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CONTENTS

I. ARTICLES AND STUDIES

- DAVID KOLBAIA, Bibliografia prac księdza profesora Henryka Paprockiego 9
- GIA KVASHILAVA, On Decipherment of the Inscriptions of Linear A in the Common Kartvelian Language 83
- MARIAM CHKHARTISHVILI, Narrative Sources on the Creation of Georgian Alphabet..... 101
- REVAZ KVIRKVAIA, On the date of founding Zarzma Monastery (considering new archaeological discoveries)..... 115
- DAVID MERKVLADZE, On the Localization of the Battlefield between Sahak, Emir of Tbilisi and Muhammad Ibn Khalid..... 133
- OMIKO EJIBIA, Inscriptions on the map of Ibn Hawqal (Manuscript Arabe 2214)..... 143
- GIORGI SOSIASHVILI, From the history of the Plague spread in Georgia..... 155
- TAMAR ABULADZE, HELEN GIUNASHVILI, Georgia and Iran: Historical-Cultural Context and Tendencies of Georgian Renaissance (According to Georgian Handwritten Heritage)..... 173
- MAKVALA MIKELADZE, KETEVAN GIGASHVILI, ARSEN BERTLANI, The World Reflected in the Vocabulary (On the Example of the Unwritten Language)..... 193

CONTENTS

II. MATERIALS, DOCUMENTS, MEMOIRES

PAWEL OLSZEWSKI, Wielka Brytania wobec przyszłości Gruzji
oraz Kaukazu Południowego na przełomie 1918 r. i 1919 r. 205

NATO SONGULASHVILI, Orthodox Church and Education
in the Democratic Republic of Georgia (1918-1921) 261

MIKHEIL BAKHTADZE, IRAKLI IREMADZE, Document
on the Communist Repression in Georgia
from the Archiwum Akt Nowych in Warsaw 275

III. REVIEWS AND COMMENTAIRES

REVAZ PAPUASHVILI, EMANUELE E. INTAGLIATA, ANDREY VINOGRADOV,
DAVIT NASKIDASHVILI, GOGITA CHITAIA,
Report of the 2020 excavations at Machkhomeri
(Khobi Municipality) 295

IV. CHRONICLE

IN MEMORIAM, MEDEA KANTARIA (1931-2020), GOCHA JAPARIDZE
(1942-2020) 305

GEORGIA AND IRAN:
HISTORICAL-CULTURAL CONTEXT
AND TENDENCIES OF GEORGIAN RENAISSANCE
(ACCORDING TO GEORGIAN
HANDWRITTEN HERITAGE)

by *Tamar Abuladze, Korneli Kekelidze*
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Georgian-Iranian cultural contacts have a long history and deep roots. The Georgian culture has adopted and originally transformed artistic and spiritual achievements of the neighbouring Iran. These influences significantly touched all the spheres of the Georgian cultural life – literature, language, art and science.¹ From the very beginning, Georgians were inspired with high artistic and melodious Persian literature. In spite of political and national-religious hostility, Georgian scholars translated and “interpreted” with great erudition and diligence Persian poetic masterpieces, which at that time became an essential part of the Georgian national literature. This was conditioned by the high artistic level of these translations, and existence of relative motives in Georgian artistic thought (didactics, heroics, romance *et cetera*).²

Scientific works of Georgian scientists, created in the Middle Ages, contain rich material for studying Georgian-Oriental cultural relations, revealing the role of Georgian intellectuals, translators and “(re)

1 “Georgia”, in: *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, New York 2001, vol. X, Fasc. 5, pp. 460-497; online site: <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/georgia>

2 About Georgian-Persian literary contacts see D. Kobidze, *Kartul-sparsuli literaturuli urtiertobani*. (Georgian-Persian Literary Relations), vol. I-III. Tbilisi 1969, 1978, 1983; A. Gvakharia, *Narkvevebi kartul-sparsuli literaturuli urtiertobis istoriidan*. (Essays on the History of Georgian-Persian Literary Contacts), vol. I-II. Tbilisi 1995, 2001; Idem, “Literary Contacts with Persia”, in: *Encyclopaedia Iranica* vol. X, Fasc. 5. New York 2001, pp. 481-486, online version: <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/georgia-iv--1>.

interpreters” in the formation of scientific thought of that period, their elucidative aims, as well as general trends of the whole Near Eastern cultural region’s development.³ Persian cultural influences were appreciably reflected in all fields of the Georgian art and monuments of material culture. Foreign influences were mostly revealed in Georgian national miniatures, handwritten books illustrations and ornamentation, which was connected with the epoch’s demands and artistic taste. Development of Georgian culture, being hindered by the invasions of Mongols’ hordes, Tamerlane’s continuous attacks, and Ottoman Turks expansion, was renewed in the 15th century. In the 16th century a common national cultural-creative process started in Georgia, known as the “Georgian Renaissance” (ქართული აღორძინება).⁴

The revival of Georgian secular literature in the 16th-17th centuries was a particularly important phase, primarily for Georgian writing as was for the development of Georgian-Persian cultural interrelations. During the Renaissance, there was a revived national self-awareness, with deepening interrelations with the Orient, as well as with the West. Cultural-elucidative trends were reinforced, and translational activities were widely promoted.

Generally, in the literature of the Renaissance epoch, preference was given to poetry and verse. Epic, romantic, historical writings, Biblical texts and even lives of the Saints composed centuries before, were versified. In this period of incomparable Georgian literary expression, Shota Rustaveli’s (12th century) “The Knight in the Tiger’s Skin” became the main source for literary fable and imitations. Herewith, a group of

3 T. Abuladze, “The Oriental Scientific and Cultural Area of the Middle Ages and Georgian Science”, in: *The Caucasus and Globalization*, vol. 3, Sweden 2009, pp. 114-121.

4 On historical, social-political, economical and cultural state of Eastern Georgia (Kartli) in the 16-17th cc, see M. Dumbadze (ed.), *Sakartvelos istoriis narkvevebi*. (Essays on History of Georgia), vol. IV, Georgia from the beginning of 16th century till 30th years of 19th century. Tbilisi 1973, pp. 5-382 (particularly, chapters IV-VII pp. 225-385); on the historical-cultural interrelations of Safavid Iran and Georgia, with a list of bibliographic references see G. Beradze, K. Kutsia, “Towards the Interrelations of Iran and Georgia in the 16-18th Centuries”, in: *Near East and Georgia*, vol. III. Tbilisi 2002, pp. 160-176; A. A. Гвахария, Д. В. Кацитадзе, *Грузино-иранские культурно-исторические связи. (Краткий очерк)*. Тбилиси 1978, pp. 4-13; D. Katsitadze, *Iranis istoria. III-XVIII saukuneebi*. (A History of Iran. III-XVIII centuries). Tbilisi 2009, pp. 367-459; N. Kharebava, *Regesten der zweisprachigen georgisch-persischen Urkunden der Safavidenzeit*, Bamberger Orientstudien, Band 10, Bamberg 2017, pp. 15-58. On the Georgian literature of 15th - 18th cc. see A. Baramidze, *Narkvevebi kartuli literaturis istoriidan*. (Essays on Georgian Literature), vol. II. Tbilisi 1940; K. Kekelidze, *Kartuli literaturis istoria*. (A History of Georgian Literature), vol. II. Tbilisi 1958; A. Baramidze, G. Imedashvili, G. Mikadze (eds.), *Kartuli literaturis istoria*. (A History of Georgian Literature), vol. II. Tbilisi 1966.

