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Translating the Title of *Vep'xis-Tq'aosani* ('(The /Some)one in an Ounce's skin' / 'The Panther-clad one') in Foreign Languages, Before and After 1937:
the Mark of 'Culture 2' or of Socialist Realism?

1. Content of the work

The work was written in 16-syllable rhymed quatrains, most likely around year 1200, or, according to marginal views of prominent scholars, later, in the 1230s (Korneli Kekelidze (K'ek'elidze 1979: 74–75)), ca. 1250 or even in the 14th or 15th c. (according to changing opinions of Sergo Kakabadze and Niko Marr (K'ak'abadze 1924: 121–122, 148 ff.)). The earliest manuscript that contains the whole work is from 1646. The work was printed for first in 1712 in Tbilisi. In the 17th c., additions (three major narrative episodes and several minor ones) were considered part of the work, even though their post-cedence and even exact authorship was known (Arabuli 2004: 8-10). The status of two special fragments, namely, the 'Prologue' and the 'Epilogue' of the work, has been a matter of contention up to nowadays (Arabuli 2004: 15-17, 150).

The status of the mentioned three narrative episodes, of almost 300 stanzas in sum (Tsaishvili 1970: 237; summarised in: ivi: 238-240), seems to be indeterminate too (a brief historiography and discussion of the issue: Arabuli 2004: 149-169). They are included in the Georgian edition of 1988 (which I was unable to consult) issued by Metsniereba, but together with the epilogue are printed in different font (ivi: 151). I guess that the issue has, ultimately, not a textological but a theoretical solution: one depending on what we see as prevailing, 'authorship' or 'authority' (ascribed authorship) (after: Averintsev 1994), or on whether we prefer to view the work as modern or pre-modern.

The 'Prologue' contains a convoluted praise of a patronising sovereign, which praise borders at confession in love;¹ and it contains a double *profession of faith* – of a

¹ The spirit of this praise recalls the spirit of Stalinist culture, or "Culture Two" of the 20th c. (see Papernyj 1996: 300). Disputations over the "authenticity" of the 'Prologue' are worth exploring with this resemblance in mind.

noble man who has lost his mind out of love to a dame and of a poet/rhymester.¹ The narrative part is divided into non-numbered and titled chapters of uneven length.

The plot is constructed by two plot-lines, initially an enframing and an enframed one, which intersect at the outset of the first one and at a low-point of the second one, after which moment they become directly interdependent, till the end of the work.

A very brief synopsis: Avtandil is about to marry the daughter of his sovereign, but is sent by her to find a strangeman who has spoilt the pre-marital feast; Avtandil finds him, befriends him, and, having received the permission of his future wife, does his best to rescue him from his despair. Tariel, a would-be son-in-law of another sovereign, has killed the imposed bridegroom of his beloved and has had his beloved kidnapped and non-findable anywhere on earth. Avtandil finds traces of the kidnappers and after adventures which compromise his moral purity finds the beloved of Tariel and rescues him from his despair. A military campaign to retrieve the kidnapped, and three marriages, follow.

The work presents an intriguing romance, but also an exercise in rhetoric.² The exercise presents two hypotheses of human condition and contemplates their interoperability. These hypotheses actually develop, in contrasting ways, possible solutions of the emotional and maybe juridical deadlock hinted at in the 'Prologue'. The narration elevates the 'troubadour-ic' deadlock into a Christological diptych. The first hypothesis of human condition is embodied in the story-line of Avtandil and the second one in the story-line of Tariel. The contemplation can be summarised thus: can man as a non-sinner help man as a repenting sinner? The exercise has its semi-hidden 'counterpart': can a sinner's suffering be so appealing as to drive a non-sinner out of his 'idyllic' existence? Final answers in both exercises are 'yes'. This is hardly surprising from a Christian standpoint. But a casuistic or rhetoric exercise has the task of making the mind more elaborate, an individual's free will more informed and faith stronger, not the task of surprising.

¹ The number of stanzas in editions can reach 33, and 41 in manuscripts (cf. Arabuli 2004: 8-10).

² This structure links the work of Rustaveli with the origins of novel, as a presentation of an insolvable case of conflict of interests or life-perspectives, according to the theory of Boris Griftsov (2012 [1927]: 36-38, 41-45).

2. A key to the poetics of the work: the title and its translation

The translation of the work's title is uncertain. It is a matter of deep, even if hardly visible, cultural controversy or intercultural rift.

A literal translation would speak of 'Someone/The one¹ with/in/bearing a snow-leopard's skin (fur?)'; or of 'The snow-leopard-clad one'. Irine Modebadze (2015: 267) suggests identical Russian-language solutions; just as Konstantin Rdułtowski: „*Wepchistchaosani*, co znaczy Lampardzio-skórny [*Leopard-furred/-skinned*]“ ([Rdułtowski] 1830: 152-153).²

If we assume the credible hypothesis that we have an artistic structure organised in line with pre-modern religious symbolism, this translation can be accepted as adequate. Such a structure would have an image or presence of God³, or both, as its centre, and would 'have in mind' God-likeness and presence of God in whatever vicissitudes of narration and extremes of description. Such a translation would underscore a *basic property of a world which has something to do with God: the truthfulness or falseness of any likeness and the constant likelihood of His hidden presence to become manifest*.⁴ This property has survived as a fossil in phrases like 'a lion in a donkey's skin' and 'a wolf in a sheep's skin'.

The composite word from the title, which appears once again as an attribute of a young princely warrior in the eighty-fifth stanza of the work, would designate the link between that warrior and God's presence, that warrior and God-likeness, and not solely the warrior: it would designate a symbol and not solely its vividly-material facet. *The warrior named Tariel*, protagonist of the work or of its framed story, *is a simile of the 'one in snow-leopard's fur' or just a facet of the symbol*. Focussing on that facet, most translations confine themselves to it, transforming the '(some)one' into a 'knight'. Some translations encode a non-lost opportunity to maintain the double vision (of things material and immaterial), through stopping halfway and choosing 'man'.

¹ Georgian language lacks the grammatical (morphological) category of (in)determinacy.

² He (under the cryptonym of „K. R-dt“) was probably the first populariser of the work in Polish who translated tiny fragments of it into that language (ivi: 157-158, 159, 160). On Rdułtowski see: Baranowski 1981: 7.

³ And, why not, of His, in a way, antagonist – 'the transient world', emblematised in/as the 'wheel of Fortuna' in Western visual culture. Rustaveli mentions it, *ts'utisopeli*, more frequently than God.

⁴ Deliberately skipping references, I summarise conceptualisations of scholars as different as Sergei Averintsev, Hans Belting, Viktor Bychkov, Titus Burkhart and Josef Campbell.

To return to the original, the state of wearing or bearing a beast's skin should be read as a Christian symbolic designation of human condition, not as a solely mimetic attribute of a mimetically conceived and received agent. (It is noteworthy that the protagonist of the equally important 'framing' story within the romance, Avtandil, carries a name understandable as '(fur)cloth(ed)heart', from the Persian (Marjory Wardrop in Rust'haveli 1912: 8, footnote 1).) This core peculiarity of the work and its central image was given due attention in a 1996 newspaper article by Mariam Karbelashvili, titled a bit precautiously¹ 'Vepkhistqaosani as a metaphor': „We should view the leopard's skin clothed Tariel in a Biblical context. The bestial skin was the first cloth with which God dressed Adam and Eva before expelling them from Eden. [...]... The killing of the child of the Khwarazmshah is the sin which tortures Tariel and Nestan. [...]“ (Nestan is Tariel's beloved; K'arbelashvili 1996, annotation by Giorgi Arabuli in *Rustvelologiuri* 2012: 267).

A frankly secularist reading of the work's central image was offered a century ago by the work's first translator into English, Marjory Scott Wardrop: „The Man in the Panther's Skin' is the story of man enveloped in the passion spoken of in the introductory quatrains“ (Rust'haveli² 1912: 15 n. 8).

