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THE OSSETIC 3RD PLURAL IMPERATIVE

1. One of the many problems posed by the verbal personal endings in Ossetic concerns the *t* of the 3pl. impv. suffix, *-ænt* in Iron, *-æntæ* in Digoron. While Miller (1903:71) was evidently right in deriving the corresponding 3sg. ending *-æd* in both Iron and Digoron from OIran. *-atu* (instead of which the middle *-atām* would do equally well),[1] one cannot but feel misgivings at his statement 'Die 3P1. *-ænt(æ)* scheint auf ir. *-ntu* zurückzugehen, wobei nach Abfall des *-u* ein *æ* angetreten ist, welches das auslautende *t* vor dem Übergang in *d* geschützt hat.' This explanation squares ill with the fact that, in the Ossetic derivatives of the OIran. noun **anta-* 'end', the 'protection' of the *t* of *-nt-* provided by suffixes did not prevent the cluster from becoming *-nd-* in Digoron, and *-dd-* in Iron.[2]

2. Miller did not know what Abayev, writing in Russian, made known in 1949 (499), namely that to the North Ossetic 3sg. impv. *-æd* of both Iron and Digoron there corresponds *-æt* in the large so-called Džawian dialect group of South Ossetia, whose dialects all belong to the Iron Ossetic variety. Abayev, in his turn, made no mention of what did not come to my notice until April 1990, namely that already in 1929 Tibilov, writing in Iron, had drawn attention (1929:8) not only to the Džawian use of *-æt* for the 3rd person singular of the imperative, but also to the fact that in Džawian the same *-æt* undifferentiatingly serves for the 3pl. impv. as well.

3. Having found this intriguing information unmentioned by Abayev, I was not prepared to rely on it without confirmation, but I had reason to expect that before long a personal check on it might become possible. For, thanks to a lavish invitation from the Georgian Academy of Sciences backed by a travel grant kindly accorded me by the British Academy, I was due at the end of September 1990 to visit South Ossetia for the first time in my life. The visit took place, which is why I am at present engaged in writing a report on the dialect distribution of this least known of Ossetic regions, documented by hitherto unpub-

lished maps and other material generously supplied to me by my hosts in Tbilisi and Tskhinvali. Examples of the use of *-æt* for the 3pl. impv. will be included in the report, so that here I may confine myself to referring to the least inaccessible mention in print of it shown to me in Tskhinvali, by Dzattiatə (1985:82).

4. The fact is that the plural imperative use of *-æt* is a feature of everyday South Ossetic speech. My new friends were greatly amused at learning that Iranologists at large knew nothing of it and would be bound to consider it of unusual interest. To the statement, however, of Tibilov, and indeed also to that of Dzattiatə, I should add that *-æt* for both the 3sg. and the 3pl. impv. is a peculiarity not only of Džawian, but also of the other large dialect group of South Ossetia, the so-called Ksanian. We are dealing with a morphological trait that generally marks off South Ossetic from North Ossetic.

5. In addition to being morphological, the trait is of course syntactic. Viewing it synchronically, South Ossetes see nothing odd in their using, as they imagine they are doing, the 3sg. for the 3pl. in the imperative, although in the other tenses and moods the two persons have distinct endings. My friends were less happy to admit that in fact they might be using the 3pl. for the 3sg. (cf. below, §15). At all events, even though one may expect the syntactic ambiguity to be an outcome of morphological coincidence, of suffixal homonymy as it were, we must be prepared to find, since the origin of the *t* of *-æt* is by no means obvious, that the morphology of the syntactic ambiguity owes something to a frustrated attempt, frustrated perhaps because it went counter to a long-cherished speech-habit (cf. below §16), to *avert* ambiguity.

6. To begin with, Miller's derivation of NOss. *-æd* from *-atu* (or *-atām*) and of *-ænt(æ)* from *-antu* (or *-antām*) (see §1), is paradigmatically so consistent that the incomprehensibility of *t* instead of expected *d* in *-ænt(æ)* seems a small price to pay for it. Let us therefore see what price we should have to pay for deriving, by extension of Miller's adhesion to Old Iranian paradigms, the SOss. 3sg. *-æt* from the Old Iranian thematic singular *-atu* (or middle *-atām*), and the SOss. 3pl. *-æt* from the Old Iranian unthematic 3pl. suffix **-atu* (or middle **-atām*), whose *a* was from IE *n̥*.

