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EUPHEMISTIC FUNCTION OF SOME TERMS DENOTING VASSALAGE IN GEORGIAN

Euphemistic expressions have occurred in Georgian from ancient times. "From the beginning it followed the principle of feudal hierarchy" (B. Jorbenadze). This must have resulted in inclusion of euphemistic function in the terms that denote vassalage.

Historically, the change in hierarchic attitude in Georgia revealed itself in the lexical fund of the Georgian language: some terms both preserved the primary semantics and obtained an additional meaning on the level of language ethics. This influenced the terms denoting both high and low hierarchy.

Euphemisms denoting high hierarchy such as *upali* (lord, master), *mepe/nepe* (groom), *dedopali* (bride) *p'aṭroni* (protector, patron, guardian), *baṭoni* (lord, master, landowner), *kalbaṭoni* (lady), etc. sometimes interchange on various phases of the language development: *mibrṣane*, *upalo* (tell me, lord, master (= boss, chief)), etc.

Among the terms denoting low hierarchy *mona* (slave), *qma* (serf; servant; vassal), *msa'uri* (servant; maid), etc. expressed different levels of hierarchy in Georgia.

These terms – as a euphemization mean – are attested in the following expressions: *šen 'ar čemi baṭoni* (Know what I mean?); *tkveni mona-morčili* (your humble servant); *tkvens samsa'urši var*, *mimsa'uret*, *tkvens samsa'urši migulet* (I'm at your service).

Inclusion of additional or sometimes completely new semantics into the terms that denote vassalage, their use in addressing and polite expressions, and phraseologisms, and finally, their incorporation into the sphere of language ethics highlights a high level of development of the Georgian society.