
The XVII-XVIII Centuries Persian Manuscripts in Georgian Script from Georgian Archives

Helen Giunashvili*¹

¹Ilia State University [Tbilisi] – Géorgie

Résumé

Iranian-Georgian cultural-historical contacts have a centuries-old tradition. These influences significantly touched all the spheres of the Georgian cultural life – language, literature, art and science. 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)interpreters" in the formation of scientific thought of that period.

During the XVI-XVII centuries, Georgians held important positions in the governmental and cultural spheres of Safavid Iran (1501-1736). Many distinguished Georgian intellectuals (historians, interpreters, painters, poets) significantly contributed to the development of science and art. Parsadan Gorgijanidze (1626–96) is the most eminent figure in the second half of the seventeenth century of the latter group. He served in the Safavid administration as deputy governor (*nāeb-e dāruḡa*) of Isfahan and royal chamberlain (*išik-āqāsi*); he was also a linguist.

Gorgijanidze undertook various creative activities and most importantly, compiled a Georgian-Persian-Arabic dictionary. This first terminological dictionary was based on the XVII century Georgian, Persian and Arabic sources; Arabic and Persian correspondents of Georgian lexemes were given in Georgian transcription.

Gorgijanidze was an author with mutual Georgian and Persian cultural traditions, and undoubtedly, he had many followers who remained in Isfahan and followed in his creative footsteps.

For the relations between Iran and Georgia in the XVI-XVIII centuries there are many contemporary documents preserved at the Korneli Kekelidze Georgian National Center of Manuscripts and the National Archive of the Ministry of Justice of Georgia, such as Georgian-Persian historical documents and Persian manuscripts written in Georgian script.

One of them is of particular interest: the Persian Gospel translation, transcribed in Georgian script and kept at the Korneli Kekelidze National Centre of Manuscripts (S-16). The manuscript contains all four Gospels, but it lacks the last part of Mark's Gospel. The handwriting is in the Georgian script, Mkhedruli.

The original version of the manuscript is preserved at the Saint Petersburg Institute of Oriental Manuscripts (C-268), in the collection of the Georgian Prince Teimuraz Bagrationi

*Intervenant

(1782–1846). According to the preface of the original version, the Gospel was translated from Arabic into Persian during Nader Shah's reign (1736-1747). The manuscript written in Isfahan was taken to Tbilisi and given its final form in Georgian.

The Georgian transcription of the Persian Gospel might have been the result of scientific activities (particularly, translations) originally established by Parsadan Gorgijanidze.

The Persian Gospel manuscript in Georgian script raises a number of important issues concerning the comprehension of the Christian Holy Book by a Muslim author, textual interrelations of the Persian translation with the transcribed version, linguistic peculiarities of the text (phonetic, morphologic, syntactic), and the requirements and trends of a specific historical period, among others.

Mots-Clés: Safavid Iran and Georgia, cultural relations, Persian Manuscripts (Gospel) in Georgian script