Georgian poets were fascinated with translating Persian poetic works, being also involved in Rustaveli's poetic thought and skills.⁵

Precisely in this period, Ferdowsi's (940-1020) monumental poem "Shahnameh" drew the attention of Georgian poets and interpreters, this "Great Book" as it was called in Iran, their national epic, inspired with admiration to the past of Iran, ideals of heroism and justice. Georgian versions of the poem, both prosaic and poetic, belong to the Renaissance epoch. Obviously, Georgian creators' passion for the "Shahnameh" was not uncommon – Ferdowsi in his poem was critical of the Muslim invaders, considering them as destroyers of ancient Iranian culture and great Iranian history. The poem, which was imbued with love for freedom, its generous and incomparable heroes and their adventures, romantic and idealised love stories were mostly close to the Georgian ideology and to the Georgian secular literature's genre and themes.

Georgian versions of "The Book of Kings" directly take their origin from Persian sources and are compiled from separate editions.⁶ In Georgian collections there are preserved a number of these versions. Among them is distinguished "Rostomiani", written in Rustaveli's poetic form–*shairi*. One of its manuscripts, S-1580⁷ is dated to the 17th century and adorned with numerous (61) miniatures. The manuscript has an interesting history: it was brought to Russia, as mentioned on the

5 M. Mamatsashvili, *Teimuraz pirvelis "Leilmajnunianis" sparsuli cqaroebi*. (The Persian Sources of Teimuraz I's "Leilmajnuniani"). Tbilisi 1967, pp. 123-126. An extensive scientific literature was devoted to Persian poetic influences on Rustaveli's poem: N. Marr, I. Abuladze, K. Kekelidze, A. Baramidze, D. Kobidze, E. Metreveli and other Georgian scholars have contributed significantly in this field. The whole bibliography see G. Imedashvili, *Rustvelologiuri literatura*. (Rustvelological Literature. 1712-1956). Tbilisi 1957. See also J. Giunashvili, H. Giunashvili (eds.), *Manzume-ye palanginepush-e Shotā Rustāveli dar Irān*. (Shota Rustaveli's Poem *The Knight in the Tiger's Skin* in Iran). Tbilisi 2016 (2017).

6 A. Baramidze, "Le *Schah-Naméh* de Ferdousi dans la littérature géorgienne", in: *Proceedings of the State Museum of Georgia*, vol. IX. Tbilisi 1936, pp. 141-144; K. Kekelidze, *Kartuli literaturis istoria*. (A History of Georgian Literature), vol. 2. Tbilisi 1958, pp. 323-55; D. Kobidze, *Shah-names kartuli versiebis sparsuli cqaroebi*. (The Persian Sources of the Georgian Versions of "Shah-Nameh"). Tbilisi 1959; J. Giunashvili, "Rewāyat-e Gorji-ye Sāh-nāma". (The Georgian Versions of "Shahnameh"), in: *Āyande* 6, number 9-12, Tehran 1980-81 (1359), pp. 863-65; J. Giunashvili, "Sāh-nāma Translations ii. Into Georgian", in: *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, online edition, 2005: <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/sah-nama-translations-ii-into-georgian>; J. Giunashvili, "Shāhnāme-ye Ferdousi dar Gorjestān". (Ferdowsi's Shahnameh in Georgia), in: *Kārname-ye panjāh sāle*. (Selected Essays on Iranian Studies and Georgian-Iranian Historical-Cultural Relations). Tbilisi 2012, pp. 37-44; A. Gvakharia, "Literary Contacts with Persia", in: *Encyclopaedia Iranica* vol. X, Fasc. 5. New York 2001, pp.481-486, online version: <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/georgia-iv--1>.

7 E. Metreveli (ed.), *Kartul khelnacerta aghceriloba*. (A Register of Georgian manuscripts), the "S" Collection, vol. III. Tbilisi 1963, pp. 37-38.

manuscript's endorsement: “ “Rostomiani” belonged to King Vakhtang... when Queen Darejan was taken to St Petersburg, my father followed her and Dimitri Bagrationi presented it to him”.⁸



Fig.1. S-1580. K. Kekelidze Georgian National Centre of Manuscripts

8 Vakhtang VI also known as Vakhtang the Scholar and Vakhtang the Lawgiver, (1675–1737), the Georgian monarch of the royal Bagrationi dynasty. He ruled the East Georgian Kingdom of Kartli in the time of kingdom's vassalage at the hands of Persia from 1716 to 1724. One of the most important and extraordinary statesman of the early 18th Georgia, he is known as a notable legislator, scholar, critic, translator and poet, see T. Abuladze, *Vakhtang VI-is mtargmelobiti moghvaceoba*. (The Translation Activity of Vakhtang VI). Tbilisi 1990.

Darejan (1738–1807) was the third wife of the Georgian monarch Heraclius II and, thus, the queen consort of Kakheti and then also of Kartli in Eastern Georgia. She was a daughter of Katsia-Giorgi Dadiani, a member of the princely house of Mingrelia (West Georgia).

Dimitri Bagrationi – (1746 – 1826), the Georgian poet, translator, descendant of the Bagrations' branch, who lived and created in Moscow and Saint Petersburg.

The Georgian prose version of the “Shahnameh” is the “Utrutian-Saamiani” (65 miniatures). It comprises stories of kings and nobles (Pahlavāns), following the main theme of the “Shahnameh”, relating tales of Rustam.⁹



Fig. 2. S-1594. K. Kekelidze Georgian National Centre of Manuscripts

9 I. Abuladze (ed.), “*Shahnames*” *anu mefeta cignis kartuli versiebi*. (The Georgian Versions of “Shahnameh”, the Book of Kings”), vol. I. Tbilisi 1916; I. Abuladze, A. Baramidze, K. Kekelidze, P. Ingoroqva, A. Shanidze (eds.), “*Shahname*”, *kartuli versiebi*. (“Shahnameh”, the Georgian Versions), vol. II. Tbilisi 1934; D. Kobidze (ed.), “*Shahnames*” *kartiuli versiebi*. (The Georgian Versions of the “Shahnameh”), vol. III. Tbilisi 1974.

