

Philology

The Newly Revealed Epistolary Heritage of 'Tsisperkantselis' and its Importance for the History of Georgian Literature

Thea Tvalavadze* and Ia Ghadua*

Giorgi Leonidze State Museum of Georgian Literature, Tbilisi, Georgia

(Presented by Academy Member Avtandil Arabuli)

ABSTRACT. Founded at the beginning of the 20th century, the Order of Tsisperkantselis, was the only literary school in the history of Georgian literature. Influenced by French and Russian symbolism poets with their manifests were seeking new artistic forms to revive Georgian Culture and orient it towards Europe. The Tsisperkantseli group consisted of talented and well-educated writers, who were proponents of Western and Eastern cultures: Paolo Iashvili, Titsian Tabidze, Valerian Gaprindashvili, Giorgi Leonidze, Kolau Nadiradze, Sergo Kldiashvili, Nikolo Mitsishvili, Razhden Gvetadze, Shalva Karmeli, Sandro Tsirekidze, Leli Japaridze, Ali Arsenishvili, Ivan Kipiani, and Shalva Apkhaidze. The attitude of the society towards the school of the Georgian symbolism was quite inconsistent. Many did not share the efforts of the rebels to reevaluate the past. As a result, this led to a great resistance. Tsisperkantselis are still of a great interest. Yet, a comprehensive and thorough research of them individually or their written works and public activities has not been fulfilled. This was caused by a harsh era full of disasters. Three Tsisperkantselis - Paolo Iashvili, Titsian Tabidze and Nikolo Mitsishvili - were sacrificed to repressions and only after their rehabilitation, it became possible to research and recognize their contributions to Georgian culture. The study and publication of the writer's epistolary heritage is of particular importance for literary and textual studies of literature. Personal or official letters represent the authentic sources of the author's life and creativity. Personal letters reflect the opinion of the current literary processes, cultural and social life and political environment, as well as the history of creation of the work. Although personal letters are not intended for the wider society and often contain intimate information, and sometimes unintentionally or intentionally distorted facts, today nobody casts a question of the correctness of their publicity. Personal correspondence specifies biographical details that are otherwise known or completely unknown. The personal letters of the 'Tsisperkantselis' were published in the works of the writers, biographical essays or periodic editions either completely or cut. Their creativity and activity are well known to the society concerned. Correspondence by 'Tsisperkantselis' to each other, family members, Georgian and other foreign writers sheds light on the previously unknown facts, gives them a new understanding of their creativity and creates basis for a new research. © 2018 Bull. Georg. Natl. Acad. Sci.

Key words: 'Tsisperkantselis', letters, manuscripts, museum

Founded at the beginning of the 20th century, the Order of Tsisperkantselis, was an only literary school in the history of Georgian literature. Influenced by the French and Russian symbolism, the writers with their manifests and theoretical articles and in search of new artistic forms were seeking to revive the Georgian Culture and orientation towards Europe. The Tsisperkantseli group consisted of talented and well-educated writers, who were proponents of Western and Eastern cultures: Paolo Iashvili, Titsian Tabidze, Valerian Gaprindashvili, Giorgi Leonidze, Kolau Nadiradze, Sergo Kldiashvili, Nikolo Mitsishvili, Razhden Gvetadze, Shalva Karmeli, Sandro Tsirekidze, Leli Japaridze, Ali Arsenishvili, Ivan Kipiani, and Shalva Apkhaidze. The attitude of the society towards the school of Georgian Symbolism was quite inconsistent. Many did not share the efforts of the rebels to reevaluate the past. As a result, this led to a great resistance. Tsisperkantselis are still of a great interest. However, a comprehensive and thorough research of them individually or their written works and public activities has not been fulfilled. This was caused by a harsh era full of disasters. Three Tsisperkantselis - Paolo Iashvili, Titsian Tabidze and Nikolo Mitsishvili - were sacrificed to repressions and only after their rehabilitation, it became possible to research and recognize their contributions to Georgian culture.