I would add that *Vepkhistqaosani* is a story of *two* men enveloped in passion, a sinner and a helper, and of invisible God who lets these two men act in their ways, meet and interact. *Vepkhistqaosani* is a multi-layered personification of the *mystery of the created world*.

3. Existing translations of the title: a historical sketch

Scholarly and translational reception of the work in Russian late imperial culture put a stress on the (material and symbolical) object in that image, to the detriment of the agent (be him man or knight or whomsoever). The author of the third published translation into Polish known to me, Kazimierz Łapczyński (1863), introduced the work under the title of 'Tiger's skin/fur'.³ The author of the second

¹ And indicatively – of the power of a mimetic literalism which it possibly had to confront.

² While I use the form „Rustaveli“ in my text, I keep the individual forms pertinent to items in the reference list.

³ Partly a translation, partly a summary, as admitted in the publication's subtitle. The record in the online catalogue of NPLG abounds with typos. On Łapczyński's work see: Baranowski 1981: 6-7. The first who had his fragmentary translation from Rustaveli into Polish published was probably K. Rdułtowski (Baranowski 1981: 7).

translation into French, “Achas Borin” (Aleksandr Bobrinskij) (Roustaveli 1885; Borin 1886), professor Aleksandr Khakhanov (Aleksandre Khakhanashvili) in Moscow (Khakhanov 1895: 67, 330, 363; 1897), and the poet-symbolist Konstantin Balmont, in the introduction to the first edition of his Russian translation (Rustaveli 1917: 14, 21), use the metonymic designation ‘Panther’s skin / Snow-leopard’s skin’ („La peau de leopard“ / „Барсова кожа“). In the artistic text itself, Balmont uses ‘(The) one who carries a snow-leopard’s fur’ („Носящий барсову шкуру“): both in the 1917 edition containing a partial translation, and in the 1933 one published in emigration in Paris (publ. D. Kheladze)¹, containing complete translation. The agent is *preserved* as a participle² and a silhouette.

This is, first, the closest to a literal rendering that, second, would not violate the good taste. Both assessments were voiced by Irine Modebadze (2015: 267). As indicated by her, the first Russian translation in verse (incomplete) by Ipolit Bardtinskii (1845) contains another solution: ‘Tariel. Snow-leopard’s skin’. Unlike her, I do not think ‘Tariel. Snow-leopard’s skin’ (Rustaveli 2015: 6) is a “violation of authorial intention” (Modebadze 2015: 267) that is worth mentioning as a violation. First, it does not identify Tariel with the bearer of the skin, just puts them side by side; and thus precludes the intellectually unhealthy proclivity to specify the status, stature and personhood of the bearer. Second, it brings to the fore a name in a way that urges to its etymological analysis, esp. in directions which would suggest a non-evident link between the name and a snow-leopard’s fur.

(Hence, a possible etymology of the name “Tariel” (*T’ariel*, according to official Georgian transliteration rules from 2002), would derive it from the stem of the verb *t’areba* (‘to lead (by holding by the hand); spend (time); bear, carry (within oneself); wander’ (Chubinashvili 1984 [1884]: 1215)), combined with the noun *ieli* (*Azalea pontica* / *Rhododendron leteum*, but also intoxicated, spoilt honey, because containing nectar from the mentioned plant, ivi: 578; “a tree which spoils honey” (Orbeliani 1949: 260)). Through adding the motif of honey to the motif of fur used as a dress, it contributes to an allusive presence of St John the Forerunner throughout the work and seems simpler than the Arabic one (from *tarikha*, ‘path of initiation’, and *el*, ‘world’) proposed by Zviad Gamsakhurdia in 1987 (Gamsakhurdia 1987, annotated

¹ Balmont remains an anti-communist émigré until his death in 1942.

² However, the parallel French-language title (Rustaveli 1933: [XXXI]) already hypostasised the participle into a noun: *L’Homme a la peau de Léopard*. Explanation for the „léopard“ see below.

in: *Rustvelologiuri* 2012: 102). It is so simple, and Rustvelological literature so vast, that I cannot claim originality.)

The majority of post-1930s translations show an opposite proclivity, spectacularly embodied in the Moscow 1937 re-edition of Balmont's translation (Rustaveli 1937a)¹, which changed the title to 'Vityaz in a/the tiger's skin'. In a highly symbolic act of self-submission², the Tbilisi scholarly establishment produced a Georgian edition which programmed the normative Russian and the desirable French translations for the times to come on its title page: „...Витязь в Тигровой Шкуре“, „Chotha Rousthavéli, Le Preux à la Peau de Tigre“ (Rustaveli 1937c: [A])³. And already in 1938 Wardrop's translation was appropriated, being 'corrected' and republished, too (Rust'hveli 1938). A bit earlier, in 1935, Balmont's translation had been issued in Tbilisi still under Balmont's title; "on the rights of a manuscript", "на правах рукописи" (Rustaveli 1935a); but already under new title in Moscow (Rustaveli 1935b). **See Table 1.**

It is important to stress that the choice in favour of „vitjaz“ *and* 'tiger' was not a Soviet but the Stalinist choice. The earlier Georgian Soviet edition by Konstantine Ch'ich'inadze (Rustaveli [1934]⁴) promoted different Russian and French-language choice on its front matter: „Носящий тигровую шкуру“, „L'Homme qui Porte la Peau de Tigre“.

¹ A *second* edition, not by Goslitizdat but by Academia, of this re-publication is digitised: <https://imwerden.de/publ-9869> (Rustaveli 1937b). Balmont's translation of the 'Prologue' and „chapters 1-47“ is complemented by a translation of „chapters 48-50 [the additions ascribed to Rustaveli! YL] and the concluding stanzas“ by E. Tarlovskaja (Rustaveli 1937b: [317]).

² The manuscript of the Tbilisi edition was delivered for print on 20 July 1937, while the book was issued on 23 December (Rustaveli 1937c: colophon). The manuscript for the 1937 Academia edn was „delivered for printing on 19 August 1936“ and „approved for printing on 2 November 1936“ (Rustaveli 1937b: colophon).

³ The Russian-French titling was assigned to the title page, while the Georgian one to the cover and to a second title page. Latin pagination was assigned for the Introduction (pp. I-XLIV). This project for French title was implemented in the 1977 Tbilisi French edition (tr. Elisabeth Orbeliani and Solomon Iordanishvili).

⁴ <https://opac.iliauni.edu.ge/eg/opac/record/62848>. As noted in this bibliographic record, the edition included the aforementioned three narrative additions to Rustaveli's work.

Table 1 (to part 3). Existing translations of the title (selection): (NB There is no English trans. choosing “tiger” and no Russian one choosing “panther”)

