From The Panther Skin to the Translations of the Holy Books by Georgian Jews - Linguistic Parallels

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ABSTRACT

In the present paper, we will discuss some of the linguistic parallels that exist between the panther and these translations. Of course, such parallels can be inferred if the above assumption about the timing of the translation is correct and, on the other hand, given the immeasurable impact both of these monuments had on their readers. We will touch on some interesting linguistic parallels that emerge when comparing texts.

Keywords: Vocabulary; translation, Georgian-Jewish linguistic relations; linguistic parallels

For centuries, Georgian Jews have preserved translations of the holy books and some other fundamental religious books, translated into their vernacular and known as "Tavsili" (translation, commentary). For the last ten to fifteen years, little was known about these translations in scientific circles. In 2008, a translation of the book of Genesis was published in Israel (Genesis, 2008) in three different editions, followed by an extensive study of the text a year later, and in 2014 a translation of the Passover Legend (the Feast of Tabernacles) was released to the public (Feast of Tabernacles, 2014). These translations were passed down from generation to generation orally among Georgian Jews. The spiritual leaders of the community have been teaching them for years (there were also special terms - "თავსილზე დგა" - "stand on the head"). Nowadays, when the vast majority of Georgian Jews live in Israel, the area of use of these translations is significantly reduced. Their fragments are mainly used in the preaching of the so-called "Dibra Torah" ("Torah is said"). There is no direct document as to the time of the creation of the translations. According to indirect data, this date is estimated to be the 11th-12th C. (Enoch, 2009, p. 8). One of the proofs is the language of translation, which is close to the language of Georgian secular monuments of that time. The beauty of Rustaveli's eloquence (Glonti 1961; Gigineishvili, 1975) has been studied in
detail in scientific literature, including the peculiarities of the great poet’s pronunciation of names.

In this regard, the form ვექმარები attracts attention: „თუ შენ შენს ცოლსა არ შეგრთავ, მე ჩემსა არ ვექმარები“ (If you do not marry your wife, I do not marry mine) (1466,4). It seems that this verb existed in Georgian at that time (or in any of its dialects) and Rustaveli used it so gracefully in the poem. The fact is that in the original text of Genesis, we find the form of the second series of this verb: „მიდი იმათ ცოლსა ძმის შენისას და დეექმრე მას“ (Marry your brother’s wife). In the modern translation of the Bible, we have the equivalent of it. Also in Shalom David’s translation: ექმრე.

A different edition is presented in the translation of Abram Mamistvalov, Tamar Mamistvalov-Kezerashvili, and Gershon Ben-Oren, where other lexical items are used: შეირთე. We see another edition in the old Georgian translation of the work - ქმრო (O, AKS), ჯარქვე (CV). All these clearly indicate the diversity of Georgian vocabulary and to the fact that translators were not entirely sure which word would be more appropriate for the translated text. It is noteworthy that in both the text - in the panther skin and in the chapter we have the initial form of this verb:

1. „შენგან ჩემისა ქმრობის წინასცა ვიყავ მნდომია“ (I thought I was before you in my manhood).;

2. „და ის დარქმეული ქრმობითა“ (20.3) (And he is called a virgin) (with a slight phonetic change), which literally means: because he is married. This is clearly seen in the old translation of the Bible: ეგე შეყოფილ არს ქმარსა. (CB: იგი თანა-მკვიდრ ქმარისა).

This form is discussed by Shalva Glonti, who thinks that it, like a number of other verbs, must have been coined by Rustaveli. Of course, no one doubts the unique mastery of the great poet, but in this case, Ivane Gigineishvili’s view that Rustaveli was well acquainted with the possibilities of the Georgian language and skillfully used the existing forms should be more correct. In our humble opinion, the fact that these forms can be found in Tavsili, which should have been created slightly earlier than the genius poem, backs up Ivane Gigineishvili's opinion (GigineiSvili, 1975; Ben-Oren, 1993). However, it should be emphasized that we are not discussing the case of influence here, but merely highlight that both Rustaveli and the anonymous creator of Tavsili use existing forms from the rich source of the Georgian language (Enoch, 2009).
Both texts also confirm the form, which is explained as follows: "request, supplication": ნუკევა (128, 4). An interesting phonetic variant of this verb is presented in the chapter: გენუკვი, which means "I beg you". We must repeat that the use of such forms indicates their existence in the Georgian language.