7. The price may seem double the one we charged Miller, as with him at least the *d* of the NOss. 3sg. was regular. In reality the price we owe is not only no greater than the one Miller left owing, but is worth paying because it annuls *his* debt. He owed an explanation as to why *-antu* did not become **-ænd*. We have no doubt that it did become ** -ænd,* of which ending however the *d*, before it could reach modern times, was replaced in North Ossetic with the *t* of the likewise 3pl. ending *-æt*, the latter being shown thereby to have been current, at the time of the replacement, also in early North Ossetic.

8. With North Ossetic thereafter jettisoning both the plural endings a contamination of which had supplied it with -*ænt(æ)*, we may assume that South Ossetic, too, at one time had endings which it subsequently abandoned. Here close attention needs to be paid to chronology. Neither **-ænd*, nor the -*ænt* that had resulted from its contamination with the 3pl. -*æt*, can have been jettisoned in South Ossetic before a variant -*æt* of the 3sg. -*æd* (from the OIran. thematic 3sg. -*atu*) had arisen by analogy, namely by analogy to the word-final *d/t* alternation that had sprung up in the *n*-containing 3pl. suffix. At that time, therefore, South Ossetic will have had not only the fore-runner * -*æt* of its present-day undifferentiating 3sg. and 3pl. suffix -*æt*, but also the 3sg. and 3pl. suffixes (i.e. **-æd* and **-ænt*) that alone have survived in North Ossetic, as well as the **-ænd* which by now is nowhere to be found in Ossetic speech.

9. Now for the price owed by us in the form of an explanation, no longer as to why against expectation Old Iran. *t* does not turn up as *d* after *n* in NOss. -*ænt(æ)* – this we have seen need be due to no more than a contamination –, but as to why, if the *æ* of 3pl. -*æt* goes back to IE *n̥*, it is not *d* but *t* which we find where Old Iranian, in its **-atu* from **-n̥tu*, can only have had an intervocalic *t*.

10. If the unthematic 3pl. ending **-atu* continued into early Middle Ossetic, its outcome will have been an **-æd* that was phonetically identical with the one which, from the Old Iranian thematic 3sg. -*atu*, is in present-day North Ossetic represented by the 3sg. ending -*æd.* Already in Old Iranian the thematic 3sg. -*atu* and the unthematic 3pl. **-atu* were phonetically indistinguishable, but confusion was kept at bay not only by contextual guidance, but also because – contrary to what was to happen in Ossetic – the verbs whose 3pl. impv. ended in **-atu* had a -*tu* not preceded by *a* in the 3rd singular. It having been the thematic conjugation which was generalized in early Middle Ossetic, an accidentally preserved unthematic 3pl. ending **-æd*,[3] interfering in the convenient thematic distinction between singular -*æd* and plural **-ænd*, would stand little chance of resisting for very long its own elimination. One way to achieve elimination is by substitution; and since it is **-æd* which from **-n̥tu* we expect to find where South Ossetic instead has -*æt*, and the unvoicing in Ossetic of postvocalic final *d* would be unheard of, substitution is by far the most promising possibility for us to explore.

11. Accordingly we need to identify a personal plural ending **-æt* other than of the 3rd person (of which altogether no known Old Iranian ending could in Ossetic have turned up as **-æt*), made redundant in the personal function for which early Ossetic had inherited it, and thereby available for expressing the 3rd person more satisfactorily than the inherited plural **-æd* was proving capable of doing.