	focus on the attribute	equilibrium	focus on the agent
ounce /snow leopard [panthera uncia or <i>white</i> panthera pardus]	„Барсова кожа“ (title page of the Geo. edn of Palandishvili and Chubinov, SPb. 1841; Meunargia, Rus. abbrev. adaptation, Tiflis 1888; Александр Хаханов, „История груз. словености“ in 4 vols, v. 2, Moscow 1897; K. Balmont, Intro. to the 1917 edn)	„Таргелъ. Барсова кожа“ (Ipolit Bardinskij [& Davit Chubinashv.], 1845, partial trans.) „Носящий барсову шкуру“ (Balmont: Moscow 1917, Paris 1933, Tiflis 1935)	„Вигъзъ в барсовой шкуре“ ([Balmont’s trans.], Tbilisi: Merani, 1989, ed. Sargis Tsaishvili)
panther /leopard [panthera pardus]	‘leopard’s skin/fur’ („ La peau de léopard “, Achas Borin [Aleksandr Bobrinskij], Tiflis 1885, Paris 1886) („ La pelle del leopardo “, Scialva [Shalva] Beridze, Milano 1945)	‘(hu)man in a/the panther/leopard skin/fur’ („The man in the panther’s skin“, Marjory Wardrop, London 1912, Tbil. 1966; „L’homme à la peau de leopard“, Georges Gvazava & Anie Marcel-Paon, Paris 1938 in prose, 1983; „Der Mann im Pantherfell“, Robert Bleichsteiner, Wien 1956, Hermann Buddensieg, 1970-71, Tbilissi 1976, 2017; „L’uomo dalla pelle di leopardo“, Antonio Bonelli et al., Ragusa 1998)	‘knight/rider in a/the panther/leopard skin/fur’ („Le chevalier à la peau de panthere = ვიგბობჯგვოსღობო = Вигъзъ в барсовой шкуре“ Gaston Bouatchidze, Москва 1989; „The knight in the panther’s skin“, Venera Urushadze, Tbilisi 1968; Katharine Vivian, London 1977; Lyn Coffin, Tbilisi 2015; „Il cavaliere con la pelle di pantera“, Mario Picchi & Paola Angioletti, 1981, from Rus.; „Der Ritter im Pantherfell“, Mikheil Tsereteli, Paris 1961/Tbilisi 2015)
tiger [panthera tigris]	‘tiger’s skin/fur’ „Skora tygrysia“, Kazmierz Łapczyński, Warszawa 1863	‘the lord of the panther[-patterned?] skin’ (‘The lord of the panther-skin’, Robert H. Stevenson, Albany (NY) 1977)	‘Tariel, knight/rider in leopard skin/fur’ („Tariel, a párdúcobóros lovag“, Vikár Béla, Budapest 1917)
		‘(hu)man in a tiger skin/fur’ („ L’Homme à la peau de tigre “, Marie Felicite Brosset, Journal asiatique , t. 2, Paris 1828 , partial trans.) („Der Mann im Tigerfelle“, Arthur Leist, 1889, Dresden & Leipzig) („Der Mann <u>mit</u> dem Tigerfell“, Felix Pecina, Tbilisi 2004 [Reutlingen 1931], abbrev. adaptation for children)	„Вигъзъ в тигровой шкуре“ (Бальмонт, Москва 1937) ‘Рыцарь/Всадник в тигровой коже/шкуре’ („A Tigrisbóros lovag“, Sándor Weöres, Budapest 1954; „Le Chevalier à la peau de tigre“, Serge Tsouladzé, Paris 1964, Nino Salia & M. Tsereteli eds., title page, Paris 1977; „Der Ritter im Tigerfell“, Marie Prittowitz, Tbilisi-Berlin 2005) ‘Рыцарь в тигровой коже/шкуре’ („ Der Recke im Tigerfell “, Hugo Huppert, Berlin 1955 , 1970, 1980) (Wardrop, Москва 1938, 1977) („Kaplan postlu sovalye“, Bilal Dindar, Samsun 1991)

4. A Cold War West mirrors the Stalinist East? Towards an outline of tendencies and zones in the field of translations

The implicit bearer of the skin (or fur) from the original was being specified as a 'knight' in a growing number of German, French and English translations, and there are indications in the bibliographic data and in the chronology that the trend was set in motion in the 1950s through contacts with Moscow, by Moscow itself and by a Tbilisi led by Moscow.

The prototypical event in the process had been the re-titling of Balmont's 1933 Paris-issued translation for the Moscow 1937 re-publishing. The self-promotion of Stalinist choice culminated in the mid-1950s and then in 1964, was halted after 1977, **imploded** in 1989 and has been revived in the 21st century.

After the Soviet occupation of Eastern Europe, a new Hungarian translation with the 'correct' title was produced: from 'Tariel: the knight/horseman in panther skin' in the edition of 1917 (trans. Béla Vikár) to 'The knight/horseman in *tiger* skin' in 1954 (trans. Sándor Weöres) (Rusztaveli 1917; 1954). In 1964, a French edition in Paris appeared to bear the Stalinist title (Roustaveli 1964), within the „UNESCO Collection of representative works“ of world literature. In 1977, Moscow once again republished Wardrop's translation with the corrected title (Rusthveli 1977)¹. The earliest specimen in a major Western language to carry *both* lexical peculiarities of Stalinist (that is, classic Soviet Russian translation), 'not simply man (but knight, etc)' *and* 'tiger', was Hugo Huppert's 1955 one into German; *Der Recke im Tigerfell* was published in Berlin by the 'Society for cultural ties of the Georgian SSR with abroad' (Rusthaveli 1955).

As a result of Soviet cultural pressure, a kind of a westernist analogue of the rigorously populist Soviet 'hero' („vityaz“ in Russian) was produced. This analogue appeared either at the other side of the Iron Curtain or on 'neutral' ground², and implemented a logic of 'pre-negotiated' race, not of submission.³ Instead of 'The

¹ In 1966, Tbilisi re-publishers of Wardrop's translation were tolerant to her choice of title.

² It appeared probably for first in English translation by Venera Urushadze, issued in Soviet Georgia (Rustaveli 1968).

³ In Slavonic, as well as intra-Soviet, translations submission was fuller than in East Germany and Hungary. Rare exceptions are the 1958 Czech translation (*Muz v tygri kuzi*, 'Man in tiger's skin', tr. Jaromir Jedlicka) and the 1966 Armenian one (*Շնձեկաբեր*, 'Leopard-skin-bearer', tr. Gevorg Asatur).

bearer...'¹ or 'The one / Someone in...'; instead of the metonymy 'The panther's skin/fur' (Achas Borin, 1885, 1886); instead of the relatively non-specifying 'Man in...'² and *The lord of..* (a unique choice of Robert H. Stevenson, which brilliantly disperses the unequivocal association of the fur with Tariel, making it uncertain) (Rustaveli 1977); – instead of all these options we have a 'knight' 'in (the) panther'(s) skin'³ predominant in both a physical and symbolical West⁴ and 'Vityaz' 'in a/the tiger's skin' hegemonic in the Soviet and Sovietised East: a *high-brow* Hollywood and a Mosfil'm.

A Tbilisi and a Moscow editions are indicative of the aforementioned implosion. The first produced a hybrid, Stalinist-Balmontan, title, „Витязь в барсовой шкупе“, while presenting Balmont's translation without announcing it, but, paradoxically, complementing it with Balmont's 1917 article 'The great Italians and Rustaveli' (Rustaveli 1989: 274-282). The reader is informed about the name of the translator on p. 7, footnote 1, within the introduction by Tsaishvili (Rustaveli 1989: 5-32); to me, the note is an epitome of a mental style of half-truths, civilised brutality and inability to conceive of oneself from without, hence I quote it unabridged and in its original:

Читателя не должно смущать, что мы переводим заглавие поэмы Руставели не так, как оно представлено в русских поэтических переводах, в том числе и в переиздаваемом ныне переводе К. Бальмонта. Исследования последних лет убедили грузинских руствелологов в том, что „вепхи“ у Руставели не тигр, а именно барс, и в этом отношении Бальмонт оказывается точнее. Однако герои Руставели – витязи, рыцари в лучшем смысле этого слова, и поэтому выражение „носящий барсову шкуру“ не совсем удачно (Rustaveli 1989: 7).

One wonders how a professional poet and a prime master of poetic form (incl. its phonetic subtleties) may have been so insensitive to his own mother tongue and to a poetic work he extolled to a match of Divine comedy! It is obvious that between the 1930s and 1980s a mental and lingual shift had occurred which immured the speakers of the erstwhile *novojaz*-become-prison into it. **The second edition**

¹ I guess „The panther-clad one“ (a phrase used by M. Wardrop inside the text of her rendering) is a possible English solution, equal to „Носящий...“.

² A choice of Marie-Felicite Brosset (1828), Arthur Leist (1899), Marjory Wardrop (1912), Sargis Kakabadze (1924, article), George Gvazava and Annie Marcel-Paon (1938) and others.

³ Venera Urushadze (1968); Mikheil Tsereteli (1961, 1975); Catherine Vivian (1977); Paola Angioletti (1981); Olavi Linnus (who used the English trans. of Wardrop but changed the title, 1990); Marie Pritwitz (2003); Lyn Coffin (2015) and others.