To the Renaissance epoch belong Georgian translations and literary “(re)interpretations” of well-known Oriental romantic fables and Persian writings made on this subject – “Leilmajnuniani” (Persian poem “Leili and Majnun”), “Vardbulbuliani” (Persian tale “The Rose and the Nightingale”), “Shamiparvaniani” (Persian poem “The Candle and the Moth”), “Ioseb-Zilikhaniani” (Persian poem “Joseph and Zoleikha”). Versions of the latter was made by Teimuraz I (the King of Kakheti from 1606-1648 and of Kartli-Kakheti from 1625-1632) and by an anonymous author.

The Biblical plot of Joseph and Zoleikha, the wife of Potiphar, which became a source of inspiration for Western as well as for Oriental Islamic literary interpretations, was transmitted with a particular profoundness by ‘Abd al-Rahmān Jāmī (1414 – 1492), the last representative of Persian classical literature.

The text of Georgian manuscript S-1283¹⁰ – “Ioseb-Zilikhaniani”, dated to the 17th century, is directly related to Jāmī’s composition.¹¹



Fig. 3. S-1283. K. Kekelidze Georgian National Centre of Manuscripts

10 E. Metreveli, *Kartul khelnacerta aghceriloba*. (A Register of Georgian Manuscripts), the “S” Collection, vol. II. Tbilisi 1961, pp. 143-144.

11 A. Gvakharia, “*Ioseb Zilikhaniani*” *sparsuli cqaroebi*. (The Persian Sources of the Georgian Versions of “Ioseb-Zilikhaniani”), Tbilisi 1958; see also A. Gvakharia, *Narkvevebi kartul-sparsuli literaturuli urtiertobis istoriidan*. (Essays on the History of Georgian-Persian Literary Contacts), vol. I. Tbilisi 1995, pp. 84-110; A. A. Гвахария, Д. В. Кацитадзе, *Грузино-иранские культурно-исторические связи*. (Краткий очерк). Тбилиси 1978, p. 17.

One of its layers presents a brilliantly illustrated record of the poem, from which only miniatures remain. They were made in the 16th to 17th centuries. On the reverse of these miniatures separate fragments of corresponding textual passages are preserved. They are brought from other Georgian manuscripts and attached to S-1283 manuscript's size sheets.

In the Renaissance epoch, Georgian secular manuscript painting was raised as a uniform branch, and conditioned by the political and cultural orientation of the country. It presents two main types: 1) fine illustrations made completely in the Oriental style, in a thorough miniature technique, being distinguished by refinement of drawing, colour, and marked with formal achievement; 2) Painting created on folk, or national grounds being free from such influences.

There are numerous drawings known as intermediate group of works of art, reflecting tendencies characterized for both types of painting, and the striving of Georgian artists for independence.

Eminent patterns of Georgian secular miniatures are presented in illustrations of manuscripts of "Vefkhistqaosani" – "The Knight in the Tiger's Skin". The poem's pictures belong to the 17th century, the period of the re-flourishing of the Georgian miniature, and reproducing general trends of the development of Georgian secular miniature painting. Earliest example of the first, so-named "Iranized miniatures" is presented by painting of "The Knight in the Tiger's Skin" manuscript from "Tsereteli collection" – S-5006¹² (87 miniatures). It is characterized by the conditional-decorative style of drawing, analogical to Iranian miniature painting; in this cycle of illustration a composition is mainly uniform. Within the painting are equally distributed landscapes and architectural elements. Landscape images are entirely flat-form, like carpet ornamentation. Separate sharp, local color intensifies general decoration.

12 About this manuscript see S. Tsaishvili, "Vefkhistqaosnis" *Vakhtangiseuli redakcia*. (Vakhtang VI's Edition of "Vefkhistqaosani") (The Knight in the Tiger's Skin). Tbilisi 1957, pp.56-57; Idem, "Vefkhistqaosnis" *tekstis istoria*. (A History of the Text of "Vefkhistqaosani") (The Knight in the Tiger's Skin"). (Manuscripts), vol. II. Tbilisi 1970; E. Metreveli (ed.), *Kartul khelnacerta aghceriloba*. (A Register of Georgian Manuscripts), the "S" Collection, vol. VII. Tbilisi 1973, p. 8. See also "Vefkhistqaosnis" *dasurateba: miniatyurebi shesrulebuli XVI-XVIII saukuneebshi* (Illustrations of "Vefkhistqaosani") ("The Knight in the Tiger's Skin"): *Miniatures made in the 16-18th Centuries*). Composition and artistic design by G. Gordeladze. Introduction by Sh. Amiranashvili. Tbilisi 1966, 32 p.

Outlines are light, exact and subtle, being influenced by Iranian standard samples, namely the Isfahan school of painting.¹³ This illustration is considered as a masterpiece by an Iranian artist.

In the manuscript of “The Knight in the Tiger’s Skin” from “Tsereteli collection” are distinguished details, being less typical for Iranian miniatures: closeness of a picture, indivisible color spots, flatness without ornamentation, more accentuated actions, and originality of iconographic details, which makes an *intermediate* painting group of secular manuscripts, distinctly liberated from Iranian influences.



Fig. 4. S-5006. K. Kekelidze Georgian National Centre of Manuscripts

To the same group belong miniatures of the Georgian translations of the fable of Joseph and Zoleikha, made by an anonymous author. These paintings, distinguished by less contrasting of colors, reflect national

13 The main trends of the 16-17th cc. Persian miniature painting were presented in scientific works of M. M. Ashrafi, O. F. Akimushkin, A. A. Ivanov, Sh. M. Shukurov, C. Alvan, E. J. Grube, B. W. Robinson, R. Savory, M. Simpson, E. Sims. A. Soudavar, A. Welch and many others. See A. Welch, “Art in Iran IX. Safavid to Qajar periods” in: *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, New York 1986, vol. II, Fasc. 6, pp. 620-627; online site: <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/art-in-iran-ix-safavid>; M. Farhad, “Isfahan XI. School of Painting and Calligraphy”, in: *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, New York 2007, vol. XIV, Fasc. 1, pp. 40-43; online site: <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/isfahan-xi-school-of-painting-and-calligraphy>.

characters in their composition, different types of images and several other peculiarities.