12. The obvious candidate is the one which Miller by chance offered in passing (1903:70), when he declared *-æt* the 'probable' original ending of the 2pl. pres. ind., from OIran. *-aθa*, extruded in early Middle Ossetic by *-ūt* < *b(a)vaθa* in Iron (thus also in South Ossetic), by *-etæ* in Digoron.[4] In contraction with a preceding *a*, OIran. *-aθa* is present also in the Iron 2pl. subj. ending *-at* < *-āθa* (Miller 1908:71).[5] In Old Iranian the active thematic 2pl. ending inherited from Indo-Iranian was *-aθa* in the present indicative and in the subjunctive, but *-ata* in the imperative. Old Ossetic evidently used *-aθa* also for the imperative, as the 2pl. impv. corresponding to OIran. *bavata* would otherwise have been in Iron (including South Ossetic) not *ūt* but **ūd*, and in Digoron not *uotæ*, but **uodæ*.[6] We may therefore be sure that Miller's enlightened chance remark that *-æt* was the suffix which in the 2nd person plural of the present indicative was extruded by *-ūt/-etæ* applies also to the imperative, seeing that the imperative, too, has for the 2nd person plural as regular ending *-ūt* in Iron and *-etæ* in Digoron.[7]

13. After the extrusion of the only *-æt* which, from its only possible ancestor *-aθa*, the Ossetic indicative and imperative can at first possibly have had, it is only natural that no *-æt* continued to figure in the paradigm of the indicative. All the more remarkable is the presence of *-æt* in the imperative, in charge of not only one grammatical person as it had been before its extrusion by *-ūt/-etæ*, but of two persons, neither of which can possibly have been marked by *-aθa* in Old Iranian. Of the two cases of 'illegitimate' *-æt*, the one for the 3rd singular has in §8 appeared to us capable of having secondarily acquired its *t* by replacement of 'legitimate' *d* under the influence of an alternation brought about by the *t* of the other 'illegitimate' *-æt*, the one for the 3rd plural. The reverse does not seem possible, because the alternation in question, affecting a 3rd plural suffix, could not have been brought about by a *t* serving the 3rd singular. Our task being thus firmly reduced to explaining the 'illegitimate' 3rd person *-æt* of the plural, and not of the singular, it becomes difficult to dismiss as an accident the fact that the *-æt* extruded by *-ūt/-etæ,* i.e. the only *-æt* 'legitimate' in the imperative, had also had for grammatical number the plural.

14. We are led to ask: what might have been the reason why in the imperative, but not in the indicative, the plural *-æt* of the second person could, in the course of being made redundant by *-ūt/-etæ,* have come to be thought of as capable of denoting more usefully the third person? The only plausible answer would seem to coincide with the proposition we advanced in §6 as a working hypothesis, without as yet making the extrusion of *-æt* by *-ūt/-etæ* our starting point. Now that it is from here that we are viewing the riddle, logic compels us to realize that, at the time when the original *-æt* was becoming redundant, early Middle Ossetic must still have had beside **-ænd* for the 3pl. impv. an

n-less **-æd* indistinguishable from the 3sg. **-æd*, whereas *in the indicative no n-less 3rd plural ending had survived*.[8] Phonetically the redundant imperatival **-æt* differed from the two imperatival **-æds* only in respect of the dental's voice. Grammatically it differed from both in respect of person, but agreed with one of them in being plural. This was therefore the one in whose place it would become tempting to instal the redundant and likewise plural **-æt*, of which the person it was ceasing to serve was debarred by its usurper *-ūt/-etæ* from interfering in the novel function. With the plural **-æd* thus out of the way, the other *-æd* would be left to rule unchallenged for a while as sole suffix of the 3rd person singular.

15. Not very long, however, after the 3sg. *-æd* was relieved of serving also the 3rd plural person (see our chronology in §8), the two persons came again to share a suffix, this time ironically the very *-æt* (though in the singular it was that only in appearance) whose 'illegitimate' introduction had earlier on relieved *-æd* of responsibility for the plural. This would seem too incongruous for the reconstruction outlined in the preceding pages to be allowed to stand, were it not for the reconstruction's being itself to some extent our backward projection into early Middle Ossetic of what in 'literary' South Ossetic has been happening in recent decades, just as incongruously one might think, to the spoken 3rd singular and 3rd plural imperative.