⁴ The English translation by Urushadze was republished in Soviet Tbilisi in 1971, 1979 and 1986.

introduced two hybrid titles, a French and a Russian one, into still Soviet Moscow, „Le chevalier a la peau de panthere“ and „Витязь в барсовой шкуре“ while presenting the French translation of the work by Gaston Bouatchidze (Roustaveli [1989]). The Russian hybrid had been prefigured by Niko Marr’s in his pre-Soviet papers sessions at the Academy of Sciences in St.-Petersburg, e.g. in (Marr 1910).

Ironically, it is the two erudite and multifaceted St.-Petersburg editions of 2007 (publ. Vita Nova) and 2015 (Rustaveli 2015) that contribute most to the revival of the Stalinist tradition: by virtue of their ambiguous and ambivalent elaborateness. A restoration of the hegemony is undermined by, e.g., Giorgi Keburia’s choice of title for his translation (Rustveli 2014), „Облаченный в шкуру тигра“, ‘attired / clothed¹ in a fur of a tiger’.

The ‘knight’ (instead of ‘man’) and the ‘tiger’ (instead of ounce / panther / leopard) are palpable on the international scene since the 1960s, and are even stronger today. This is a surprising success of the Georgian “cultural nationalism” (on it: Jones 2012) cultivated in the post-Stalinist USSR and of that nationalism’s Soviet auto-images. To compare: as shown by Ivo Strahilov (2021), back in 1974 Bulgarian state is able, more or less, to dictate its vision of the ancient Thracian heritage for the exhibition in the Louvre, but in 2015 it is not. (One can find the reason for the difference in the diverse fortunes of the supporting ideologemes: Bulgarian retroactive nationalism is backwater anachronism, but Georgian self-exoticisation – tiger is more exotic than a panther to a ‘Westerner’² – and self-colonisation – as in the ‘knight’-isation of Georgian medieval nobility – are not). Outlining another aspect of the situation: the 21st-c. heir of Georgian cultural nationalism continues enjoying and cultivating its inaugurating images from the Stalinist age.

The learned study in the already mentioned edition (Rustaveli 2015), apparently a summary of its author’s Georgian-language monograph under the same title (2009), speaks out the precious idea that the feline fur is attributable to the majority of work’s characters, but through diverse tropological modes (metaphor, allusion, symbol, allegory etc.) (Sulava 2015: 247).³ To return to the feline fur: the

¹ Keburia’s choice is praiseworthy, for „облаченный“ is associable (based on paronomasia and etymology) with clouds, hence his translation implies a bearer of the fur who may be different from Tariel.

² Actually ‘tiger’ can speak to both – post-Soviet and Western – audiences: playing on nostalgia/habit and exoticisation, respectively.

³ As a whole however the study is an unlucky mix of expertise on the source and of the cultural-historical and poetological fancies and beliefs of the USSR-made Rustvelology (with its *poèma* and Renaissance anchors) including a ‘New Age’ tinge, and of scholarly and

second line on p. 1 of the 1712 edition (a kind of a title for large part of the work, typed in red) ascribes the wearing of the fur to *both* Tariel and Nestan-Darejan („ქ. ამა ამბის დასაწყისი პირველი: ამ დასასმენლად შვენიერის სწავლ<ისათვის> / მშაირეთასა ტარიელს და ნესტან დარეჯანს ვეფხის ტყაოსნობით უკ<მბენ>“) (Rustaveli 1712: 1)¹; hence the fur is identified not as a physical object but as a state of sinfulness and repentance.

5. Philological arguments

Philological argument (in passing) against “knight” is offered by Elguja Khintibidze (2017: 1, footnote 1); (scrupulously) against “tiger” – by Luigi Magarotto (2017); against both these and “vityaz”, with some analysis of aesthetical, political and colonial implications of the choice of words to translate the Georgian title, in: Люцканов 2013: 213-221.

It can be argued that Magarotto, in his excellent argumentation, which notably considers the impact of Sergo Kobuladze’s illustrations (featuring a tiger fur) on readers and translators, unduly downplays the option ‘ounce’, limiting it to the Turkic-Slavic “бapc” and disregarding the zoological reality and the cultural symbolism of divergence of habitats of big dotted “cats”: non-mountainous and mountainous (even alpine). On the other hand, Russian pre-Stalinist preference for ‘ounce’ (to ‘tiger’), incl. in texts by Nikolai Marr, can be partially explained as a fidelity to a literary tradition sanctified by Lermontov’s narrative poem ‘Novice’ („Мцыри“), and present in the first Russian modernist novel, Dmitry Merezhkovsky’s ‘Julian the Apostate’, where adolescent Julian sleeps on a plank bed covered by/covering himself with an ounce’s fur. According to the Russian Brokhaus and Efron encyclopaedic dictionary, in the Caucasus the word „бapc“ used to designate simply leopard. I would hypothesise an aberration of perception in this piece of information. Ca. 1900 ounce did not inhabit anymore the Caucasus, so any mentions of this animal in relation to local context could have been perceived as misattribution or, more proper, homonymy. I cannot discuss neither of the issues (the literary-historical and the lexicological) here.

student’s-essay styles. Its disciplinary focus on Christian theology is understandable, given the Russian-speaking readership targeted by the edition.

¹ Illegible letters are given according to the 1937 phototypic re-edition of the 1712 edition.

To summarise, “tiger” divorces the work from the ancient and medieval Mediterranean symbolic tradition to which many interpreters tie the work.

To focus on the more important issue for the present paper, “vityaz” is undesirable translation for two reasons. First, as it is a concretisation of the ‘*One who bears...*’. Second, as it dilutes the cultural-historical context of the word (or concept) it seeks to translate. „Vityaz“ stays for ყმა (q'ma) and for მოყმა (*moq'me*) („юноша, молодец; подданный“ (Chubinashvili 1984: 865) – ‘a youth, a brave man; a subject’) (see, e.g., Rustaveli 1712: 15): „ნახე ეს უცხო მოყმა ვიხმე...“ (stanza 85)¹.

„Vityaz“ itself could be understood as an attempt to match the Georgian *bumberazi* (ბუმბერაზი), and this is the translation suggested by the Georgian-Russian dictionary of Chubinashvili (1984 [1884]: 123)². But „vityaz“ lacks in Russian the cultural memory which „bumberazi“ has in Georgian. „Vityaz“ refers to Romanticism of Vasilii Zhukovskii and Alexander Pushkin, to romanticist poem and literary fairy tale.³ „Bumberazi“ refers to the ‘Life of Vakhtang Gorgasali’ (an eight to eleventh century work incorporated in the *Georgian Chronicle*, or ‘Life of Kartli’)⁴.

A Georgian ‘Golden Age’ should not and hence cannot be fundamentally different from the Russian ‘Golden Ages’; ahistorical bias of (Stalinist) classicism helps bridge the gap between ‘medievallity’ and ‘medievalism’ (Romanticist reinvention and simplification of Middle Ages).

To return to *q'ma* and *moq'me*. *Q'ma* refers to (sometimes landless) serf and also to a subordinate; it can refer, in certain dialects, to a servant of a holy image or relic (<http://www.ena.ge/explanatory-online>). *Moq'me* can refer to a young male human being and to a sovereign’s subject, and these meanings are no less prominent than the meaning ‘strong and noble warrior’, they are even primary.⁵ They refer to an anthropological reality and to a feudal one. „Vityaz“ keeps only the secondary

¹ „ნახე ეს უცხო ყმა ვიხმე...“ (stanza 84/85 acc. to Rustaveli 1999).

² “*bumberazi*, *buberazi* (*arab. muberaz*), s. *gmiri bogatyr*’, vityaz” (I Romanise Georgian and Cyrillic in the quote).

³ I skip excerpts from the late-19th century explanatory dictionary of Vladimir Dal, and from the late-20th c. academic dictionaries of 18th-century and of 11th–17th c. Russian language, as well as an analysis of uses of the word by Pushkin, as indicated in (Vinogradov 2000: 286). It would suffice here to say that the sole use of *вИТЯЗЬ* which invests some psychological, moral/religious and feudal connotations is an occasional use in Pushkin’s ‘Boris Godunov’; and that the word is most typical for ‘Ruslan and Lyudmila’. The word is a tool to *domesticate* the world of Rustaveli under the species of Pushkin’s *literary fairy tale*.

