



VISRAMIANI

VISRAMIANI, title of the Georgian translation of the *Vis o Rāmin*, a versified romance by Persian poet *Fakr-al-Din As'ad Gorgāni* (fl. mid-11th cent.). The 12th-century translation traditionally is attributed as one of the works of a feudal lord, Sargis Tmogveli.

The Georgians were converted to Christianity at the beginning of the 4th century. During the following centuries they created a rich volume of both original and translated ecclesiastic literature, within which developed hagiography, hymnography, types of adventure tales, and amorous narratives; and, above all, they promoted the literary idiom of the Georgian language with an elevated, expressive style. The 11th-12th centuries mark a particular stage of formation and development of a strong secular trend in the Georgian classical literature. It was in this period, not later than the second half of the 12th century, that Gorgāni's versified romance was translated into Georgian. The highly artistic, colorful prose of the Georgian *Visramiani* defined its peculiarity. It is generally considered as one of the most distinguished example of ancient Georgian literary tradition (Baramidze et al., 1966, II, pp. 60-87).

There are twenty manuscripts of the *Visramiani* text, copied in the 17th-18th centuries, besides one dated 1805. The first edition of *Visramiani* was published in 1884 by I. Cahvchavadze, P. Umikashvili, and A. Sarağishvili. It was based on four manuscripts. The second edition of the text was issued in 1938 by A. Baramidze, P. Ingoroqva, and K. Kekelidze. It was based on fourteen manuscripts and, to some extent, on the second edition (1935) of the



original Persian text. In 1960 appeared the third edition, prepared by I. Lolashvili, who had used the two previous editions, with consideration of all comments and amendments given in scholarly literature concerning them. The fourth edition of the *Visramiani*, published in 1962, should be regarded as a significant stage in the process of studies concerning the translation. The editors, A. Gvakharia and M. Todua, undertook a line-for-line comparison of the Georgian and Persian texts and devoted two-thirds of the edited volume (763 pages) to critical textual analysis with comments, variant readings, vocabulary list, and index (Mamatsashvili and Giunashvili, 1985, p. 122).

On the basis of line-for-line collation of several passages of Persian and Georgian texts, Nikolai Marr (1864-1934) concluded that the Georgian text was an exact reproduction of the Persian original and that it was of key significance for the critique of the Persian text (Marr, 1925, p. 137). The first attempt for realizing this potential was partially done, via Oliver Wardrop's English translation of *Visramiani*, by Mojtabā Minovi, during the preparation of the second edition of *Vis o Ramin*.

A distinct aspect of this translation is the fact that, in spite of being an almost literal rendering of the Persian original and in contrast to the free use of Persian lexis by Georgian authors of the 12th-13th centuries, it is quite free from any elements of Persian language to the extent that it has been called an original Georgian literary work and the oldest representative of the secular literary monuments of Georgia (Marr, 1925, pp. 164-66).

Questions concerning the textual interrelationship of the Persian original and its Georgian translation, their lexis, various redactions, and the whole complex of philological analysis of *Visramiani* have been discussed in works of Y. Abuladze, A. Baramidze, J. Giunashvili, A. Gvakharia, G. Imedashvili, K. Kekelidze, D. Kobidze, M. Mamatsashvili, N. Marr, V. Puturidze, M. Todua, and other scholars.

Visramiani attests to its strong link with the Georgian fiction tradition. Reproducing the Persian romance in his native language, the Georgian translator succeeded in masterfully blending into one the poetical subject matter of the original and the rich artistic heritage of Old Georgian literature.



BIBLIOGRAPHY

Translations of *Visramiani*

Oliver Wardrope, tr., *Visramiani: The Story of the Loves of Vis and Ramin: A Romance of Ancient Persia*, London, 1914 (English).

B. Rudenko, *Visramiani – gruzinskiĭ roman 12 veka i persidskaya poema 11 veka Vis i Ramin (Visramiani – Georgian novel of the 12th century and Persian poem Vīs o Rāmīn of the 11th century)* Moscow, 1938 (Russian).

Ruth Neukom und Kita Tschkhenkeli, trs., *Wisramiani oder die Geschichte der Liebe von Wis und Ramin. Uebertragung aus dem Georgischen*, Zurich, 1957 (German).

S. Iordanishvili, *Visramiani (Vīs o Rāmīn). Roman. Perevod s drevne-gruzinskogo (Visramiani [Vīs o Rāmīn]. Novel. Translation from Old Georgian)*, Tbilisi, 1960; 2nd ed., 1989 (Russian).

Nelly Amaschukeli und Natella Chuzischwili, *Wis und Ramin. Roman einer verbotenen Liebe im alten Persien*, Leipzig, 1991 (German).

References

Y. Abuladze, “*Visramianis tekstisathvis*” (Towards the text of *Visramiani*), in *Literaturuli memkvidreoba* 1, 1935, pp. 270-97.

A. Baramidze, G. Imedashvili, and G. Mikadze, eds., *Kartuli literaturis istoria* (History of Georgian Literature), 2 vols., Tbilisi, 1966.

Faḡr al-Din As‘ad Gorgāni, *Vis o Rāmīn*, ed. W. Nassau Lees, Calcutta, 1865; ed. M. Minovi, Tehran, 1314/1935.

D. Kobidze, “*Visramianis sakitkhebi*” (Questions about *Visramiani*), in *Kartul-sparsuli literaturuli urtiertobani* (Georgian-Persian literary relations) II, Tbilisi, 1969.

M. Mamatsashvili, “*Gorganis “ Vīs o Rāmīn “ da kartuli “Visramiani” (Vīs o Rāmīn by Gorgāni and the Georgian Visramiani)*”, Tbilisi, 1977 (in Georgian; summaries in Russian and French).



M. Mamatsashvili and J. Giunashvili, *On the Centenary of the First Edition of Visramiani*, Rome, 1985.

Nikolai Marr, “Iz gruzino-persidskikh literaturnikh svyazei” (On Georgian-Persian literary contacts), in *Zapiski Kollegii vostokovedov pri Aziatskom muzee Rossiiskoi akademii nauk*, Leningrad, 1925.

Idem, *Voprosy Vepkhistaosani i Visramiani* (Problems of the Man in the panther’s skin and Visramiani), Tbilisi, 1966.