16. The South Ossetic language as printed locally in books, newspapers and leaflets, leans heavily on Iron as printed in North Ossetia (capital Vladikavkaz, during the Soviet period renamed for a while Ordzhonikidze) and spoken in that country. One of the southern concessions to northern usage is that the spoken 3sg. impv. ending *-æt* is regularly printed *-æd.* By this adoption of the North Iron singular, South Ossetic writers were given a chance to do away in print with the absence from speech of 3rd person distinction between singular and plural. They might have in print retained spoken *-æt* for the plural only. Alternatively they might have taken over from North Ossetic not only the singular *-æd*, but also the plural *-ænt.* Instead, their spoken *-æt* gets into print as *-æd* also when it denotes the plural! One can only conclude that speakers inured to a homonymically arisen lack of distinction do not invariably welcome opportunities, however readily within their grasp, to abolish it. Instead of consolidating an emerging differentiation, they are quite capable of restoring the threatened ambiguity in new guise. If the spoken plural *-æt* is today turned into printed *-æd* to conform to the spoken singular *-æt's* secondary replacement with printed *-æd,* we need not wince at the singular *-æd*'s having allowed itself in antiquity to be turned into *-æt* for one purpose only, that of conforming to the plural *-æd's* secondary replacement with *-æt.*

17. The above printing convention goes a long way to explain why Western Iranologists, depending for acquaintance with the South Ossetic language on the mere trickle of printed matter reaching them from Tskhinvali, have for so long remained in the dark about its imperative. The singular *-æd* would arouse no curiosity. The plural *-æd* would be encountered rarely because imperatives are not often used in the 3rd person plural. Readers noticing the occasional *-æd* where they would expect to see *-ænt,* would be more likely to attribute it to careless syntax than to start thinking along the lines of the present article.

18. Less negatively, the above printing convention has an amusing side to it, not devoid of instructive aspects. The plural suffix which, non-existent in present-day spoken Iron, has recently entered print to *preserve* a lack of distinction between singular and plural, is the very suffix *-æd* which above we postulated with an asterisk for the BC period as a plural indispensable to accounting for the adoption in its stead of an *-æt* introduced to *avert* that same lack of distinction. Moreover, the fact that North Iron *-ænt* was *not* chosen in printed South Ossetic for a pendant to the imported North Iron singular *-æd* lends substance to our chronologically conceived hint in §8 that the retention in antiquity of the secondarily arisen 3pl. *-æt* must have been due to preference for the latter (in consequence of **-æd*'s having for so long served also as plural ending) over the more explicit *-ænt* which it had generated, and not to the latter's not having as yet come into existence.[9]

19. The price alluded to in §§6-7 and 9 which we pay to recover from the 3pl. impv. *-æt* the **-æd* whose *æ*'s derivation from *n̥* is concealed by the substitution of its *d* with *t*, and thus to identify in present-day Ossetic a disguised survival of the Indo-Iranian unthematic 3pl. impv. ending **-atu*, has turned out to consist in having to graft onto a third person a suffix originally reserved for the second. We pay it gladly not only because no other procedure is in sight by which the *t* of *-æt*, and through it the *t* of *-ænt*, can be explained with reference to safe parallels,[10] but above all because the price will buy us also another piece of enlightenment.

20. The South Ossetic 3sg. opt. ending is not *-id* as it is in North Iron, but *-it*.[11] We have seen in note 1 that *-id* necessarily goes back to the Old Iranian thematic middle optative 3sg. ending *-aita*. The middle voice suits to perfection also the 2nd sing. person, NOss. *-is(æ)*, SOss. *-is*, from OIran. *-aiša* (written *-aēša* in Avestan). The *t* of SOss. *-it*, however, can go back only to an OIran. intervocalic *θ*. How then can one ignore the fact that corresponding to Av. *-aēša* Sanskrit has no **-eṣa*, but only *-ethās*? If Middle Ossetic inherited from Old Ossetic, beside *-is < *-aiša* for the 2nd sing. optative, an obsolescent *-it* <**-aiθāh*, the latter would, by the closer affinity of its voiceless dental to the

voiced stop of *-id* than to the sibilant of *-is*, be dragged almost inevitably into competition with the former for the 3rd person singular. It would thereby lose touch with the second person, and according to dialect either perish, or oust *-id* from the third. By dint of the volitional affinity between optative and imperative, it is even possible that in early South Ossetic the *t* of *-it* strengthened the hand of another *t*, namely the one which in §8 we presented as having secondarily come to alternate with the *d* of the 3sg. impv. ending *-æd.*