⁴ I skip a further inspection based on analyses of *Life of Kartli* by Stephen Rapp and conceptualisations of Georgian ‘feudalism’ by Cyril Toumanoff.

⁵ A linguistic reconstruction could support or modify this general outline.

meaning of ‘strong and noble warrior’. Bringing to the fore this meaning, it obscures the primary meanings of *moq’me* and thus obscures the delicate anthropological and political contexts of the word. The translation with „vityaz“ divorces the referents of *q’ma* and *moq’me* both from Christian subtext and from Georgian feudal context.

A practical solution for a new Russian translation would be to return somehow to Balmont’s rendering of the title; and to substitute „vityaz“ in the text with some other word or words. For choosing the right word(s), translators have to inspect the original and modern versions of such works as the ‘Tale of Igor’s campaign’ and the ‘Life of Boris and Gleb’.

6. The title, Sovietisation, “Culture Two”, and socialist realism

To simplify, I accept that aesthetic Sovietisation means two things: first, certain degree of saturation with Bolshevik propaganda and ideology; second, aesthetic democratisation, that is, adaptation to less elaborate tastes, which implies a more mimetic and naturalist writing, and also more narration.

As known, Vladimir Paperny worked out the concept of “Culture Two” to portray the conservative, hierarchical and specifically inward-looking phase of Soviet culture from about 1930 to mid-1950s. “Culture Two” did not see Russia as backyard of Western world which had received the historical chance to teach its teachers and bring them to revolution; but more as a meta-historical core of an alternative cultural-historical world, which had to have its own Antiquity, its own Middle Ages, its own Renaissance, and so on (Papernyj 1996: 45-53). In ‘narrow’ aesthetical terms “Culture Two” promoted mimetism, but **not** naturalism (ivi: 92, 221, 282).¹

Socialist realism, as known, was defined and decreed in the first half of the 1930s. According to one definition of socialist realism, it does not simply describe contemporary reality, but does it in a socialist manner, which meant that it serves to “strengthen the acquisitions of revolution, to affirm the new reality”².

A shift in accent from the attribute (the skin) to the agent (the bearer of the skin) fits all three paradigms, as all of them prefer ‘action’ to ‘contemplation’.

¹ Sergei Ivanov’s concept of ‘reactionary culture’ (2010) can be useful to elaborate the argument.

² Boris Lavrenev in the Polish PEN-club in Warsaw in 1934, as reported by a co-eval Bulgarian leftist magazine (Genev 1934).

A shift to mimetic concretisation of the agent could be unwanted in the very early stage of aesthetic Sovietisation when it was possibly dominated by 'leftist' avant-garde, and avant-garde is counter-mimetic, as we know. But it should have been welcomed at any later moment.

A concretisation towards 'knight', as it happened later in many Western translations, could not be welcomed in a „Culture Two“, for two reasons: it would Westernise, retroactively, the Georgian realm, if applied literally; and it would invest too much symbolical value in Georgian 'feudalism', if a proper term had been found and used, – for Georgia and its medieval past were not at the centre of the spatial-temporal hierarchy of the “Fourth Rome” universe.¹

A vague term like „vityaz“ should have been especially convenient, because it referred to military heroism (hence nurtured the quest for spectacular images and optimism), had vague folklore air (hence could be popular-national, and not focused on a social stratum) and subtextually supported a Russian-centric hierarchy. The folklorism and non-apparent Russian-centrism matched the Culture-Two paradigm, but also the socialist-realist paradigm as the latter's concretisation. Folklorism and Russian-centrism produce a stylisation and *retroactively* create a semi-historical semi-fictional reality that supports the revolution *current in the 1930s*, as a kind of allegorical mirror. But an important aspect of this revolution is related to the personhood of Stalin.

Aesthetics of Renaissance and aesthetics of socialist realism are congruent, much like medieval and modernist are. The former two welcome mimetism and instill meritocratism (as social-political correlate to an aesthetics). The central hero of the 1930s, when the Georgia-wide and internationally dominant receptive paradigm of *Vepkhist'qaosani* emerged, was Stalin: a self-made man from the lower social strata, possibly with an intuitive and earnest preference for simpler to grasp mimetic forms of art. Interpersonal loyalty and not an inherited suprapersonal hierarchy of duties and rights should have been closer to him. Hence Renaissance meritocracy and not medieval feudalism. Renaissance-isation and partial re-folklorisation of Rustaveli's work became in the 1930s a projection of its Stalinisation. Unlike a medieval king, a post-medieval one can be an ultimate autocrat, the embodiment of an “absolutist” monarchy. The obscuration and peripheralisation of feudalism in the work of Rustaveli, through instilling the word „vityaz“ in key positions of the text,

¹ Ivan the Terrible was at the premodern core (see Papernyj 1996: 140, 168, 242) of this universe; and, after the WWII, – Alexander Nevskij (see *ivi*: 57).

creates a fictional world more compatible with the values of socialist realism and of Renaissance (at least as conceived and recreated in Stalinist USSR).

There is one more aspect in the choice of „vityaz“ that is relevant to socialist realism. If we assume that by the mid-30s Soviet scholars have succeeded in presenting a religiously-sensitive feudal romance as a secular national epics¹, this should be considered a kind of ‘achievement of the revolution’. The presentation of the work to general Russian-reading public had to affirm this achievement and not erode it, and „vityaz“ is perfect for the aim.

The choice of an animal (leopard/panther, ounce=*bars*=snow leopard, or tiger) is, I guess, politically significant too. Against the quest for aesthetic ‘democratism’, leopard can be too laden with old literary, potentially ‘decadent’, connotations; and it is not *grand* enough, if compared to a lion or tiger. Against the context of a pursuit of alternative universe timelessly centred on Moscow, *snow* leopard, *bars*, could have been more suitable: it inhabits the mountains of inner Asia under actual or intended Soviet control and is part of the mental universe of the Turkic-speaking people, the second-largest group of speakers in the USSR; but *bars*, I guess, had three weak points: the animal was not big enough, it could be less appealing to inhabitants of the plain (such were most Soviet citizens and esp. the Slavonic-speaking ones), and it could support and popularise an unwanted hierarchical perspective between Rustaveli and Lermontov².

During the period of „affirmative action“ (Martin 2001), or of reverse discrimination of Russians to remedy former oppression of esp. ‘Asian’ minorities, both ounce and tiger should have fared better than panther. By the time of the work’s composition and even in the late 19th c. (see articles on tiger³ and leopard in the Russian Brockhaus and Efron encyclopaedia), at least two of the three feline species have populated the territory of ‘wider Georgia’ (Georgian kingdom at its medieval zenith, and its tributaries). It is possible that an occurrence of an ounce in this area has been growingly considered, in the 19th – 20th c., as a fancy.

¹ Each of the two options implied a range of non-Georgian works with which to compare the one of Rustaveli, that is, implied a comparative-literary and comparative cultural perspective.

² To collective unconscious, precedence in time should have implied priority in value.

³ „Т. водится исключительно в Азии [...] от Турецкой Армении на западе до о-ва Сахалина на востоке. [...] линия, проведенная от Евфрата по южному берегу Каспийского моря [...] [представляет] северную [границу его распространения]. В Закавказье около Ленкорани Т. изредко забегают из Персии“ (*Entsiklopedicheskij slovar’*, vol. XXXIII, 1901, p. 163).

If we abandon the assumption that a Georgian work should reflect the fauna of Georgia only, we can wholeheartedly admit the presence of ounce in Rustaveli's work. We may relate this animal to the realms of Khwarezmshah and of Khatay (China?): let us remember that the Indian prince Tariel killed a Khwarazmian prince and defeated Khatayan armies. In extra-literary reality, all three realms are home to the snow leopard (ounce).