Manuscript (S-1283) of the poem is richly illustrated and, as mentioned, dates to the 16th and 17th centuries. This record consists of twelve miniatures. Some of miniatures are encountered with a line having plant or geometrical ornaments. Illustrations reflect chief moments of the poem's plot. The painter shows a certain independence in choosing illustrative material.

Compositional structure of the illustrations finds analogies with miniatures made in Shiraz¹⁴, though differences are also obvious: the sizes of figures, image types and clothes, diversity of mild colours. The painting shows a resemblance, particularly in landscape background depiction, with early examples of the Isfahan artistic school, which were created on the turn of the 16th-17th centuries.¹⁵

To the same category is to be attributed the painting of the 16th-17th centuries Georgian-Persian historical documents. Creation of this unique diplomatic material is connected with the sovereignty of Eastern Georgian kings who converted to Islam¹⁶ Documents of this period, issued in Georgia and being registered then by the Iranian supervisory administration obviously reflect artistic influences of Iranian manuscript books and documents' painting principles: decorative frames, ornaments between

14 Cf. E. J. Grube, "The Miniatures of Shiraz", in: *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin*, New York 1963, vol. XXI, number 9, 1963, pp. 285-296; B. W. Robinson, "Painter-Illuminators of Sixteen-Century Shiraz", in: *Iran. Journal of the British Institute of Persian Studies*, London 1979, vol. XVII, pp. 105-108.

15 Illustrating of the above-mentioned manuscripts of Georgian masterpieces, and the main trends of Georgian secular miniatures' development with the context of Iranian influences, are presented in: I. Khuskivadze, "Iranuli saminiaturo khelovnebis sakitkhisatvis" (Issues of Iranian Miniatures' Art), in: *Proceedings of the Georgian National Academy of Sciences, Series of Historical, Archaeological, Ethnographic and Art Studies*, vol. III. Tbilisi 1973, pp. 95-108; Idem, *Kartuli saero miniatura. XVI-XVIII saukuneebi*. (Georgian Secular Miniature. XVI-XVIII Centuries). Tbilisi 1976; Idem, "Islami da kartuli sakhviti khelovneba" (Islam and Georgian Painting Art), in: *Literature and Art*, vol. III. Tbilisi 1999, pp.100-128; See also N. Gelashvili, "Sefianta Iranis kulturis istoriidan (miniaturis khelovneba)" (From the Cultural History of Safavid Iran (Miniatures' Art), in: *Near East and Georgia*, vol. III. Tbilisi 2002, pp. 177-189; N. Gelachvili, "Peintures et relations culturelles entre Perse et Géorgie au XVIIe siècle", in: *La Géorgie entre Perse et Europe*, Paris 2009, éditions l'Harmattan, pp. 67-72; I. Koshoridze, *Islamuri Khelovneba. VII-XIX saukuneebi*". (Islamic Art. VII-XIX Centuries). Tbilisi 2012, pp. 106-121.

16 V. Gabashvili, "Sakhelmcofo cqobilebis sakitkhisatvis gvianfeodalur Sakartveloshi" (State System in Late Feudal Georgia), in: *Mimomkhillveli* vol. II. Tbilisi 1951, pp. 164-165.

lines and on borders, a painted header, seals, which like in Iranian documents have the most important function for artistic decoration.¹⁷

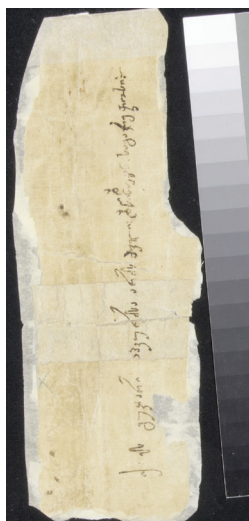
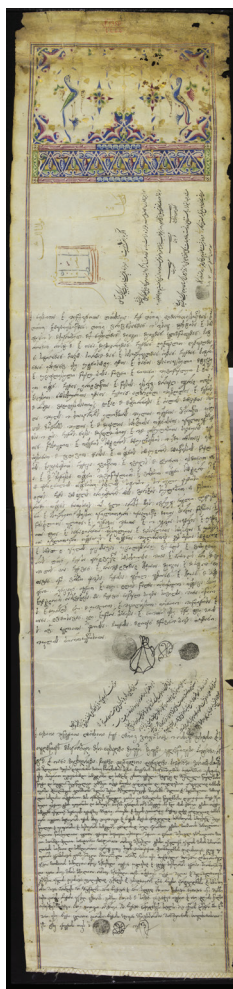


Fig. 5. Hd-1350.
K. Kekelidze Georgian
National Centre of Manuscripts

17 See D. Kldiashvili (ed.), *Mokhatuli istoriuli dokumentebi Sakartvelos sidzveletsatsavebidan*. (Illuminated Historical Documents in the Depositories of Georgia). Tbilisi 2011, pp. 44-49; E. Machavariani, "Kartul-sparsuli da sparsuli mokhatuli istoriuli sabutebi". (Georgian-Persian and Persian Illuminated Documents), in: *Philologia Orientalis*, vol. II. Tbilisi 1972, pp. 183-187. Manuscripts: H-2140, H-2492-autographs. See about them: A. Baramidze (ed.), *Kartul khelnacerta aghceriloba*. (A Register of Georgian Manuscripts), the "H" Collection, vol. V. Tbilisi 1949, pp. 103; 315.

As it was mentioned, in the Renaissance epoch Iranian impact was conditioned by historical-political factors, really appears in all spheres of the Georgian culture and among them, in Georgian historical writing, with the ancient national tradition, development of which began in the 17th century. First steps in this respect were made in compiling historical poems. The first historiographical work from this period is “The Life of Georgia” (“A History of Georgia”) by Parsadan Gorgijanidze.¹⁸

It comprises the history of Georgia from the most ancient times until the year 1696. The author wrote it during his stays in Isfahan, using works of historians of the Queen Tamar (*circa* 1160-1213, possibly 1207/1210/), Georgian chroniclers and of Persian authors. His writing is related to Georgian feudal as well as to Medieval Muslim historiographic traditions.¹⁹

The academic Ivane Javakhishvili (1876-1940) conditionally divided Gorgijanidze’s “History” into four parts: I-from the very beginning till the reign of Queen Tamar (12th-13th centuries); II- from the rule of Queen Tamar (1160-1213) until the 14th century; III- from Tamerlane till the first half of the 17th century, and IV- from the middle of the 17th century until the end of 17th century. This material fills these large gaps in Georgian historiography. As the author of the “History” held a big post at the Persian royal court, and might be aware of Georgia, the fourth part of his work is of great importance for studying the history of Georgia and offers valuable data.²⁰