The study of the Tsisperkantselis' epistolary heritage is of particular importance for literary and textual studies of literature. Personal or official letters represent the authentic sources of the authors' lives and activities, and in certain cases, they are the genuine sources of their creativity. The majority of the personal letters of Tsisperkantselis are preserved in the Museum of Literature; most of them have been published after gaining independence of Georgia. Titsian Tabidze and Paolo Iashvili's letters were collected in the archival two-volume edition; Kolau Nadiradze's correspondence was published in the museum

periodical 'Literature Annals'; several letters were published in Grigol Robakidze's five-volume edition. However, all personal or official letters of these writers have never been published together.

Presumably, a significant part from the epistolary heritage of 'Tsisperkantselis' is lost due to the well-known political reason; the remained part has been disregarded and is still unpublished. The letters appeared to be scattered around museums, archives and private collections. Apart from the Literature Museum, the postcards are preserved in the National Center of Manuscripts, National Archive of Georgia, Ioseb Grishashvili's Library-Museum, Archive of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia, the Museum of History and Central Archive of Kutaisi, Giorgi Leonidze House-Museum in Patardzeuli, as well as Paolo Iashvili and other families of 'Tsisperkantselis'.

The museum of Literature collected the archival documents of 'Tsisperkantselis' and in June 2018, their personal and official correspondence to each other, Georgian and other foreign writers, as well as family members and friends was published as a two-volume edition. Their correspondence is very interesting and sheds light on numerous details of their lives or creative biographies.

The Role of Biographical Details in the Creative Work of a Writer

'Tsisperkantselis' believed in the influence of a writer's biography on his/her creativity. Valerian Gaprindashvili, in his essay "Declaration (New Mythology)" emphasized that the biography of poets and their lifestyle was less interesting for both the reading society and poets in the past. The main focus was the poet's creativity. Nowadays, the poet's personality causes acute interest... Frequently, the life of a poet is as original as his poetry. The name and biography of the poet was lost in vain. The contemporary poetry wishes to use the poet's biography and his/her magic name, which is actually a mirror of his/her creativity, as well as equivalent [1].

'Tsisperkantselis' shared their opinions regarding the ongoing literature processes and cultural and social life in their personal letters; the world outlook becomes clear and the biographic details, which were known in a different way or were totally unknown for researchers and readers, are specified.

Infatuation with Symbolism and an Effort to Reevaluate the Past

In this regard, the correspondence of Valerian Gaprindashvili and Ali (Alexandre) Arsenishvili, which has not been published yet and which includes the period before the establishment of the order of 'Tsisperkantselis', is of acute interest (1914-1915). Their passion for symbolism is clearly seen in their letters; they cite symbolist-poets (e.g. Emile Verhaeren, Paul Verlaine, Fyodor Tyutchev, Valery Bryusov, Fyodor Sologub, Alexander Blok, Konstantin Balmont and others) and share opinions regarding their creative works.

While getting familiar with the early letters of 'Tsisperkantselis', the impression is created as if all the cards are written by one author; it becomes clear that they had had one ideological-aesthetic belief even before the Order was established. Kolau Nadiradze in his memories "Debedachais Night" writes: "We were not born from one mother, but it seemed that we opened our eyes at a time so that we could see and feel equally this great homeland..." [2:74].

It is obvious from these letters what nourished and attracted the young symbolists. Accordingly, these details allow us interpret their creativity in a new light.

A student of Petersburg University Shalva Apkhaidze writes to Sandro Tsirekidze that he had read Andrei Bell's letters about symbolism, "Apolon" papers, where Anenski's letters had been published, as well as Gippius, Balmont, Bryusov and Blok's poems and lyrical plays, and Edgar Poe's stories; he informed that he was preparing a report about Baratashvili. He points out that women

are very interested in his report. The evening is supposed to be held on November 30. He is scared that people will not like his speech, since the cult of Baratashvili is strong in Georgians. According to Shalva Apkhaidze, Baratashvili's poetry is a complete fall of the form, since Baratashvili is weak with his technique of poems. There is no purposeful connection between Baratashvili and the time he lived. Georgia could have such a poet like Baratashvili even in the time when it breathed the air of freedom [3]. Decadent mood can be felt in the letter, as well as an effort to reject the creativity of classicists and to reevaluate the past.