But what if the medieval user of the word *vepx(v)i* did not discriminate between the two aforementioned varieties of big dotted feline? The Brockhaus and Efron article on leopard implies that „барс“ is used in the Caucasus as a synonym of leopard¹, and ascribes “leopard” to the African and “panther” to the Asian variety of the species *panthera pardus* (*Entsiklopedicheskij slovar'*, vol. XVII^A, 1896, p. 566). Is it possible for a culture with close contacts with both Oguz and Kipchak Turkic polities and shortly after with the Mongols to fail to recognise the distinctiveness of the ‘white’ panther? A survey of Turkic and Mongol heraldic, of pictures of dotted felines in Persian manuscripts (esp. of *Shāh-nāma*), as well as on the areal of *panthera uncia* in Antiquity and the Middle Ages, may help come to an answer.

If we decide to consider „барс“ and „пантера/леопард“ as having one and the same denoted – namely, *panthera pardus*, and not *panthera uncia* – difference in idea or connotation remains. „Барс“, being vaguely felt or recognised as a word of Turkic origin, should have brought the tacit presence of Inner Asia and its mountains. It would have suited to the climate of the “affirmative action” of the 1920s – early 1930s, but the new turn related to creating a parallel modernity and to restoring Russian hierarchical prominence should have necessitated an avatar that is both greater and more culturally neutral (polyvalent?) than the „барс“.

Throughout the 19th – 21st centuries, Russian translations have adamantly resisted ‘Mediterraneanisation’, or ‘south-westward’ exoticisation: they have never chosen „пантера / леопард“ (words of Greek origin which firmly passed into Latin and European languages), even if, as claimed by the encyclopaedia, „барс“ designated the same zoological species. In a way, ‘tiger’ made the Asiatic (eastern) bent substantial: a connotation became a denoted.

While „барс“, exactly with its synonymy to „пантера / леопард“, maintains a balance of relevance (and belonging?) to two distinct worlds.

¹ „У нас на Кавказе пантера ("барс") достигает южн. Дагестана, а по зап. склону доходит еще далее на С.“ (*Entsiklopedicheskij slovar'*, vol. XVII^A, 1896, p. 566-567). Compare: „Леопард снежный – см. Ирбис“ (ivi: 567); „Ирбис – см. барс. На Кавказе барсом называют пантеру или леопарда“ (*Entsiklopedicheskij slovar'*, vol. XIII, 1894, p. 308); „Барс водится в средней Азии и в Южной Сибири, у истоков Енисея и по Амуру“ (vol. III, 1891, p. 106).

See Tables 2.1 and 2.2.

6. Sovietness, Culture Two, socialist realism: criteria for assessment of and relative assessment of translational decisions reg. the agent: Table 2.1 (to part 6.1.)

cultural formation	criterion	assessment of носящий 'wearing / clad'	assessment of рыцарь 'knight'	assessment of визаж
Sovietness	demonstratism (mimetism)	bad (Symbolist incompleteness)	not bad (distinct, but exotic figure)	good (distinct and non-alien, socially and geographically, f-re)
	realism (factographic trustworthiness)	not bad	'not bad' or 'good' (a social stratum, in partic. feudal, is featured)	not good (reality under (slight) make-up)
	'progressivity' (egalitarianism, people's genius)	neutral	not good (people's genius eulogises representative(s) of the exploitative class)	good (social identity of the eulogised is blurred)
Culture Two	a separate world, not part of the West	neutral	bad	good
	hierarchism	neutral	good	'not good' (hierarchism is pale)
	defence of „achievements of revolution“	bad (return to Symbolist irresoluteness)	good, if 1917 revol-n is meant, bad, if Stalinist cultural revol-n	good
socialist realism	a simulated realism	neutral	neutral	good
	simulated historicism	neutral	bad	good

Table 2.2 (to part 6.2): Relative assessment of ways to translate the agent's attribute

		барс, ounce	пантера, panther	тигр, tiger
Sovietness	demo(cra)tism (mimetism, popularity)	not bad (among non-Russians – a significant animal; reference to Lermontov's 'Novice')	not bad (memorable, but exotic)	good (memorable and growingly non-exotic)
	realism (factographic trustworthiness)	neutral	'not bad' or 'good' (an animal associable with a social stratum, of feudal exploiters)	neutral
	'progressivity' (egalitarianism, people's genius)	not bad	not good (an animal laden with the cultural tradition of the exploitative class)	neutral
Culture Two	separate world, not part of the West	neutral	bad	good
	hierarchism	neutral	not good (less symbolically valuable than a lion/tiger's)	good
socialist realism	defence of „achievements of revolution“	not bad (serves „affirmative action“ and „alternative (path to) modernity“)	not good (links with 'decadent' erudition, annuls the two shifts away from it)	good, if Stalinist is meant (avatar of alternative world)
	a simulated realism	not good (verisimilitude undermined by long-term intertextuality: memory for 'Novice'?)	not good (as previous; memory for Dionysus, Jason, Paris, Rostom interferences) (cf. Polishchuk; Magarotto)	good (verisimilitude serves hierarchism)
	simulated historicism	neutral	neutral	neutral

7. Instead of conclusion: translations of the title as a field of production (in the sense of Bourdieu)

A 'natural' development, testified by translations from the 1820s-1930s, features a focus on the attribute or on both the agent and his attribute, and deliberates between variants of the feline (but ounce and tiger definitely prevail over panther). The 1937 Stalinist act of 'constitutive violence' (embodied in the re-titling of Balmont's translation and in the next year of Wardrop's too) split (or re-divided) the field of translations into several zones more or less dependent on the 1937-born 'centre of gravity', the 'pre-constitutive' inertia/tradition, and on a 'counter-centre' of gravity. That act successfully brought in focus the agent, achieving an overemphasis on him, and with less success promoted the tiger and the priority of translation into Russian over translations into any other languages. The ensuing response promoted the feline alternative of panther, but fell in what I see as an interpretative trap of overemphasis on the agent. After an expansion in the 1950s-early 1980s, the Stalinist centre imploded ca. 1990 but, apparently re-experienced as a tradition, is being re-vivified since the 2000s. Georgian cultural establishment failed to emancipate itself from the legacy of the Stalinist act of constitutive violence – either by restoration of pre-Stalinist tradition(s) or by accumulating achievements to form a new one. It fell prey to the kind of self-complacency nurtured in post-Stalinist Soviet Georgia and termed by Stephen Jones "Georgian cultural nationalism". Paradoxically, it tries to earn (or indeed earns) symbolical capital in the West with a basically Stalinist product while, again paradoxically, combines self-celebratory and self-colonising intentions. The issue with the title of Rustaveli's masterpiece is intimately tied to the issues with its genre and its macrohistorical stratification (Middle Ages or Renaissance), but they are only marginally considered in the present article. So, one can distinguish

a) pluralist 'proto-field' of parallel and partly converging accumulation of competence by Russian-, Polish-, French-, German-, English- and Hungarian-speaking translators

b) dualist field born by Stalinist imposition of a single translation formula and hierarchy of languages

– zone of cultural violence: multiplication of „vitjaz“ (in Hungarian and German – „knight/rider“) „in a tiger's skin“ in the „Soviet bloc“ (the Hungarian re-edition of 1954 and the Eastern-German trans. of 1955 are the „initiational“ event);

– zone of (negotiated? domesticated? home-made?) opposition *or concessive mirroring*: concretisation of the „(hu)man“ into a „knight“ in Anglophone translations (antithesis to „vitjaz“?) and fidelity to „panther“;

- zone of concessions to Soviet „cultural nationalism“: French trans. of 1964 and the Italian of 1981;
 - zone of resistance to the 1937 innovation (the concreticisation of the agent): French trans. of 1938 (republished 1983), German trans. of 1976 and the Italian of 1998;
 - zone of archaism/endemism: Italian trans. of 1945;
 - zone of (new) innovation: English trans. of 1977 (Stevenson);
 - zone of self-reiterating and appropriative Soviet-Stalinist classicism: republishing of the 1912 English trans. under the Stalinist= Soviet title in 1977;
 - zone of (temporary) erosion of the Soviet centre: Tbilisi 1989 republication of Balmont’s trans. under a hybrid title, the title page of the French-language 1989 Moscow edn;
 - zone of convergence between the (post)Soviet and (post)anti-Soviet inertias: 2015 English edn, new Russian-language edns under the Stalinist= Soviet title, German edn/trans. of 2005;
 - zone of uncertainty: Turkish 1991 trans./edn, following the Soviet canon.
- The pair of ostensibly contrasting images sanctified by the Cold War remain the most powerful (Table 3).