18 A brief biographic information: Parsadan Gorgijanidze was born in Georgia, in Gori. He was grown up at the court of the King Rostom (the King of Kartli in 1632-1658), the Georgian monarch, who was born in Iran and then sent by Shāh for reign to Kartli. By Rostom’s recommendation Shāh-Abbās II (1642-1666) appointed Parsadan, converted to Islam, as the *dārughā* (the governor) of Isfahan. Later, Parsadan become a victim of intrigues and Shāh exiled him to Shushtar (Khuzistan). He lived there with his family till the end. His literary activities were related to his stays in Iran. See: R. Kiknadze (ed.), *Parsadan Gorgijanidze da “istoriani da azmani sharavandediani”*. (Parsadan Gorgijanidze and the “History and Praising of Crowned Heads”). Tbilisi 1975, pp. 8-17; K. Kutsia, “Ispahanis kartveli tarughebi (1618-1722)”. (Georgian *Dārughas* of Isfahan (1618-1722)), in: *Issues of the History of the Near East*, vol. II. Tbilisi 1972, pp. 93-103; H. Maeda, “Parsadan Gorgijanidze’s Exile in Shushtar: A Biographical Episode of a Georgian Official in the Service of the Safavids”, in: *Journal of Persianate Studies*, vol. 1, issue 2, 2008, pp. 218-229; J. Giunashvili, “Gorgijanidze, Parsadan”, in: *Encyclopaedia Iranica online edition, 2016, available at <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/gorgijanidze-parsadan>*.

19 P. К. Кикнадзе, *Очерки по источниковедению истории Грузии: Парсадан Горгиджанидзе и “Картлис цховреба”*. Тбилиси 1980.

20 I. Javakhishvili, *Dzveli kartuli saistorio mcerloba*. (Old Georgian Historical Writing). Tbilisi 1945, p. 288.

Parsadan Gorgijanidze nearly two centuries before carried out the work, which was after fulfilled by scholars Marie-Félicité Brosset (1802-1880) and Johannes Albrecht Bernhard Dorn (1805-1881) by compiling Persian historical data on Georgia.²¹ In Gorgijanidze's "History" are attested facts, which do not occur in Georgian sources which have reached us. This work contains rich material, which is especially important for researches of existing historical works and elucidating many issues of 12th-13th century Georgian history. Parsadan Gorgijanidze undertook various creative activities: he rewrote and made an editorial work of the "Rostomiani", he translated "Jām'e 'abbāsi", the Muslim law-book, he compiled a Georgian-Persian-Arabic dictionary.²² Thus, Gorgijanidze was the author with mutual Georgian and Persian cultural traditions, and in this respect, his "History" is of great interest.

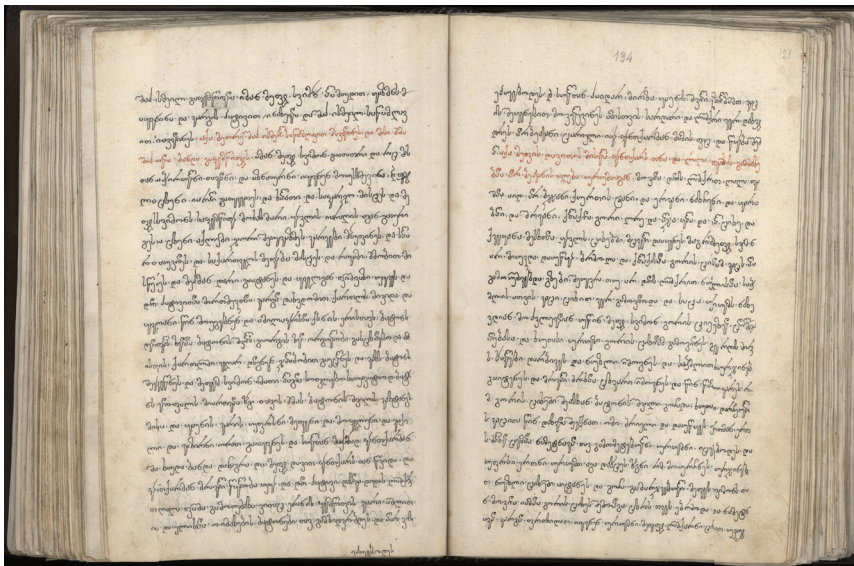


Fig. 6. H-2140. K. Kekelidze Georgian National Centre of Manuscripts

21 R. Kiknadze (ed.), *Parsadan Gorgijanidze da "istoriani da azmani sharavantedtani"* (History and Praising of Crowned Heads). Tbilisi 1975, p. 20.

22 Ibid, p. 8; M. Janashvili (ed.), *Parsadan Gorgijanidze da misni shromani*. (Parsadan Gorgijanidze and his Works). Tbilisi 1896, pp. 29-72; Parsadan Gorgijanidze, "Kartul-arabul-sparsuli leqsikoni". (*Georgian-Arabic-Persian Dictionary*), published by V. Puturidze, edited by G. Tsereteli. Tbilisi 1941.

Traces of Oriental science are clearly distinguished in Georgian scientific monuments, some of which are direct translations and others are “reinterpreted” versions of original sources. As a result of historical misfortunes, in late medieval times Georgian science fell behind the world’s science level, not adapting their ancient traditions. Some fields of science ceased to exist. In the 16th-18th centuries, during the “Georgian Enlightenment” Georgian science was revived on a national basis, and by this scientific enrichment, integrating general theoretical principles amongst the scientific, scholarly and intellectual classes of society, and restoring certain practical skills.

Ivane Javakhishvili named this period as the “Encyclopedic Epoch”, when “thought and mind of every scientist was concentrated on collecting and studying centuries-old works of the Georgian people’s creative gift and transmitting accomplished knowledge to new generations”.²³ The aforementioned tendencies were distinctly reflected in monuments created during the medieval era. These monuments belong to different fields of science (astronomy, astrology, cosmogony, calendar records; medicine, biology, pharmacy; chemistry, physics, mathematics, mineralogy; geology and geography, often interrelated to Persian sources, works of famous Oriental scientists (such as Ulugh Beg, Nasir al-Din al-Tusi, Al-Razi, Al-Jurjani) and to Oriental schemes adopted at that period. Georgian national collections of manuscripts are mostly rich with such material.

In terms of the study of Georgian-Eastern cultural-scientific relations, special works and collections of astronomical-astrological content created during the Renaissance deserve special attention – calendars of general-cosmological character, as well as mixed types of collections, which also contain material from closest disciplines (such as mathematics, geography). Their majority have been translated and adapted from Oriental sources and were originally most ancient. In this respect, the astrologic manuscript A-65, which dates back to the 12th century and has been adapted from Arabic is mostly distinguishable.²⁴

23 I. Javakhishvili, *Kartuli samartlis istoria*. (A History of Georgian Law). Tbilisi 1928, p. 116.

24 *Etla da shvidta mnatobtatvis*. (For the Planets and Seven Lights), edited and published by A. Shanidze. Tbilisi 1975.