Melancholy of Native Kutaisi

In one of the letters to Ali Arsenishvili from Kutaisi to Moscow, Valerian Gaprindashvili informs his friend about the cultural life of Kutaisi and discusses the connection between the past and creativity: He wrote that when he thought about the past, he felt as if he was sitting on his grave or looking at himself lying in the snow-white coffin. He pointed out that it was a very interesting issue – the link between memory and reminiscence and creativity. For example, there were two cities of Kutaisi: one was a genuine city, where he resided then and the second one which was created by the imagination, memories and a sad feeling... the city was a phenomenon; it did not conform to the history and the laws of the progress, and thus, it did not change. Nevertheless, he thought that Kutaisi was incomparable as a kind of provincial city. In a big city (e.g. Moscow), the betrayal was being felt everywhere... Though the 'betrayal' – was a play by Sumbatov that was being staged at that time, the word had nothing to do with the life in Kutaisi. He wrote that there were five 'radiums' in the city; that was how they called the cinematography there; sometimes some intellectual read a lecture [4].

Titsian Tabidze revealed the same attitude of mind in his postcard (1917) to Elene Bakradze from Moscow to Elizabethpol, which is preserved in Giorgi Leonidze's House-Museum, in Patardzeuli

and has not been published in any collection or the current two-volume edition (2015) so far.

Titsian complained about fatigue and justified his being there for so long by the necessity to pass seven exams. He wrote that Moscow had changed totally, the street talked loudly and, as usual, its voice was abusive for aestheticism. He pointed out that he had received a telegram from Tbilisi for the fourth time, which made him set off... He would have to stay there for a month but still he would not be able to bear it without Kutaisi. He informed Elene about Galaktion's arrival who brought bad news. Yet, Titsian still preferred Georgia's heat, sun and friends [5].

'Great Transfer'

Sergo Kldiashvili addressed the transfer of the part of 'Tsisperkantseleis' and other writers to Tbilisi – 'a great transfer' and linked it to the declaration of independence of Georgia: '... According to him, Tbilisi was the center of national movement and political life in Georgia, and it was only natural that a live power of the Georgian intelligentsia moved there... That was the time when neither society nor the government had time for literature. However, the literary life at that time full of phantasmagoria not only died away but grew stronger' [6:490]. According to Kolau Nadiradze, a group of 'Tsisperkantseleis' that stayed in Kutaisi, managed to work creatively. They managed to publish own works and first books after publishing a second issue of the magazine 'Tsisperkantseleis' and transfer of their friends to Tbilisi [2:33].

Dissonance in the Group

In 1920, Sandro Tsirekidze established a publishing house of 'Tsisperkantseleis' in Kutaisi – 'Kirchkhivi', as well as published magazine 'Shvildosani' (An Archer), 'A new anthology of writing', a collection of Valerian Gaprindashvili and Kolau Nadiradze's poems, his collection of miniatures, and Georgian translation of creative works by Stephan Malarm.

Shalva Aphkhaidze's letter to Sandro Tsirekidze sent from Tbilisi to Kutaisi also belongs to that period. It is clear from the letter that there was a dissonance among 'Tsisperkantseleis' caused by the letter published by Giorgi Leonidze on the instruction of Titsian Tabidze, which disrupted a few 'Tsisperkantseleis'. Shalva Aphkhaidze reckoned that what had been revolutionary in them had transferred into something banal and the only way out of the routine was the break-up of the group and the search of new ways; he informed his friend about the evening held at 'Chimerioni' and expressed anxiety that the edition of "Shvildosani" was not assisted with the raised amount of money.