Table 3: Most influential images (most self-assertive and most widespread lingually): mirroring across the „Iron Curtain“:

Витязь в тигровой шкуре		The knight in the panther skin	
reduction to the folkloric / romantic(ist)	stakes on a potential emblem of a mighty Asian „Second“ World (the antagonist ‘First’ one has adopted the lion: Britain, Venice...)	reduction to a feudal stratum	stakes on an emblem of symbolic elaborateness and cultural continuity around the Mediterranean

If we try to draw from the “field of translations” a palpable Bourdieuan sense, we would identify the Soviet=Stalinist centre of gravity with *political heteronomy* and the dominant English-language one with *economic heteronomy*. The first strove for hegemony through political intervention, the second has been and still is predisposed to achieving hegemony through the very status of English language (and

US publishing houses). The more or less autonomous strip of the field would avoid the phraseological (lingual, translational) solutions of both – even without recourse to semantic arguments. In a way, these two polar (actually quasi-polar) solutions are enough compromised, esp. the first one, in order to be left unused for a period of decades.

Semantically, these two dominant solutions fare between ‘almost fair’ and disastrous. To limit myself to English and Russian translational solutions, I would say that the ones of Wardrop and Balmont were very good, the one of Bardtinskij – provocative for good, and Stevenson’s – excellent.

The aforementioned 2007 and 2015 St.-Petersburg editions, containing Solomon Iordanishvili’s literal translation yet featuring the Georgian composite word transcribed in Cyrillic on the book cover (Вепхисткаосани), can be read as a cautious attempt to cast doubt on the Stalinist canon from within, yet with quite ambiguous an outcome. I am convinced that the newest US English edition of the work, (Rustaveli 2015b), is even less a step forward; alas, it is quite not, despite the exquisite rendering of the verse form of the romance.

Part of the translations should be considered more or less ‘self-translations’, on behalf of (Soviet) Georgian culture, being performed by Georgians (and non-Georgians) commissioned by (Soviet) Georgian institutions. An elaboration of this ‘cultural semiotics’-based demarcation would add depth to the future ‘Bourdieuian’ map; I cannot make use of it now.

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¹ Annotations are prepared by: G. Arabuli, Nana Gurashvili, Irak'li K'obidze, Nino Makadze, Tamar T'abidze and Ek'a Kvatadze (the list is on p. 4).

იორდან ლუცკანოვი
(ბულგარეთი)

**„ვეფხისტყაოსანის“ სათაურის თარგმანი უცხო ენებზე
1937 წლამდე და მის შემდეგ: კულტურა 2-ის თუ
სოციალისტური რეალიზმის მარკერი?**

რეზიუმე

საკვანძო სიტყვები: „ვეფხისტყაოსანი“, თარგმანი, სტალინური, პოსტსტალინური და პოსტსაბჭოთა ეპოქა.

სტატია ეფუძნება გონივრულ ვარაუდს, რომ მთარგმნელობითი გადაწყვეტილებები შეიძლება განპირობებული იყოს ენობრივი სემანტიკისგან (ლექსიკური, მორფო-სინტაქსური, თემატურ-რემატული) განსხვავებული მოსაზრებებით; იგივე შეიძლება ითქვას სათაურზე, რომელსაც ტექსტის გასაგებად პირველხარისხოვანი მნიშვნელობა ენიჭება. სტატიის ავტორის აზრით, სათაურის თარგმანის ცვალებადობაში აისახება ესთეტიკური, იდეოლოგიური და უფრო ფართო კულტურული ცვლილებები და კონკრეტული „მთარგმნოლოგიური“ (ლინგვისტური, პოეტოლოგიური) არგუმენტები სათაურის თარგმანის გადაწყვეტილების მიღებისას მეორეხარისხოვან როლს თამაშობს.

სტატიაში შემოთავაზებულია „ვეფხისტყაოსანის“ სათაურის თარგმანები 1820-2010 წლებში, ყველა ძირითად ევროპულ, ასევე რუსულ და რამდენიმე სხვა ენაზე. ავტორი განასხვავებს ათწლეულების განმავლობაში, სხვადასხვა ენაზე თარგმანის მიმართ მიზანმიმართულად მოქმედ იდეოლოგიური მნიშვნელობის ტენდენციებსა და ძირითად პროცესებს; პიერ ბურდიეს კულტურული წარმოების ველის სულისკვეთებით ადგენს არსებული თარგმანების ველის რუქას. წინამდებარე პროექტის შემუშავებით ხდება „პანქრონიზმის“ დიფერენცირება სინქრონული ჭრილის მქონე რუქებად. ეს ფრაგმენტები, ამ სტატიაში განხორციელებულ კვლევაზე დაყრდნობით, ასახავს, უპირველეს ყოვლისა, შემდეგ ისტორიულ ეტაპებს თარგმანის სფეროში: 1800-1935/1937; 1935/1937 – 1989 წწ. 1989 წ. და შემდგომ.

თვალადი განსხვავებებისა და თვალსაჩინო ცვლილებების გამოსავლენად, არსებული თარგმანების სემანტიკას ავტორი ადარებს სამ ძირითად სემანტიკურ დონეზე, რომელთაგანაც თითოეული ასახავს რეალიზების სამ ვარიანტს. პირველ, სინტაქსურ დონეს შეუძლია ფოკუსირება მოახდინოს

აგენტზე, ატრიბუტზე ან მათ შორის ბალანსზე; მეორე, ლექსიკურ-სემანტიკურ დონეს პოტენციურად შეუძლია ბოლომდე არ დაასახელოს, სი-ცხადე არ მიაწიქოს, არ დააზუსტოს მოქმედი პირი – მხოლოდ მიუთითოს მისი არსებობა ტექსტში სახელწოდებით „კაცი“, „ახალგაზრდა“/„რაინ-დი“/„მამაცი გული“/ „ელიტური მეომარი“ და ა.შ.; მესამე, საკუთრივ ლექსიკო-სემანტიკურ დონეზე, შესაძლებელია ვარიანტი ნიშან-თვისების სამ „ჰორიზონტალურ“ (თანაბრად გამოკვეთილ) „მნიშვნელობას“ შორის: ვეფხვი/თოვლის ლეოპარდი/ პანტერის ტყავი/ზეწვი/. ამ ანალიტიკური მატრიცის რეალიზაციას ავტორი ახორციელებს „ვეფხვისტყაოსნის“ თარგმანების ემპირიულ მასალაში, მაქსიმალურად შემჭიდროვებულად, ტაბულა 1-ის სახით.

გარდა ამისა, სტატია გვთავაზობს შემდეგ ისტორიულ რეკონსტრუქციას: „ბუნებრივი“ განვითარება, რომელზეც მოწმობს 1820-1930-იანი წლების თარგმანები, ხასიათდება ატრიბუტზე ან მოქმედ პირსა და მის ატრიბუტზე ყურადღების გამახვილებით და არჩევანის გაკეთებით კატისებრთა ოჯახზე (მაგრამ ჯიქსა და ვეფხვს აშკარა უპირატესობა ენიჭებათ პანტერასთან შედარებით); 1937 წლის კონსტიტუციური ძალადობის სტალინურმა აქტმა (რომელიც გამოიხატა ბალმონტის თარგმანის სათაურის ცვლილებით, მომდევნო წელს კი უორდროპის თარგმანის სათაურის ცვლილებით) თარგმანის ველი გახლიჩა (ან ხელახლა დაყო) 1937 წლის მოვლენებზე დამოკიდებულ რამდენიმე ზონად; ეს ზონები მეტ-ნაკლებად დამოკიდებულია 1937 წელს გაჩენილ „სიმძიმის ცენტრზე“, „წინასწარ კონსტიტუციურ“ ინერციულ/ტრადიციულ და სიმძიმის „კონტრცენტრზე“.