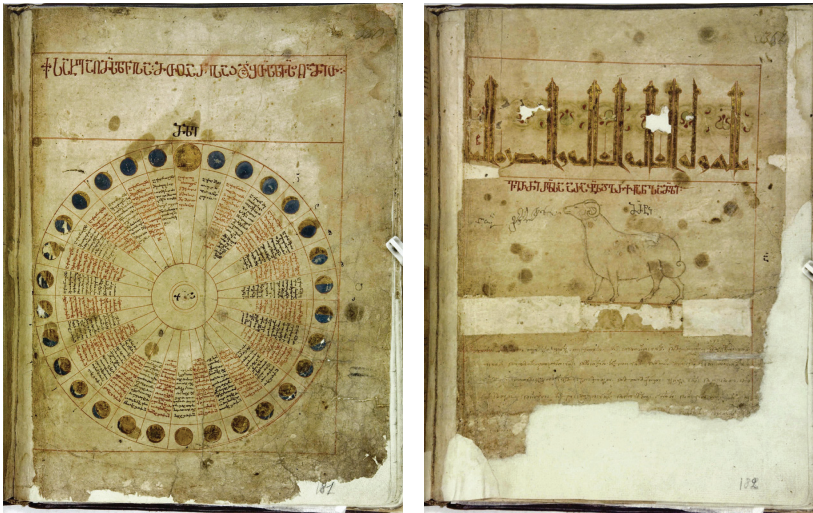


Fig. 7. A-65. K. Kekelidze Georgian National Centre of Manuscripts

It refers to the classification of the planets; the movement of the moon, the doctrine of the seven heavenly bodies. The manuscript is extremely remarkable by the illumination as it reveals great resemblances to the Persian miniature art tradition.²⁵

The manuscript attracted attention of many Georgian intellectuals during the Renaissance epoch.

We would like to bring to light the 17-18th cc Persian and Georgian manuscripts kept at the Georgian National Centre of Manuscripts, comprising Nasir al-Din al-Tusi's (1201-1274) compositions.

During studies of Georgian-Persian scientific manuscripts we ascertained that the Georgian translation of the main part of the Persian manuscript PAC-534, which was preserved in the Centre's collection (Central Asian Fund) made an essential part of the Georgian manuscript H-457, and among them we found "A Treatise on Astrolabe", presenting the Georgian translation of Nasir al-Din al-Tusi's famous work. It deals with explanations, rules of astrolabe using *et cetera*. The translation belonged to the King of Kartli Vakhtang VI (Bagrationi), who has significantly contributed in the revival of Georgian

25 G. Alibegashvili, "Shua saukuneebis ori astronomiuli traktatis ilustratsiebi". (Illustrations of Two Astronomical Treatises of the Middle Ages), in: *Bulletin of the Georgian Academy of Sciences* vol. XII. Tbilisi 1951, pp. 369-376.

science. This work was carried out due to his intensive translational activities of Medieval Persian astronomic, medical, chemical works. The manuscript clearly reflects the whole process of the text’s diligent scientific translation, revisions and comments. Specific Oriental terms occurring in the manuscript are thoroughly replaced by their exact corresponding or explanatory Georgian names made by Vakhtang VI himself.²⁶

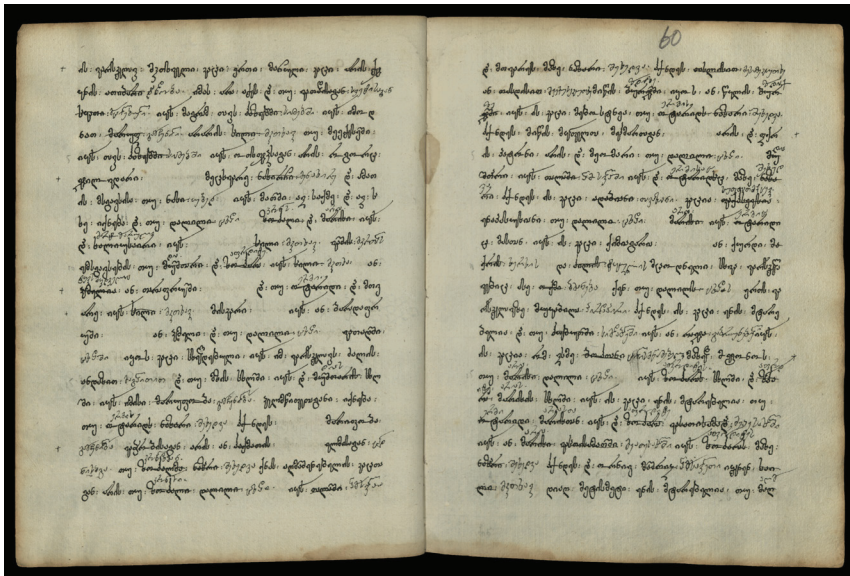


Fig. 8. H-457. K. Kekelidze Georgian National Centre of Manuscripts

The first Persian manuscript from Al-Tusi’s collections was the astrological work “Selected Āyāt”. As a result of research we found out that it presented the primary source of Vakhtang VI’s Georgian translation and reinterpretation “Āyāt or Creation”²⁷ published in 1721. Vakhtang VI’s work was composed according to the scheme established in the Middle Ages.

Along with Al-Tusi’s works, Vakhtang VI has translated Ulugh Beg’s (1394-1449) famous “Zīj-i Sultānī”. It is preserved in the form of a

26 T. Abuladze, *Vakhtang VI-is mtargmnelobiti moghvaceoba*. (The Translation Activity of Vakhtang VI). Tbilisi 1990, pp. 25-26; H. Giunashvili, “Medieval Iran and Georgia: Historical-Cultural Context and Tendencies of Georgian Renaissance”, paper presented at the International Conference “Iran and West: Converging Perspectives” at the University of Warwick, 1-3 July, 2015.

27 T. Abuladze, *Vakhtang VI-is mtargmnelobiti moghvaceoba*. (The Translation Activity of Vakhtang VI), pp. 20-35.

brilliant manuscript (S-161). The translator's contribution is quite large, both in terms of his own additions and interpretations of specific scientific statements, as well as in establishing new terminology.