One of the forms used in Panther’s skin needs careful consideration, as it can be understood in a different way from the traditional definition. We have in mind the verb ჰლალავს: შენ უხმობდა მხსნელად მათად, ტკბილად უჭვრეტს, არა ჰლალავს: 1646, 4. In the dictionary attached to the edition, this word is defined as: "does not quarrel." As it is known, Rustaveli’s masterpiece was translated into Hebrew by Boris Gaponov (Gaponov, 1991) and this translation is recognized as congenial. It should be noted that in this case the translator does not follow the above definition and offers a different understanding: ישענו thereof, וקראו במשאל. Translating this back to Georgian, we have the following situation: the primary meaning of meshes is „სხოვნა“ (memory); the word mesha has essentially the same meaning, but it has a secondary meaning as well "plan or action that gives a solution". We should roughly understand the translation like this: pays enough attention (does not show lack of attention). It is difficult to say with certainty which understanding is more acceptable, but in our view, Rustaveli’s researchers should also look to the Gaponovian understanding. We have an interesting word in one of the most beautiful stanzas of the Panther’s skin, which is still used in some contexts in Georgian: შენ ხარ მიზეზი სოფლისა ასრე გასამსალები.

According to the definition, this word is related to "სხოვნა" and is explained as follows: „სხოვნის ქარვა“ (Becoming poison). It is interesting that Georgian Jews use even today, the modified version of this word: „გასანსალება“ (for example, in the materials collected in Kutaisi, the following sentence can be found: „რათ უნდოდა ამ ხენაგ ასე გასანსალება“ (Who and why made this Khenag dish (popular dish among Georgian Jews, made of wings and walnuts) so spicy/billet?. Of course, the meanings are very close, but for the sake of clarity, we point out that greed here means "bitterness" and maybe Rustaveli also had this meaning in mind.

Particular attention is paid to the form „ხასი“, which is confirmed several times in Rustaveli’s poem with two different meanings:

1. "Person close to the king": წიგნსა მოგცემ, გმორჩილობდენ, ვინცა იყოს ჩემი
2. Genuine, pure: ".tarie;s udghvna gvirgvini, ver-,,ёмов ргв цоолоо, ჯო. გალაგომი განხ, აკურთხოს ღძგული, ჟოთხული, წყვილ ხასო“ (1438, 2-3). The word ხასი is often found in the speech of Georgian Jews, and according to this we could add other meanings - "true", "saint of saints". This can be clearly seen from the short verse that is very common among Georgian Jews: „მათსმა არი ხას, რა არი მისი ფას“ (Saturday is a “khasi”, it is priceless). The words ღმერთმა იგი დღე მეშვიდე და დაახასა ის (characterizes) are derived from ხასი. The translation of Tavsili uses this very phrase: „აკურთხა ღმერთმა იგი დღე მეშვიდე და დაახასა ის“ (God blessed him on the seventh day and made him a saint): (გენესი, 2008, 2-3). In one of the previous works I expressed an opinion that the word ხას was used as “saint” in the speech of Georgian Jews (Enouch, 2009, p. 87). Thus, we can conclude that lexical items of approximately similar meaning were developing in parallel in the speech of Georgian Jews and in the Georgian literary language.

Another "common" word between Tavsili and Rustaveli’s poem is „პაემანი“ (in Tavsili), which means "promise": „ისერა პაემანი ჩემი შენ თანა“: Genesis, 2008, 17, p. 4). In the section 17,2-13, this lexical unit has been used several times. Sometimes the speaker left him unchanged, but in most cases he said “პარტი" instead. So for him these units are absolutely identical. The publishers of Panther’s skin define the word “paemani” as agreement, pact, deadline. I think it should be clear that this lexical unit is used smoothly by both texts. Discussing any influence here does not seem justified. It is interesting in itself that Tavsil has preserved this archaic form.

