

Philology

Research for the Chronicles of Grigol Orbeliani's Life and Works

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ABSTRACT. Grigol Orbeliani's life and works continue to be topical constantly attracting the attention of Georgian scientists. Digital technologies and the most up-to-date methods such as the stage-by-stage and stratal method of reading the manuscripts and the corpus-based textual method have enabled us to unveil a number of novelties in this regard. Grigol Orbeliani's biographies comprise very general notes about the first period of his life. We found sources, which helped us with dates of birth and engagement, details of his military expeditions etc. In the editions of the writer's works, including the full collection of his works, the chapter of original prose comprises a separate subchapter of artistic sketches that includes four texts. Our investigation provides grounds to believe that two of them are the ordinary personal letters and the other two – diary-style notes. Texts, published under the title of Extracts (*Unrhymed and rhymed*) in the same editions, are not extracts from poems, but completed maxims. The materials hitherto unknown to readers are particularly important. The information they comprise and the results of our investigations will amplify the author's biography. © 2019 Bull. Georg. Natl. Acad. Sci.

Key words: textual scholarship, biobibliography, Grigol Orbeliani

Grigol Orbeliani's life and works continue to be topical constantly attracting the attention of Georgian scientists. Details of his biography are clarified and specified simultaneously with the analysis of his creative works. Digital technologies and the most up-to-date methods such as the stage-by-stage and stratal method of reading the manuscripts [1: 76-83] and the corpus-based textual method have enabled us to unveil a number of novelties in this regard.

Information Obtained from Historical Sources

Grigol Orbeliani's contemporary Iona Meunargia started writing his most complete biography when the writer was still alive. Correspondingly, it is believed to be the most complete and reliable source. However, Iona Meunargia simply recorded information he heard from the writer or his relatives. He did not make any research to establish the dates of events, did not check them, and did not

refer to documents as sources. His work, *The Life and Achievements of Prince Grigol Orbeliani*, comprises very general notes such as the following: "During the Persian war (1826-1828) in 1826, he fought together with Count Simonich", "with Madatov, when the latter was dispatched for an expedition beyond Aras" [2: 758-9], and the like.

Research in Count Simonich's memoirs [3: 39-42] published in 1901 helped us to obtain more detailed information on specifically where and at what time Grigol Orbeliani was together with his regiment and which battles he participated in. We clarified that he departed from Tbilisi on July 25 in 1826, spent the night of July 26 in the Demurchasal village in Borchaly Uyezd, spent the night of July 27 in the village of Tovuz, reached the Azerbaijani village of Hasansu on August 3, encamped on the bank of the Agstafa river on August 5, entered Yelisavetopol on September 4, and so forth. We learned from the same source that on August 6, Grigol Orbeliani's uncle Aslan, who was the ispravnic of Kazakhsky Uyezd at that time, visited his regiment on the invitation of Grigol Orbeliani's commander Ivan Simonich. Aslan accompanied them to the Khanakhtar village (now the Azerbaijani town of Goygol) on August 7. We think that the meeting with his uncle should have been encouraging for the young fighter.

It is natural that Count Ivan Simonich's memoirs cannot reflect the battles, in which Grigol Orbeliani participated under the command of other generals. However, we found sources, which helped us with details of his movement during other military expeditions, the events that unfolded, and precise dates of battles. For example, we identified the period in the writer's biography, when he fought against Persians under the command of General Valerian Madatov. According to Count Yermolov's order, he crossed the Aras river on December 22 in 1826 and defeated the enemy's nomadic units stationed there. On January 1 in 1827, he launched a powerful attack in Meshk District, entered the town of Lori on 2 January, headed towards the

Karabakh Khanate on 3 January, occupied the Nasirabad village on January 5, marked Christmas there on January 6, reached Agara on January 7, left the enemy's territory on January 9, and returned to Karabakh on January 17.

Under the command of General Benckendorff, Grigol Orbeliani headed to the Ejmiatsin fortress on April 24 in 1827, occupied Mount Irakli on April 25, repelled an attack of the Ejmiatsin garrison on April 26, and besieged the fortress on April 27. He remained in unbearable conditions during the prolonged siege, as they lacked food, it was terribly cold, and they constantly had to repel attacks by the garrison stationed in the fortress or forces that arrived from outside.

