



ŠĀH-NĀMA TRANSLATIONS II. INTO GEORGIAN

One of the important research problems of Georgian humanities, to which scholars have devoted great attention, is the thorough study of Ferdowsi's *Šāh-nāma* and its Georgian translations. Nikolaj Marr (1864-1934) and Justin Abuladze (1871-1962) laid the foundation of this research at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries.

Names such as Spandiat (Av. Spəntō.dāta, NP Esfandiār), Thrithino (Av. graētaona, NP Āfridun, Feridun), or Vaštašab (Av. and OP Vištasp, NP Goštāsp) are mentioned in Old Georgian literature. Their occurrence suggests that the Georgians were well familiar with the ancient Persian legends. The names of many *Šāh-nāma* heroes, such as Rostom-i, Thehmine, Sam-i, or Zaal-i, are found in 11th- and 12th-century Georgian literature. They are indirect evidence for an Old Georgian translation of the *Šāh-nāma* that is no longer extant. The preserved translations of *Šāh-nāma* stories (*dāstāns*) originated between the 15th to 18th centuries. The versions in verse comprise *Rostomiani* (The book of Rostam), *Zaakiani* (The book of Žaḥāk), and *Utrutian-Saamiani* (The book of Otroṭ and Sām). Prose versions are *Pridoniani* (The book of Feridun), *Utrutian-Saamiani*, and *Saam-palavani* (The book of Sām the Pahlavān).

The *Šāh-nāma* was translated, not only to satisfy the literary and aesthetic needs of readers and listeners, but also to inspire the young with the spirit of



heroism and Georgian patriotism. Georgian ideology, customs, and worldview often informed these translations because they were oriented toward Georgian poetic culture. Conversely, Georgians consider these translations works of their native literature. Georgian versions of the *Šāh-nāma* are quite popular, and the stories of Rostam and Sohrāb, or Bījan and Maniža became part of Georgian folklore.

All *Šāh-nāma* translations that originated before the 19th century are published (Abuladze, 1916; 1934; Kobidze, 1974). But even today sections of the *Šāh-nāma* are translated into Georgian. Among the 20th-century versions are the poetic renditions of the poetess and Iranologist Bella Šalvašvili (1976, 1978, 1979, 1987) particularly noteworthy.

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