21. To Bartholomae's knowledge in 1895 (see his pp. 62 (top), 63 (middle) and 65 (bottom)), no Iranian language explored by then, Old or Later, had revealed evidence of the survival into Iranian from lndo-Iranian of a counterpart to either the Skt 3pl. impv. endings *-atu*[12] or *-atām*, both with *a* < IE *n̥,* or to the Skt 2sg. opt. ending *-ethās*. To my knowledge nothing has come to light since then that would alter the position, unless it be the hitherto almost inaccessible fact, that South Ossetic has *-æt* corresponding to the long-known NOss. *-ænt*, and *-it* where North Ossetic had long accustomed us to *-id.*

22. Concerned with South Ossetic *-æt*, we began this article by noting that Miller's protection theory is neither adequate nor necessary for an understanding of why North Ossetic *-ænt* has a voiceless dental. We may end with an attempt to show that the theory is no less out of place in another instance, relevant to us because treated by Miller as parallel to *-ænt*: the voicelessness of the affricate of the North Ossetic endings Iron *-ənc*, Digoron *-æncæ* of the 3pl. ind. present, from OIran. *-anti*, and of the Digoron ending *-oncæ* of the 3pl. subj., from OIran. *-ānti.*

23. Miller could not take into account what Henning (1958:112, note 1) was to point out decades later, viz. that Iron *fəcən*, Dig. *ficun* 'to cook' has at least in the verb's intransitive sense,[13] a *c* deriving from the intervocalic *-čy-* of the Old Iranian passive present stem **pačya-*. While from the transitive present stem *pača-* one expects an unattested **fædzə/un*, just as after *n* from *panča* 'five' one expects and gets *fondz*, in **pačya-* the palatalization by *y* of postvocalic *č* immunized the affricate against voicing. From the 3pl. endings in *-Vnc* (*V* standing for any vowel) we learn, or at least I suggest we learn, that such ultrapalatalization continued to carry its immunizing property long enough to catch also such *č*s as kept cropping up out of palatalization of *t* by an immediately following *i*. But we also see that only such secondary *č*s were 'caught' and 'frozen' as had resulted from a *t* preceded by *n*. For of the 3sg. pres. ind. ending *-ati* the outcome is *-ə* in Iron, *-ui* in Digoron, and not the **-æc* which one might have expected otherwise.

24. Let us look at Miller's genealogical line for the Ossetic outcome of *-ati* (70), which I reproduce somewhat normalized and adjusted, but true to Miller's intention: *-ati* > **-aci* > **-adzi* > **-ædz^y* > **-æy* > **-æi* (the **-æi* by

attrition reduced to -*ə* in Iron, to -*ui* in Digoron; see §28). Miller would say that with -*anti* the genealogical line was shorter (i.e. -*anti* > *-*anci* > -*ænc*) because the intervention of his 'protective' vowel, caused by the presence of a cluster, put a stop to further development both in Digoron and in Iron. But if so, why did the 'protective' vowel, which did its duty by the 3pl. subj. ending *-*ānti* in Digoron, fail to intervene in Iron, where the outcome corresponding to Dig. -*oncæ* is –*oi*? For the latter, Miller's genealogical line (71) is in keeping with the one for -*ati* (I again adjust): *-*ānti* > *-*ānci* > *-*āndzi* > *-*ondz^y* > *-*ony* > *-*oyn* > -*oi*.[14] In -*ati* there was no cluster, hence according to the theory no call for 'protection', and the *c* of *-*aci* was allowed in both dialects to go on mutating; Miller does not say why with * -*ānti*, despite its cluster, mutation beyond the stage *-*ānci* was blocked only in Digoron.

