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[j] IN THE GEORGIAN LANGUAGE OF 5TH-18TH CC. AND IN THE MODERN KARTVELIAN DIALECTS

[j] enjoys high frequency recurrence in the ancient Georgian manuscripts and lapidary inscriptions. The active use of this sound is attested also in the modern Kartvelian dialects. It is derived from [i], and from the consonants: h|kh, z|s|sh|ts, n|r|l, j, g|k; it also appears with jota excursion and recursion.

The aim of this paper is to discuss [j] -containing sound-complexes in the diachronic aspect and reveal what connection can be traced between the [j], occurring in the ancient Georgian manuscripts, and in the sound found in the modern Kartvelian dialects. Namely, I discuss the forms which are characteristic to a) to 5th -18th literary standards, but are presently occurring in the modern dialects; b) also the forms regarded by scholars as characteristics to the dialects of a writer's or scribe's spoken language; c) forms regarded as a scribe's mistake; however, according to our observation they might be given different qualification.

No doubt, recording and studying of the dialectal forms attested in the ancient Georgian manuscripts acquires paramount importance in terms of their interaction; on one hand of the Georgian literary language (based on the data of recorded texts) and the spoken language, and on the other from the standpoints of researching of the historical dialectology.

The collation of the data of the ancient written monuments with the corresponding facts of modern Kartvelian dialects has revealed that as a result of the "phonetic conservatism" the language, according to the earliest distribution norms of the archaic Georgian, has retained the [*] segment assumed in different positions, as in the 5th -18th century writings so in the modern literary Georgian and in the modern Kartvelian dialects, both in ascending and descending diphthongs, respectively.

The observation on the diphthongs made it clear that in the modern Kartvelian dialects they have different occurrence frequencies, as #-V, V-#, V-V, #-C, C-C, C-#, V-C and in C-V positions.