The letter is not dated, but according to the listed events, it can be dated exactly by April 5 1920; in particular, 'Chimerioni' had already been opened (it was opened and the 'Tsisperkantseleis' arranged the event on December 27 1919), the wedding of Titsian Tabidze and Nino Makashvili had been mentioned as a new fact and the meeting of writers conducted the day before had been described. According to the speakers, the point was about the II conference of the writers, whose first session was held on April 4 1920 [7:16-17]. Apart from the dissonance in the group, the letter is also interesting in terms of the attitude of 'Tsisperkantseleis' towards the Union of Writers. Shalva Aphkhaidze wrote that the meeting of writers had been opened the day before and that he had never seen such emptiness and total wretchedness of soul and mind at any session; Ivane Kipiani described it well briefly: that was a meeting of refugees, and the chairperson (Gomarteli) was like the wine mixed with Selterask. A vapid report had been presented by K. Makashvili on behalf of the administration. Next, the revision Committee, which destroyed the work of the administration, highlighted a terrible negligence, and absence of system of reports. The administration appeared to be in a terrible situation. Ipolite Vartagava immediately used the situation and opposed the "youth". The federalists threw remarks and abused 'Chimerioni'. Poor

impressions were created. The administration was saved by Ak. Papava, who spoke about for one hour. He cleared up the impressions. If not Papava, he did not know how they would have got out of the situation. Titsian did not know how to speak. Paolo also failed to say anything. Today, another meeting is scheduled... [8].

Sometimes the letters are accompanied by the poems, the motif of their writing and the author's assessment. Poems can be found in the letter of Paolo Iashvili to Kolau Nadiradze – 'A Song of Swineherd' and 'Appeal to Friends'; in the letter to Ioseb Grishashvili – 'Ikituri' (Of that area); the personal and business postcards for Ioseb Grishashvili, as an editor of the magazine 'Leila' are accompanied by Titsian Tabidze's poem 'Phatman Khatun' and Shalva Karmeli's 'Ego vi amo'.

From the historical-political point of view, the documents preserved in the archive of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia (the archive of Central Committee of the Communist Party of Georgia) are of utmost importance. Among them, Nikolo Mitsishvili's correspondence with Levan Ghoghoberidze and Levan Aghniashvili in 1923-1924, while he was in Paris with a special mission, as well as the letters of Grigol Veshapeli sent to Nikolo Mitsishvili from Paris to Tbilisi in 1925-1926. The letters are about the life of Georgian emigrants in Paris and Berlin, including the political disagreement, as well as the establishment of the Georgian publishing house, the work of the publishing house 'Akhali Sakartvelo' (New Georgia), showing Georgian films in Berlin and other social-cultural events.

Textural Researches

The letter of Nikolo Mitsishvili is worth mentioning not only from this point of view, but also from the point of textural researches – the letter which was sent to his friends 'Tsisperkanstelis' from Istanbul in 1922, which in 1926, the writer published as a publicist letter in the magazine under

his edition "Georgian Writing", when he returned in Georgia. At that time, publishing the letter caused a lot of polemics and even today it causes a lot of interest. Major changes had been made to the published letter and substantial passages had been removed. As an example, the end of the letter is worth mentioning, where the author makes a final conclusion that everything Georgian was misborn. Georgian destiny had always been aborted and cracked halfway through. That was what was dangled over Georgia - terrible, ruthless thus unavoidable. This led Georgia to 2 million from 10 million. This would lead us and Georgia to the edge of death and what they should do?! The writer gets passive as Georgia here as well - voiceless, weak and spineless. Nikolo Mitsishvili longed for his friends' opinion, word and consolation. He was looking forward to those and begged not to forget him, not to hate and lose him [9].

Political and Social Picture of the Epoch

The epistolary heritage is interesting because it often represents the biographical details of the writer that introduce the writer himself or another writer in a different way. For example, Sergo Kldiashvili's correspondence to friends and parents is important not only for the study of literary relations among 'Tsisperkanstelis'. It tells us about his father's, one of the best Georgian writers, Davit Kldiashvili's final years and expresses the pain caused by the underestimated creativity. Sergo Kldiashvili's mother's – Mariam Matchavariani's up to 30 letters reveal the extreme distress caused by the processes of collectivization. This detail is of great importance in order to create a political-social picture of that period. In 1930, Mariam informed her son about the health state of his father and asked her son to arrive to Simoneti immediately: She wrote that his father's health state was awful and that he could not get up. He did not let anyone close. Sometimes he called Abesalo and talked to him. He did not speak to anyone else. He told Abesalo that his jubilee had been on May 6, and nobody had told

him about it, he was not dressed and he would not go out; why Sergo did not write to him or came earlier if it was on May 6. Mother asked Sergo to come as soon as possible if there was a jubilee indeed, so that they could sew for him a shirt [10]. This correspondence provides us with important information regarding the social and cultural development of that time.