25. The problem becomes more amenable if instead of applying to its solution a merely notional 'protective' vowel, we treat it phonologically. We should replace *-*aci* with *-*adi* in the genealogical line leading to Iron- , Dig. -*ui*, and *-*ānci* with *-*āndi* in the genealogical line leading to Iron -*oi*. This will enable us to exploit the awareness we gained in §23, of the *c* of -*Vnc* having remained voiceless for exactly the same reason as kept the *c* of *fəc-/fic-* voiceless: the former's *c* would not like the latter's be on view still today, immunized against becoming *dz*, if it had not resulted from palatalization of a *t* *not* yet voiced. Hence the voice borne by any *dz* occupying the place of an Old Iranian *ti* is due to the voicing of *t*, and not to the voicing of an intermediate *c*; an 'intermediate' *c* would be a contradiction in terms, because as soon as a c emerged from *t*, it turned numb, incapable of 'mediating'.

26. Just as within this new explanation not all desinential *ts* preceding an *i* would have undergone palatalization at one and the same time, some holding out until they lost voice (the *t* of -*ati* throughout; that of * -*ānti* in Iron; the non-desinential one of *spanti-* in Digoron as well as in Iron, see §27), some forestalling the change of voice by accepting affrication (the *t* of -*anti* throughout, except in Iron *stə*, see §28; that of *-*ānti* in Digoron), so also not every *dz* resulting from palatalization of a *d* that was formerly *t* went on mutating. Here the determining factor will have been the behaviour of *i* after the emergence of *dz*. If the *i* was jettisoned before it could soften *dz* further, the latter survived unchanged; if *i* persevered, the *dz* absorbed it and suffered mutation to *y*. Both outcomes are on view e.g. in the pair Iron *ssædz/Dig. insæi* 'twenty' < *vinsati*, the °*sæi* being from °*sæy* < °*sædz^y* < *°*sædzi* < *°*sadi* < °*sati*.[15] For other examples where *ti* was postvocalic in Old Iranian see Miller (1903:29),[16] noting that in all of them the timely shedding of *i*, ensuring the survival of *dz,* happened in proto-Iron, and not in proto-Digoron.

27. This is so also in one of the two examples of Old Iranian *t* turned *d* after *n*, namely the one whose *-nti* was not verbally desinential. Accepting Abayev's etymology (1958:485) of Iron *æfsondz/Dig. æfsoi* 'yoke' as from **spanti-*,[17] we apply this time to Digoron the genealogical line to which for the Iron 3pl. subj. ending *-oi* we in §25 amended the line quoted from Miller in §24. Digoron *æfsoi* has *-oi* from **-oyn < *-ony < *-ondz^y < *-ondzi < *-ăndi < *ănti*.

28. It is not so (i.e. even in proto-Iron the final *i* lingered on until it was absorbed by *dz*) with the other example, whose *-nti*, unlike that of **spănti-*, was as verbally desinential as can be. The example, with which this article draws to a close, does lend a point to the exercise we became engaged in for the sake of disentangling *-Vnc* from *-ænt*, because it consists of the hitherto unexplained ending of the Iron 3pl. *stə* 'they are',[18] the meaning of which is expressed in Digoron by *æncæ < *hanti* (Miller 1903:75). In §24 our first genealogical line ends for clarity's sake with **-æi*, since it is of **-æi* that, by attrition not uncommonly suffered by exceedingly common endings, the 3sg. pres. ind. endings *-ə/-ui* are best understood as secondary variants (thus in principle already Miller). If then we take the *-ə* of *stə* for an *-æi*, what else do we get, this time in Iron, if not the *-æi* of Digoron *insæi* (§26), with the added bonus of its having lost in this case a final *n*, as did the Iron *-oi* of §24 and the Digoron *-oi* of §27 (see note 14). The 3rd plural ending *-ə* of *stə* turns out to be from **-æi < *-æyn < *-æny < *-ændz^y < *-ændzi < *-andi < -anti*. This *-anti* called for a 'protective' vowel no less than the *-anti* of §22. But no protection was vouchsafed it.

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NOTES

1. Note that for the 3sg. opt. ending Iron *-id*, Digoron *-idæ* Miller (1903:72) felt bound to take recourse to the middle Av. *baraēta*, in preference to the active *barōiṯ*.