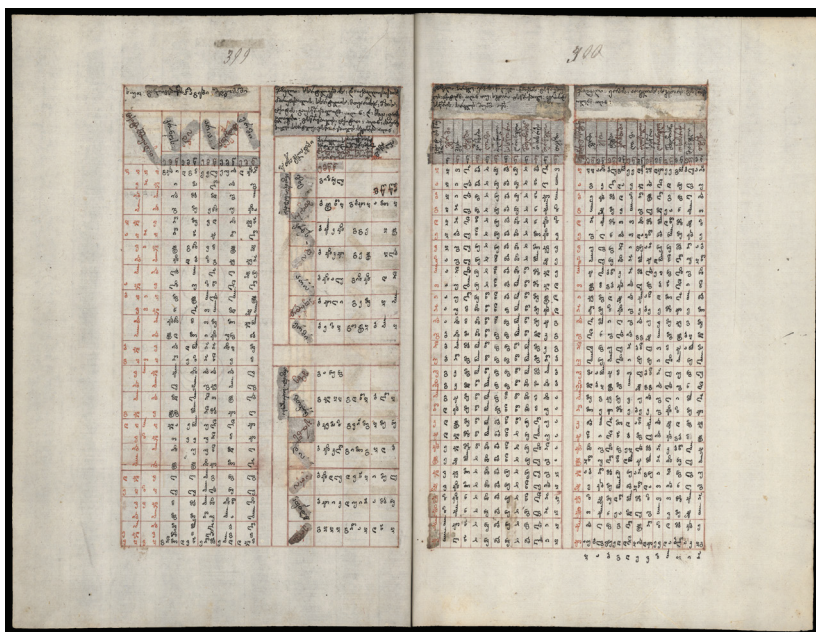


Fig. 9. S-161. K. Kekelidze Georgian National Centre of Manuscripts

Vakhtang VI has also compiled extremely interesting chemical-technologic work “The Book on the Preparation of Solutions and Chemical Transformations”.²⁸ This work reflects influences of Oriental, Russian and Latin sources. Some chapters were included from Al-Razi’s *Sirr al-’Asrār* – “The Secret of Secrets”. Like Al-Razi (854-925), the author divides the world of chemical substances into three groups: mineral, plant, and animal. Among them are common groups of salt, description of tools for metal melding *et cetera*. At the same time, the work contains material from several ancient Russian books describing medicinal herbs and methods of treatment and healing. This work clearly presents scientific achievements of the Medieval Ages and intercultural enrichments.

²⁸ Vakhtang VI, *Cigni zetebis shezavebisa da kimiisa kmnis* (Vakhtang VI, *The Book on the Preparation of Solutions and Chemical Transformations*), The text was prepared for publication, with an introduction, comments and glossary, by T. Enukidze and V. Kokochashvili, edited by J. Giunashvili and Z. Dzotsenidze. Tbilisi 1981.

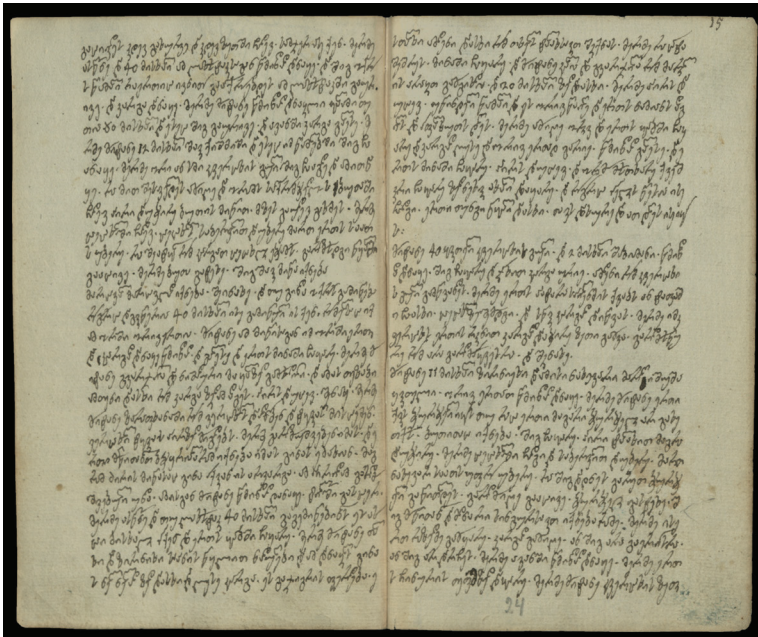


Fig. 10. H-3721. K. Kekelidze Georgian National Centre of Manuscripts

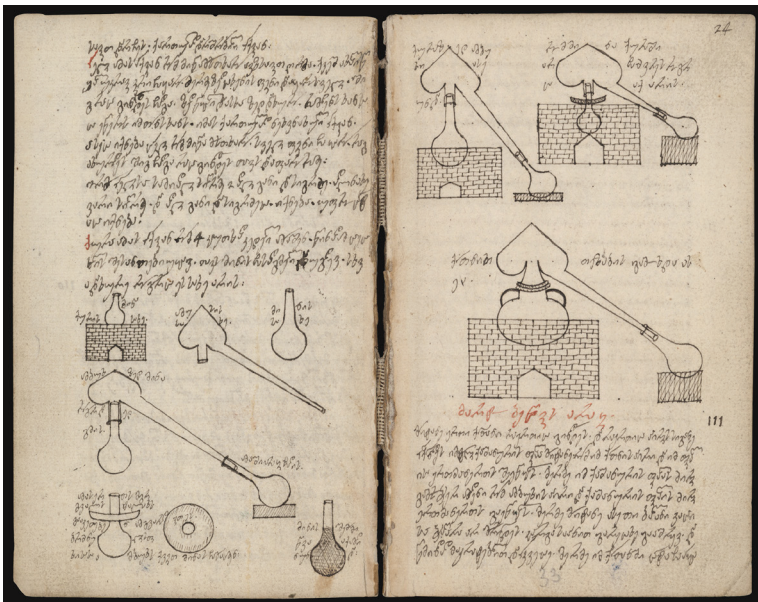


Fig. 11. H-3721. K. Kekelidze Georgian National Centre of Manuscripts

Georgian medical treatises are particularly remarkable, with works dealing with description of illnesses and medical treatments, and collections comprising medical statements. Generally, Georgian medical thought was based on national-folk traditions, having a rich and long history. It is proven by archaeological evidence, Old Georgian literary monuments and data preserved in the Ancient World's historical records (such as Strabo (64/63 BC – c. AD 24). In Georgian medical tradition there was also preserved pagan, magic, folk and secular erudition. In the Middle Ages Georgian medicine, like other scientific fields, was influenced by Arabic and Persian methodical tradition, medical books and collections based on Oriental schemes dealing with general medicine, as well as specific issues of anatomy, physiology, pharmacy, diagnostics, comprising the whole knowledge of that period, became more fashionable.²⁹