In some cases, it is not so easy to bring the form confirmed in the translation of the poetic unit and the chapter to the "common meaning". For example, one of the most interesting forms of the poem is გამეტადება („ამ უბრძანა: აღარ გამეტიადება, აღარც სიტყვა გამეტიადებს“), which is defined as: "more behavior, exaggeration." The lexical unit attested in the chapter has the opposite meaning: „გასურველება“ (Divides into ten parts), and yet, in our opinion, it is not impossible to judge the common origin of these units not only because of external similarities but also as a result of the so-called meaning in one text, replace with the opposite meaning.

It is very interesting the form „მობინება“ (wisdom) attested in the panther skin: „"მობინება"
The hand seems to make wisdom: 886, 1. In Tavsili, in the translation of Agad, we find a new word derived from this verb:

"დაუბძენდეთ მათ, არამც გამრავლდეს" (We must act wisely so that they do not multiply)...

These examples once again show the great potential of Georgian vocabulary, which is used with true mastery by both the genius poet and the most talented translators of the Tavsili.

One of the most interesting lexical items in the poem is დამართებით (righteous): "მან ბალიში დამართებით დადვა მას მზედ საქებარსა": 410,2. In this case, it really means "beyond", but there is no doubt that we are dealing with the same lexical unit. It is noteworthy that neither Ilia Abuladze (Abuladze, 1973) nor Zurab Sarjveladze's (Sarjveladze, 1995) old Georgian dictionaries have confirmed this lexical unit. With great caution, perhaps, we can say that it must have been the product of the time of the creation of the „Tavsili“ and „The Panther Skin“.

The word ნასი, which means "ugly, ugly", is often used in panther skin. It is a well-known complaint of Fatman: "მით არ ჯერ ვარ ქმარსა ჩემა, მჭლე არის და თვალად ნასი": 179,1), the explanation of which is "to become". Gaponov's (Gaponov, 1991) translation אָנָה וַיבָל - sound and freeze, which indicates a different understanding of the text and offers a different meaning of the word.

In the speech of Georgian Jews, a slightly modified phonetic version of this word is used: ნარსი. R sound development is a completely normal process in Georgian; But In none of the translations of the Tavsili is this word found without the consonant r. The poem also confirms the accusation taken from this word: დანასვა: "ახალმან ფიქრმა დათოვა, ვარდი დათრთვილა, დანასა": 179,1), the explanation of which is "to become". Gaponov's translation is as follows: Baghdadi ". Gaponov's translation is as follows: Baghdadi ". We are coming from Baghdad". It is noteworthy that there is a similar form in the speech of Georgian Jews: " - a merchant who trades in Russia). We think that in this context are the merchants who go to Baghdad to trade, and not the merchants from Baghdad anyway.
Every Georgian remembers the Rustaveli stanza from his childhood: „ხატაეთ მყოფნი ყველანი (We pay the cost (contribution)). By definition, „ხარაჯა“ is a contribution. It seems that in Georgian there was a term not only to denote a contributor, but also a tribute. This is evidenced by the testimony of the „Tavsili“: In A edition of the translation we read: „მეხარაჯე“; In the B edition, the translation is corrected and the word is used as „მეხარაჯეები“. It is clear that the speaker here is influenced by a new Georgian. In the text of the 60s of the twentieth century, but in the text preserved by oral tradition, a completely re-Georgianized form appears: "supervisors of works". Of course, it is especially valuable for us to show the A and B editions, according to which we are talking about tax collectors. So, we can present the specification regarding the lexical item under consideration.

In some cases, with the parallel forms of „Panther Skin“ and „Tavsili“, we can also discuss the possible time for certain words to enter the Georgian language. For example, the poem confirms „მოშაით/მუშაითი“ forms: „მგოსანი და მუშაითი უხმეს, პოვეს რაცა სადა“ (119, 4); „ჩემს ასიმცროს გამზრდელნი მზრდიდიან სამუშაითოდ“ (1394, 1). This lexical unit is not found in the passages published by the translation of the chapter, but is in the texts provided by the speakers. For example, Mrs. Eter Kezerashvili-Chikvashvili suggested a sentence from the speech of the Jews of Akhaltsikhe: „მუშაითი გეგონება“ This form is no longer found in the speech of the Jews today, and we may assume that it is a reminder of earlier eras.

We are sure that after publishing the rest of the chapter and comparing the texts, many more interesting materials will be revealed.
References


