Abstract: This paper re-examines the historical phonology and morphology of the palatal-stem declension of Vedic and concludes that the phonologically regular outcome of the animate nominative singular was -ṭ, while the “bh-cases” should by regular sound change have contained a cluster *°dbh°, the former existence of which can be inferred but which was replaced by °dbh° (or “gbh°”) under the influence of the nominative singular.

Keywords: Vedic morpho-phonology, palatal stems, bh-cases, viṭ

1 The Problem

There are a number of mutually connected and unresolved problems associated with the inflection of Vedic nouns with stems in °ś-, °j- and °h- < PIIr. *°ć-, *°j- and *°j°.1 The nominative singular of these appears both with retroflex (nom.sg viṭ ‘settlement’) and with velar obstruent (nom.sg dīk ‘direction’). The retroflex nominative singular ending is more common, but following retroflex segments the velar ending is often found.2 In the oblique, before endings beginning with °bh°, the same words show a stem-final consonant that matches the nominative singular in place of articulation (nom.sg viṭ : ins.pl viḍbhīṣ ; dīk : digbhīṣ). In the locative plural, the oldest ending involves a cluster °kṣ° (loc.pl vikṣū ; dikṣū).3

While it is commonly agreed that the locative plural ending °kṣu represents, by whatever path, the regular phonological outcome of a cluster PIE °K-su, the history and distribution of the nominative singular and bh-case endings have not yet been adequately explained. The older literature mostly assumes that °k was the regular outcome of PIE °K-s in the nominative and that °ṭ has been analogi-

1 The text sigla used in this article follow VIA: 5–28.
2 The conditions under which the velar variant is found cannot be precisely stated, cf. Bezzenberger 1878: 152, fn. 1; AiG: 1, 173; Meillet 1905; Kuiper 1967: 116; Lubotsky 2008.
3 It is not until the later language that the loc.pl viṭsu, productively made to an inferred stem viṭ-, appears, and a similar analogical development should be assumed for all locatives in °ṭ-su, cf. Bloomfield 1911: 50.