Personal letters are not intended for wider society and often contain intimate information, and sometimes unintentionally or intentionally distorted facts since these are their subjective vision; although a long time has passed since those events, nobody will cast a question of the correctness of their publicity.

By studying the letters of ‘Tsisperkanstelis’, their attribution will be possible, as well as dating of other letters and biographic events. It will be possible to establish the motif and creative history, as well as the time of their creation, and what is more important, the newly revealed epistolary heritage has presented the creative works of ‘Tsisperkanstelis’ in a new angle, which is undoubtedly interesting for the literary critics and will be the basis for new future researches.

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ფილოლოგია

ცისფერყანწელთა ახლად გამოვლენილი ეპისტოლური მემკვიდრეობა და მისი მნიშვნელობა ქართული ლიტერატურის ისტორიისთვის

თ. თვალავაძე* და ი. ლაღუა*

**გიორგი ლეონიძის სახელობის ქართული ლიტერატურის სახელმწიფო მუზეუმი, თბილისი, საქართველო*

(წარმოდგენილია აკადემიის წევრის ა. არაბულის მიერ)

სტატიაში განხილულია ცისფერყანწელთა ორდენის წევრთა მიმოწერა ერთმანეთთან, ოჯახის წევრებთან, სხვა ქართველ თუ უცხოელ მწერლებთან. ეს წერილები ნათელს ჰფენს აქამდე უცნობ ფაქტებს; საშუალებას იძლევა, ახლებურად გავიაზროთ მათი შემოქმედება და ქმნის ახალი კვლევების საფუძველს. მეოცე საუკუნის დასაწყისში ცამეტი შემოქმედისგან დაარსებული ეს ორდენი ერთადერთი ლიტერატურული სკოლა იყო ქართული მწერლობის ისტორიაში. პაოლო იაშვილი, ტიციან ტაბიძე, ვალერიან გაფრინდაშვილი, გიორგი ლეონიძე, კოლაუ ნადირაძე, სერგო კლდიაშვილი, ნიკოლო მიწიშვილი, რაჟდენ გვეტაძე, შალვა კარმელი, სანდრო ცირეკიძე, ლელი ჯაფარიძე, ალი არსენიშვილი, ივანე ყიფიანი, შალვა აფხაიძე თავიანთი მანიფესტებით, თეორიული წერილებითა და ახალი მხატვრული ფორმების ძიებით

ცდილობდნენ ქართული კულტურის აღორძინებასა და ევროპული რადიუსით გამართვას. ქართული სიმბოლოზმის სკოლის გამოჩენას არაერთგვაროვნად შეხვდა საზოგადოება. წარსულის გადაფასების მცდელობას, ერთგვარ ამბოხს ბევრი არ იზიარებდა და დიდი წინააღმდეგობაც გამოიწვია. მიუხედავად იმისა, რომ ცისფერყანწელთა მიმართ დღესაც არ ცხრება ინტერესი, მათი შემოქმედება და საზოგადოებრივი მოღვაწეობა ჯერ კიდევ არ გამოკვლეულა საფუძვლიანად. ამგვარი კომპლექსური კვლევისთვის კი უდავოდ ღირებულია დღემდე უცნობი პირადი თუ ოფიციალური წერილები, რომლებიც ავტორების ცხოვრებისა და შემოქმედების შესწავლის უტყუარი წყაროებია. პირადი მიმოწერა აზუსტებს ისეთ ბიოგრაფიულ დეტალებს, რომლებიც სხვაგვარად არის ცნობილი ან საერთოდ უცნობია. ამავე დროს, მათში გამოთქმულია აზრი მიმდინარე ლიტერატურულ პროცესებზე, კულტურულ-საზოგადოებრივ ცხოვრებასა და პოლიტიკურ გარემოზე, ნაწარმოების შექმნის ისტორიაზე, რაც მთლიანი სურათის შექმნის საშუალებას იძლევა.

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