2. See Abaev (1958:104f.), and Miller (1903:33 top (as well as 30, sect. 3)). Moreover the outcome of OIran. *antara-* is *ændær* not only in Digoron, but also in Iron (Abaev 1958:154f.). Iron maintains unchanged even an Old Iranian *-nd-* in *bændæn* 'string' (Abaev 1958:250), just as not only OIran. *-nt-,* but also *-nd-*, turns up in Iron as *-dd-* (in *bæddən* 'to bind' and *sæddən* 'to break'). Digoron *-nd-*, by contrast, develop further to *-dd-* (*bæddun*, *sæddun*) only if in Old Iranian the cluster was *-nd-,* and not if it was *-nt-*. An unchanged OIran. *-nd-* is seen in both Iron *ændəsnæg* and Dig. *ændisnæg* 'rheumatism' (see Gershevitch 1985:142). Thus if the *t* of *-ænt(æ)* were simply the unchanged *t* of OIran. *-antu*, its survival,

and the 'protection' which allegedly ensured it, would be unparalleled in Ossetic. On Miller's extension of such 'protection' to the 3rd plur. suffix -*Vnc* see here §§22-28.

3. The accident may have been induced by reduplicated unthematic present stems, of which a very common one was in Old Iranian that of *dā*- 'to give (etc.)'. Its unattested unthematic 3pl. active impv. **dadatu* would have become **dædæd* in early Middle Ossetic. However, of this base the secondarily arisen present stem *dædd*- (on which see Gershevitch 1985:125) is used in Ossetic, taking in the 3pl. impv. the regular endings NOss. -*ænt(æ)*, SOss. -*æt*. For a trace in Digoron of the unthematic 2nd pl. impv. see below, note 7.

4. Of -*etæ* Miller assumed (70) that it represents an 'intrusion' of Dig. *aitæ* 'estis' into the paradigm of the present indicative, while *aitæ* was taken by him at p. 75 for an extension, by the 2nd pl. pres. ind. ending -*etæ*, of an *a* 'das als Stamm empfunden war'. The latter statement being immediately preceded by his derivation of Dig. *an* (i.e. /ān/) 'sumus' from **ām < *āmah < *ahmahi* (with initial **ah*- taken over from *ahmi*), it is clear that by 'Stamm' he meant *ah*- 'to be', finding himself nevertheless at a loss to explain the relationship between the *e* to which the 2nd pl. suffix -*tæ < -θa* is attached in the present indicative, and the *ai* to which -*tæ* is attached to form the semantic equivalent of Latin *estis*. I would suggest that -*etæ* continues an enclitically used **ahiθa* (i.e. *ahi* 'thou art' extended by the 2nd pl. suffix -*θa*; cf. Dig. *cæugitæ* and *kæntæ* below, note 7), of which in emphatic, non-enclitic use the initial *a*- was lengthened by analogy to Miller's forerunner **āmahi* of Dig. *an* 'we are'. Against this proposed distinction between non-enclitic and enclitic position, the Digoron use of -*aitæ* itself as suffix denoting the 2nd person plural in the subjunctive need not constitute a valid objection (see note 5).

5. The corresponding Digoron ending is -*aitæ*, which I take to be not *aitæ* 'estis' itself, but an earlier **-atæ* that suffered intrusion of *i* under the influence of *aitæ* 'estis'.

6. Also the Manichean Sogdian 2nd pl. impv. endings go back to -*θa* (Gershevitch 1961:112-115). (In Christian Sogdian, however, it is -*ta* which prevails, cf. Sims-Williams 1985:193.) In the relevant Old Iranian communities the ending -*θa* may be presumed to have spread to the imperative from the subjunctive; cf. the occasional imperatival use of the subjunctive in Avestan (Reichelt 1909:314) and in Digoron (Abaev 1949:419). Note that when Miller (77) writes *'ūt, otæ* ist ir. **bavata'*, his 'ist' means not a retreat from his statement at p. 30, sect. 2, end, but simply that all three words are 2nd pl. imperatives of the base which in Old Iranian was *bav*-.