Particularly distinguished were Georgian-Persian medicinal manuscript volumes related to well-known Georgian treatise – “Iadgar-Daud”. This monument was written in the 16th century and belonged to the son of Luarsab I King of Kartli (1521-1665), David, King of Georgia, known after as Daud-Khan (1564-1579). He was educated in Georgia and Iran. This work was composed in 1579-1588, first in Tiflis and then in Istanbul, where the author died in 1588, in the age of 46. “Iadgar Daud” is one of the most popular Georgian medical treatises, based on Hippocrates' humoral-pathological system and on innovations brought in pharmacy during the medieval age by Galenists and Al-Razi.³⁰

Recent research has ascertained that the source of “Iadgar-Daud” was the famous ophthalmologist's, ‘Alī ibn ‘Īsā al-Kahhal's work “Shifā’ al-‘Alīl” (“Healing of the Sick” – the Persian manuscript PAC-432³¹ preserved at the Central Asian Collection of the Korneli Kekelidze Georgian National Centre of Manuscripts), compiled on the basis of Arabic and Persian collections, with the order of Muhammad Darvish-Bahadur Khan, or from their “selection” (*montakhab*), which probably existed in Persian, with

29 On the history of Georgian medicine see M. Shengelia, *Kartuli meditsinis istoria*. (A History of Georgian Medicine). Tbilisi 1980; L. Kotetishvili (ed.), *David Bagrationi “Iadgar Daudi”*. (The text, with a preface, glossary and comments). Tbilisi 1985.

30 L. Kotetishvili (ed.), *David Bagrationi “Iadgar Daudi”*. pp. 39-40.

31 M. Mamatsashvili (ed.), *Korneli Kekelidzis sakhelobis khelnacerta institutis sparsul khelnacerta katalogi*. (A Catalogue of Persian Manuscripts of the Korneli Kekelidze Institute of Manuscripts), the “AC” Collection. Tbilisi 1977, p. 93.

the same title – منتخب الشفاء, *Muntakhafi Shafa*, as it was named by Daud Khan/David Bagrationi.³²

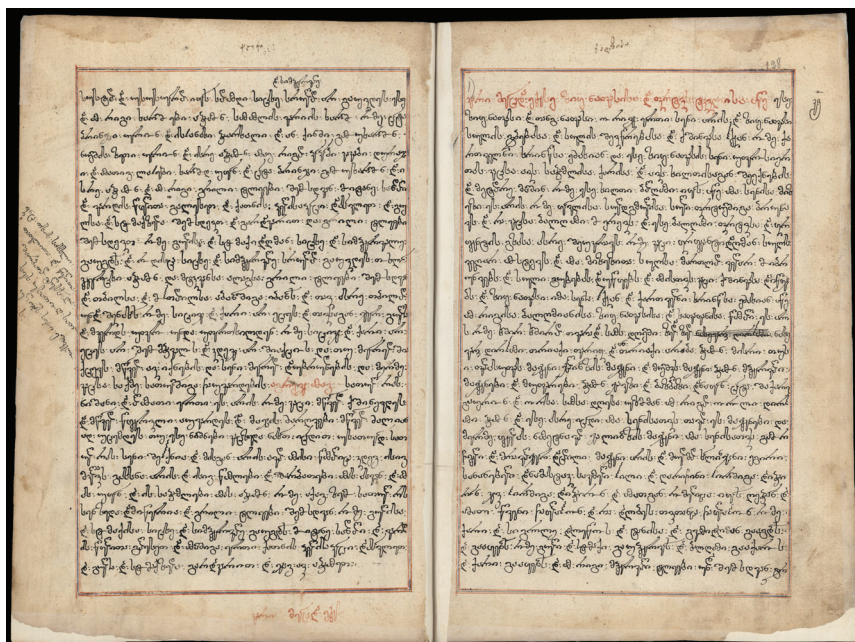


Fig. 12. Q-270. K. Kekelidze Georgian National Centre of Manuscripts

Thus, Georgian writing of the Renaissance period – literary works, historical and scientific records, Georgian-Persian historical documents as well as artistic representation of Georgian secular manuscript books clearly shows an important stage of Georgian-Iranian cultural relations conditioned by historical-political realities, and its general courses and trends.

32 T. Abuladze, “Iadgar Daudis” sparsuli cqaroebis shesakheb”. (On the Study of Persian Sources of “Iadgar Daud”), in: *Mravaltavi* vol. XXIII. Tbilisi 2010, pp. 11-19.

Georgia and Iran: Historical-Cultural Context and Tendencies
of Georgian Renaissance
(According to Georgian Handwritten Heritage)

In the 16th century a common national cultural-creative process started in Georgia, known as the “Georgian Renaissance”. This national movement, based on its cultural heritage, covered different fields of education, literature, science and fine arts, adopting and transforming correspondingly on the national basis of cultural achievements within the common Near Eastern cultural area.

National themes became prevalent in the literature of this period; secular poetry was leading, were established new literary genres. In spite of political and national-religious hostility, Georgian scholars translated and “interpreted” with great erudition and diligence Persian poetic masterpieces, which at that time became an essential part of the Georgian national literature. The Renaissance literature exhibited great influence of Persian fictional forms, such as, *mokāleme* (مکالمه), *majam ‘e* (مجمعه), translations and additions of heroic and romantic poetry. Literary writings belonging to the Persian مناظره *monāzara* genre (“discussion, debate”) were composed and progressively established as national creative works.

During the 16th to 17th centuries, Georgian science clearly reflected the tendencies of that period, requests of the secular society and cultural influences. First of all it concerned Georgian historiography and its eminent representative, Parsadan Gorgijanidze, *dārugha* (the governor) of Isfahan and his “Georgian History”.

In this period (the 16th century) was also compiled a vast and well-known medical treatise “Iadgar Daud”, author of which was Daud-Khan (the Georgian King David XI). At the Georgian National Centre of Manuscripts, among Persian manuscripts of Central Asian collections one of its sources was discovered – “Shifā’ al-‘Alīl”, belonging to the well-known Arab physician, ‘Alī ibn ‘Īsā al-Kahhal’. Iranian influences on Georgian art became more obvious during the Safavid period.

Georgian and Georgian-Persian historical documents (their ornaments, borders, sealing and decoration), paintings and ornaments of Georgian Medieval literary masterpieces (such as, the 16th century manuscripts of “The Knight in the Tiger’s Skin”, “Ioseb-Zilikhani”) were artistically influenced by Persian miniatures.

Key words: Medieval Georgia and Iran, cultural relations, Georgian “Renaissance”.