certainly except for those cases when Anthony speaks proceeding from the nature of his language, or when he takes into account the European reality of his time. Thus, it is impossible to completely study and evaluate Anthony's grammatical contribution without considering the Greek sources; and in general, without studying the original sources it is impossible to determine the ways and directions of the Georgian grammatical thought and grammatical terminology.