7. From Digoron, however, Abaev (1949:418) most interestingly cites the exceptional 2nd pl. imperatives *niuuaxtæ* 'let go!' and *nissaxtæ* 'thrust (it) in!'. If these were formed, as he states, from the past stems (of *uadzun*, *sadzun*), what would the 2nd pl. suffix be? To my mind they are precious survivals of ancient root-class conjugation, with the 2nd p. suffix (here possibly as yet -*ta*) added directly to **wăk*- and **săk*-. On the same page Abayev mentions the Digoron 2nd pl. imperatives *cæugitæ* and *margitæ* of *cæu*- 'to go' and *mar*- 'to kill', consisting according to him of the participles *cæugæ* and *margæ* which can be used (also in Iron) for the 2nd sg. impv., extended by the *nominal* plural suffix -*tæ*. The suffix is more likely that of the

2nd pl. impv., this time not as an ancient survival, but as analogical to an ancient survival: the -*tæ* of *cæugitæ*, if the preceding *i* is a weakened *æ,* imitates the function of the -*tæ* of the 2pl. impv. *uotæ* in relation to the 2sg. impv. *uo* 'be, become!'. This is virtually proved by Dig. *kæntæ*, quoted by Abaev as a rarely used form of the 2pl. impv. (usually *kænetæ*) of *kæn-* 'to do', where the suffix (surely distinct from the nominal plural suffix -*tæ*) appears to have been added directly to the 2nd sg. impv. *kæn.* Cf. our suggestion, for a vastly earlier period, on the origin of Digoron -*etæ,* above, note 4.

8. The apparent exception, Iron *stə* 'they are', was at the time not yet *n*-less; see here §28.

9. This needs saying because of our attribution of -*ænt's t* to the *t* of the 3rd plur. -*æt*; but our saying it might have strained belief were it not for the fact that, in 'literary' South Ossetic today, such a preference for the less explicit has been manifesting itself for all to see.

10. The 'protection' theory we quoted from Miller in §1 would find only a very unsafe parallel in Miller's application of it to the 3rd plural ending -*Vnc*; see here §§22-28. Nor must we forget that the theory, devised for -*ænt*, would not account for the -*æt* of which Miller knew nothing. Here though, an explanation may not seem superfluous as to why we did not exploit the assimilation of *n* mentioned above in §1, by which in Iron a *dd* (or *dt* or *tt*) can be derived from *nt* via *nd*. The main reason is that nowhere do I find it stated, including significantly by Sokolova, that in word-final postvocalic position an Iron *dd* is heard anywhere simplified to *t* (for instance */bæt/ or /sæt/ in the 2nd sg. impv. of *bæddən* or *sæddən*; see note 2 above). Moreover, by assuming that 3pl. -*æt* has *t < nd < nt*, one cuts oneself off from attributing to contamination the *t* of Dig. -*æntæ*, as Digoron offers no parallel for a *dd* whose assimilated *n* stood in Old Iranian in front of not *d*, but *t*; see again note 2 above. Even in Iron the contamination would be hard to defend, because it would have occurred between two mutually exclusive outcomes (*nd* and *dd*) of an *nt* that constituted an unmistakeably precise morpheme. The advantage of deriving the *t* of the 3rd plur. -*æt* from the *θ* of the 2nd person plural is that at no stage do we need to charge either Iron or Digoron with intra-dialectal inconsistency.

11. This is stated by all the authorities we have quoted above (Tibilov, Abayev, Dzattiatə), each of them mentioning -*it* in one breath with -*æt.*

12. The exception which Bartholomae hesitatingly allowed, Gathic *dadātū*, is quoted as a 3rd singular by Kellens (1984:317).

13. Cf. Gershevitch (1985:279f.).

14. For the dropping of final *n* after postvocalic *y* Miller justly referred to the Iron noun *æncoi* 'rest', corresponding to Dig. *æncoinæ*.

15. Via *°*saci* the outcome of °*sati* would have been *°*sæc* in both Iron and Digoron.

16. To which add from Gershevitch (1959:173) Iron *afædz*/Dig. *afæi* 'year', and the remark on *kudz/kui* 'dog'.

17. With *o < a* as in *fondz* (§23), although alternatively one may start from *spānti- and compare the *o* of Dig. -*oncæ* (§24). Where -*anti* was verbally desinential, no *o* developed from its *a*; see §§22 and 28.

18. On which see Miller's plight at the top of p. 76, although on p. 75 he correctly suspected *stə* of being formed like NP *hastand.*

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