ამ მოქმედებამ წარმატებით მიიპყრო აგენტის ყურადღება მიაღწია მასზე ზედმეტ აქცენტირებას და ნაკლები წარმატებით შეუწყო ხელი თარგმანში „ვეფხვის“ გამოყენებას რუსულ და სხვა ენებზე. მომდევნო პასუხმა (მაგრამ შესაძლოა ეს მხოლოდ საშინაო კომპრომისია, რომელიც მისაღები გახდა დასავლეთში მისი წარმოშობის მოკრძალებული ადგილის წყალობით – არა მოსკოვი, არამედ – თბილისი?) ხელი შეუწყო „პანტერას“ კატისებრთა ალტერნატივას, მაგრამ აგენტზე გადაჭარბებული აქცენტის გამო, გაება ინტერპრეტაციულ მახეში. 1950-იან წლებიდან – 1980-იანი წლების დასაწყისამდე სტალინური ცენტრი დაიშალა, მაგრამ დაახლოებით 1990 წლიდან, როგორც ჩანს, ხელახლა აღორძინდა, ხოლო როგორც ტრადიცია, ხელახლა გაცოცხლდა 2000-იანი წლებიდან. ქართულმა კულტურულმა „ისტბლიშმენტმა“ ვერ შეძლო გათავისუფლება კონსტიტუციური ძალადობის სტალინური აქტის მემკვიდრეობიდან – ვერც სტალინამდელი ტრადიცი(ებ)ის აღდგენით, ვერც ახლის ჩამოყალიბებისთვის მიღწევების დაგროვებით. ის გახდა ისეთი თვითკმაყოფილების მსხვერპლი, რომელიც გაიზარდა პოსტ-

სტალინურ საბჭოთა საქართველოში და რომელსაც სტივენ ჯონსმა უწოდა „ქართული კულტურული ნაციონალიზმი“. პარადოქსია, რომ ის ცდილობს მოიპოვოს (ან მართლაც გამოიმუშაოს) სიმბოლური კაპიტალი დასავლეთში ძირითადად სტალინისტური პროდუქტით, ხოლო, ისევ პარადოქსულად, აერთიანებს თვით-აღსანიშნავ და თვითკოლონიზაციურ ზრახვებს.

1937 წლის კონსტიტუციური ძალადობის შესაძლებლობათა სემანტიკურ პირობებზე ფოკუსირებით, სტატიის ავტორი ცდილობს გამოყოს კულტურული ძალადობის სამი მჭიდროდ დაკავშირებული და თანმიმდევრული, მაგრამ განსხვავებული პარადიგმის ესთეტიკური იმპერატივები: გასაბჭოება, კულტურის მეორე თვითდაწესება და თვითდამკვიდრება; მოდელირება სოციალისტური რეალიზმის მიხედვით. შემდეგ ავტორი ცდილობს შეაფასოს „ვეფხისტყაოსანის“ სათაურის სემანტიკური დონეების ვარიანტული განხორციელებები აღნიშნული პარადიგმების სავარაუდო ესთეტიკური იმპერატივების წინააღმდეგ. სხვა სიტყვებით რომ ვთქვათ: რამდენად ცუდად / კარგად ექცევა „ვიღაც“ / „კაცი“ / „რაინდი“ / „ვეფხვი“ / „პანტერა“ და ა.შ. საბჭოთა / კულტურა ორი-ს / სოციალისტური რეალიზმის პარადიგმის ფარგლებში? ავტორი ამ მცდელობას აჯამებს ცხრილებში 2.1. და 2.2.

1937 წლის კონსტიტუციური ძალადობის აქტის შესაძლებლობათა სემანტიკურ პირობებზე კონცენტრირებით, ავტორი ცდილობს გამოყოს კულტურული ძალადობის სამი მჭიდროდ დაკავშირებული და თანმიმდევრული, მაგრამ განსხვავებული პარადიგმა: სოვეტიზაცია; თვითდაწესებული კულტურა 2; თვითმოდელირება სოციალისტური რეალიზმის მიხედვით. შემდეგ, კი ამ აპარადიგმების ესთეტიკურ იმპერატივთა ფონზე, ცდილობს შეაფასოს „ვეფხისტყაოსნის“ სათაურის სემანტიკური დონეების ვარიანტები. სხვა სიტყვებით: რამდენად ცუდად/კარგად ცხოვრობს „ვიღაც“/ „კაცი“/„რაინდი“/ „ვეფხვი“/„პანტერა“ და ა.შ. საბჭოთა კავშირის/კულტურა ორი-ს/სოცრეალიზმის ჩარჩოში? ეს მცდელობა შეჯამებულია ტაბულა 2.1-ისა და 2.2-ის მეშვეობით.

სტატიაში ავტორი არ მალავს საკუთარ დამოკიდებულებას „ვეფხისტყაოსნის“ სათაურის ყველაზე გავლენიანი თარგმანების მიმართ. ისინი მიუღებლად მიაჩნია, პირველ რიგში, მორალურ/ სოციოლოგიური მიზეზით: სათაურმა *Витязь в тигровой шкуре* („ჭაბუკი ვეფხის ტყავში“) აღმოსავლეთ ევროპელი ხალხების კულტურული სუვერენიტეტის ველი უჭულვებელჰყო, ხოლო *The Knight in (the) Panther(s) Skin* („რაინდი პანტერის ტყავში“) ვერ გახდა ის ალტერნატივა, რომლის მხარდაჭერაც ღირს. ავტორს ისინი მიუღებლად მიჩნია პოეტიკური მიზეზებითაც: ორივე თარგმანი, განსაკუთრებით პირველი, აუბრალოებს ნაწარმოების პოეტიკას და ახდენს მისი

ანონიმი ავტორის მსოფლმეხედველობის მოდერნიზებასა და ვესტერნიზაციას. პირველი კიდევ უფრო მავნეა, რადგან ირიბად ემხრობა ორ, გამარტივებულ სამეცნიერო და მასობრივ-საზოგადოებრივ ტოპოსს და არა-ბუნებრივია რუსთაველის შუასაუკუნეების რომანისათვის: რომ ის ეპიკური პოემაა და აღორძინების ეპოქას მიეკუთვნება. სტატიის ავტორი გამოყოფს მე-19 საუკუნის მთარგმნელთა რამდენიმე მარგინალურ გადაწყვეტილებას, ასევე რობერტ სტივენსონის არჩევანს 1977 წელს, როგორც როგორც ყველაზე პერსპექტიულ გზას თავის დასაღწევად მთარგმნელობითი ჩიხიდან, რომელიც შეიქმნა ცივი ომის დროს და რომელიც, სტატიის ავტორის აზრით, რომანის ევროპეიზაციას უშლის ხელს, ხდის მას ძნელად გასაგებს ევროპელი მკითხველისათვის (სხვა სიტყვებით, ეს მკითხველები, ალბათ, ვერ გაიგებენ, რომ „ვეფხისტყაოსანი“, იმისათვის, რომ აღიარებული იქნას, აუცილებელი არ არის ჩაეწეროს ევროპაცენტრისტულ მაკროისტორიულ ტელეოლოგიაში, არც ლიბერალიზმ-პროგრესულში, არც სტალინისტურში, არც საქვეყნოდ ცნობილ მულტიკულტურულობაში).

დაბოლოს, სტატიის ავტორი ნაწილობრივ აღიარებს პოსტ-სტალინური „ქართული კულტურული ნაციონალიზმის“ გავლენას და მის გაგრძელებას 1990-იანი წლების შემდეგ „ვეფხისტყაოსანის“ საერთაშორისოდ გავრცელებაზე და კითხულობს, რატომ იყო ის საკმარისად წარმატებული, რათა აგრძელებდეს პოპულარიზაციას ორი დომინანტური თარგმანისა, შფოთვის ან დისკომფორტის თვალსაჩინო გამოხატვის გარეშე.