Linking the aforementioned facts to Grigol Orbeliani's biography makes more complete our scant knowledge of the first period of his life.

Dating of Biographical Events

The Orbeliani family roster says that Grigol Orbeliani was born on October 2, in 1804 [4] and his service record, which his biographer Iona Meunargia relied on, says that he was born in 1800. However, we had a well-founded suspicion that he was born in 1805. When an investigation asked him on February 24 in 1833, he said that he was 27 [5], which means that he was born on October 2 in 1805. The letter sent to Dmitry Yemelyanov in 1834 gives the same information. It says that he is 28 [6]. If he were born on October 2 in 1805, he would indeed be of the age before October 2 in 1834.

Given the aforementioned, we would have supported this date of birth, but there is a publication by Solomon Tsaishvili that says that in 1804, the writer's uncles sent congratulatory letters to his father on the occasion of Grigol's birth. These letters found in the Georgian historic archives convinced us that they were indeed sent in 1804 and the content also makes it clear that Grigol Orbeliani was born on October 2 of that year. The sources are so reliable that any mistake is ruled out. The only

explanation we can offer is that at the interrogation and in his letter sent to Dmitry Yemelyanov, the writer indicated an incorrect date of his birth. It is also possible that he had the date of his birth changed in his documents and he was obliged to point to that date. It cannot be ruled out either that he did not know the correct date of his birth. One thing is clear: He indeed proved to be born in 1804.

Grigol Orbeliani's engagement to juvenile Sopio Orbeliani has been an issue much spoken about. Iona Meunargia wrote: "When he became fourteen, Dimitri Orbeliani engaged him to his brother Qaplan's daughter Sopio, who was three years old at that time". Strangely, speaking about this engagement, Meunargia mentions the name of Sopio's uncle, not father. Why should the uncle have decided the child's future, if her father was alive? Sopio's father died in 1820. In that year, Dimitri Orbeliani was probably in major distress, because he lost another brother - Petre (Beglar) – a year earlier and in 1820, his wife died before the death of Sopio's father Qaplan. Since Dimitri did not have any other brothers, Qaplan's family remained without a male relative and little Sopio probably needed protection. We think it was probably due to this that they decided to engage her at such a young age. Otherwise, engagements of three-year-old girls could not have been frequent in Kartli at that time. The date of Sopio Orbeliani's birth is not mentioned in any sources available to us now. As Grigol Orbeliani considered, before 2 October 1820, he was still 14 years old, which coincides with Iona Meunargia's information.

Generic Classification

Writing the chronicles, we mostly rely on documental sources and scientific data, but if there are details that arouse suspicion, it becomes necessary to carry out special research. In the previous editions of the writer's works, including the full collection of his works published in 1959 [7: 289-96], the chapter of original prose comprises a separate subchapter of "artistic sketches" that

includes four texts: *To Anton, N.E.M.*, *The Winter Wind Roaring*, and *The Story Told in the Riga Hospital*. The first text is about Grigol Orbeliani's sentiments over his departure from home and the launch of military service. It has a superscript "To An..." and its content makes it clear that it was addressed to his cousin Anton Orbeliani. Besides being his relative, Anton (Tato) seems to be Grigol's closest childhood friend, because in addition to this extremely sincere text, the poet's first poem is also devoted to him. The form of address - "To An..." that is used as the title of the text and its end – "I wish your letter could give me the past joys and return my lost freedom. Farewell!" – provides grounds to believe that this is an ordinary personal letter, not an artistic sketch.

The second text has the title *N.E.M.* Its content shows that it is addressed to three ladies: Nino and Ekaterine Chavchavadze and Manana Eristavi-Orbeliani. In the text, the author recalls an occurrence: Grigol Orbeliani bid farewell to these ladies before his departure to Russia for a special assignment and noticed tears in their eyes. The form of the address: "Do you remember the day...", "I will remember, oh, Graces, your tears shed for me..." – shows that this too is a personal letter, not an "artistic sketch". Grigol wrote another letter to three addressees at the same time (for example, Salome Chavchavadze and her daughters). It is noteworthy that the aforementioned two texts were written on separate sheets of paper and were included later in the case opened in connection with the investigation launched to clarify Grigol Orbeliani's involvement in the 1832 conspiracy [8].

