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# On the inflection of palatal stems in Vedic

**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  ${}^{\circ}dbh^{\circ}$ , the former existence of which can be inferred but which was replaced by  ${}^{\circ}ḍbh^{\circ}$  (or  ${}^{\circ}gbh^{\circ}$ ) 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  ${}^{\circ}ś-$ ,  ${}^{\circ}j-$  and  ${}^{\circ}h-$  < PIIr.  ${}^{\circ}ó-$ ,  ${}^{\circ}j-$  and  ${}^{\circ}j^h-$ .<sup>1</sup> The nominative singular of these appears both with retroflex (NOM.SG *viṭ* ‘settlement’) and with velar obstruent (NOM.SG *dík* ‘direction’). The retroflex nominative singular ending is more common, but following retroflex segments the velar ending is often found.<sup>2</sup> In the oblique, before endings beginning with  $-bh^{\circ}$ , the same words show a stem-final consonant that matches the nominative singular in place of articulation (NOM.SG *viṭ* : INS.PL *viḍbhíṣ*; *dík* : *digbhíṣ*). In the locative plural, the oldest ending involves a cluster  ${}^{\circ}kṣ^{\circ}$  (LOC.PL *vikṣú*; *dikṣú*).<sup>3</sup>

While it is commonly agreed that the locative plural ending  ${}^{\circ}kṣu$  represents, by whatever path, the regular phonological outcome of a cluster PIE  ${}^{\circ}K̑su$ , 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  ${}^{\circ}K̑$ -s in the nominative and that *-ṭ* has been analogi-

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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. Bezzenger 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  ${}^{\circ}ṭsu$ , cf. Bloomfield 1911: 50.

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