The third text has no title and starts with the following words: "The winter wind is roaring and its wings blow cold and frost". The author describes his own condition as follows: "I am thus secluded in the room of mine. I am thinking thoughts, watching the burning fireplace, and sad thoughts are shattering my mind". These sad thoughts were linked to the transience of youth. The author conveys his sentiments in the first person singular

– "The days of our youth are passing", "Our frowning old age", which does not mean a concrete person and the author, but points to events common for the humankind: "Our"="humans". The style of the text is artistic and it comprises beautiful comparisons, but the same can be observed also in Grigol Orbeliani's diaries. For example, on 17 June 1831, he describes the nature in Kazbegi in the following manner: "The Tergi river is boiling and raging, spraying out foam and running with roar... Eyes see it as a beautiful fountain scattering down from mountains like diamonds". We can see almost the same artistic images as in a poem written 10 years later: "Waters running down from the mountains fall into depths like diamonds / the Tergi is running and roaring, and cliffs are singing bass". Therefore, we believe that the text with no title – *The Winter Wind Roaring* – is a diary-style text, not an artistic sketch.

The fourth text printed in the subchapter of "artistic sketches" has the title *The Story Told in the Riga Hospital*. Its content is similar to that of the fairy tale about Cinderella. Although it has a clear-cut plot, the title, the locality in which the action proceeds, and names make it clear that it is a Latvian story, which may be based on a real happening and be a little brightened up, but this fiction does not show any signs of Grigol Orbeliani's contribution. The title shows that he heard the story in a hospital in Riga and recorded it. His diaries are full of such stories.

Correspondingly, this text is not an artistic sketch either. Given the aforesaid, it follows that Grigol Orbeliani did not have any original fiction. He wrote only documentary prose. Therefore, two of the four texts we considered should be published in the subchapter of personal letters and the remaining two in the subchapter of notes.

Under the title of *Extracts (Unrhymed and rhymed)*, collections of Grigol Orbeliani's works comprise materials that are not extracts from poems, but completed maxims. For example: "What can I do for those, who are burning with infatuation, as wailing can be their only consolation", "I hate the sun that gives off light, but does not keep us warm", and so forth.

The materials hitherto unknown to readers are particularly important for the chronicles, for example, letters sent to Grigol Orbeliani, projects he designed, business papers, and so forth. Several letters by the author that have never been published have been found in the photo copies of the materials kept in the Russian State Library. The information they comprise and many other new facts will enrich the author's biography.

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ფილოლოგია

კვლევები გრიგოლ ორბელიანის ცხოვრებისა და შემოქმედების მატეიანისათვის

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გრიგოლ ორბელიანის ცხოვრება და შემოქმედება კვლავაც არ კარგავს აქტუალობას. ციფრული ტექნოლოგიების გამოყენებამ და ისეთმა უახლესმა მეთოდებმა, როგორებიცაა ხელნაწერთა ამოკითხვის ეტაპობრივ-შრეობრივი და კორპუსული კვლევის ტექსტოლოგიური მეთოდები, შესაძლებლობა მოგვცა არაერთი სიახლე გამოგვევლინა. მწერლის ბიოგრაფიებში მისი ცხოვრების პირველი პერიოდის შესახებ ძალიან ზოგადი ინფორმაციაა. ჩვენ მოვიპოვეთ წყაროები, რომლებიც დაგვებმარა დაბადებისა და ნიშნობის თარიღების დადგენაში, სამხედრო ექსპედიციებში მონაწილეობის დეტალების გარკვევაში და სხვ. ანალიზის შედეგად დადგინდა, რომ მწერლის თხზულებათა სრულ კრებულში „მხატვრული ესკიზების“ განყოფილებაში შეტანილი ოთხი ტექსტიდან ორი პირადი წერილია, ორი კი - დღიურის ტიპის ჩანაწერი, ხოლო სათაურით: „ნაწყვეტები“ („ურთიმო და რითმიანი“) დაბეჭდილი მასალის ერთი ნაწილი გამართული, დასრულებული სენტენციებია და არა ლექსების ნაწყვეტები. განსაკუთრებით მნიშვნელოვანია ის მასალა, რომელსაც ფართო მკითხველი დღემდე არ იცნობდა. მათგან მოპოვებული ინფორმაცია და კვლევის შედეგად გამოვლენილი სიახლეები მნიშვნელოვნად გაამდიდრებს გრიგოლ ორბელიანის ბიოგრაფიას.

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