

The Importance and Characteristics of the Old Georgian Translation of the Epistles of St. Ammon

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From the epistles written within the heart of the monastic life, Ammon's moral exhortations resulting from many years' experience with his spiritual flock must be singled out. 16 epistles by St. Ammon have survived in the Georgian language, which are preserved in a few manuscripts: Sin. 35 (907), Sin. 25 (10th c) and Sin.Geo.N.13 (10th c). The epistles are kept in 10th century Sinaitic manuscripts belong to the pre-Athonite epoch. From a chronological standpoint Sin. 35 is the oldest manuscript and simultaneously contains all 16 of Ammon's epistles in the most complete form. Because only 4 epistles are presented in Sin. 25, the following can be surmised: it is completely possible that this copy is a coenobitic version of Ammon's epistles having practical purpose in the everyday regime of monastic life. Sin. 13 is a palimpsest. Georgian translator of Ammon's epistles is not known, but it can certainly be said that the aforementioned copies are variants of each other and are more or less different from a textual standpoint. As it was already noted, it is plausible that Sin. 25 and Sin. 13 originate from Sin. 35, or from the same source text. This hypothesis is confirmed by the conclusions reached as a result of a mutual comparison: all three copies had to have been transcribed from the same original text, which was probably written in the asomtravruli script. © 2022 Bull. Georg. Natl. Acad. Sci.

Asceticism, monastic life, St. Ammon's epistles, Georgian, manuscript

From the epistles written within the heart of the monastic life, Ammon's (IV) moral exhortations resulting from many years' experience with his spiritual flock must be singled out. Epistles by St. Ammon have survived in the Georgian language (Sin. 35 (907), Sin. 25 (10th c) and Sin.Geo.N.13 (10th c)). Only one epistle (his second one) has been published from the Georgian translation of St. Ammon's epistles [1:123-131]. From a chronological standpoint, Sin. 35 is the oldest

manuscript and simultaneously contains all 16 of Ammon's epistles in the most complete form.

Copies of Sin. 35, Sin. 25 and Sin. 13 differ significantly from Athonite and Jerusalem manuscripts, because they were made far earlier. They might possibly take us to the start of Georgian literature, especially if it is considered that Mar Saba Monastery is deemed to be the place where Sin. 35 was made [2: 79], whereas the other two –

Sin. 25 and Sin. 13 – had to have been copied at Mt. Sinai.

Only 4 epistles are presented in Sin. 25. It is completely possible that this copy is a coenobitic version of Ammon's epistles having a practical purpose in the monastic life. Such a custom is not foreign in the monastic realm. Take the short version of the *Lausaic History* by Palladius of Galatia [3:180] for example. In our opinion, it is not ruled out that the Old Georgian translation of Ammon's epistles done at Mar Saba became the source for the long and abridged coenobitic versions of these same epistles.

The Georgian translator of Ammon's epistles is not known, but it can certainly be said that the aforementioned copies are variants of each other and are more or less different from a textual standpoint. As it was already noted, it is plausible that Sin. 25 and Sin. 13 originate from Sin. 35, or from the same source text. This hypothesis is confirmed by the conclusions reached as a result of a mutual comparison: all three copies had to have been transcribed from the same original text, which was probably written in the asomtavruli script. As it is known, the first copy transcribed from it, Sin. 35, is also done in asomtavruli, yet at the time of its transcription (907), the nuskhuri script was already firmly established in Georgian literature. This must be the reason why the scribe of this copy copied with mistakes. These errors are especially striking when the graphemes უ and ჳ are written. The scribe of Sin. 35 frequently shows the უ grapheme in the same expected position with either only one graphical sign, which in asomtavruli means "o", or with both graphical signs, which is characteristic of this script. The copy of Sin. 35, striking for its occurrences of the incorrect usage of the უ and ჳ graphemes, is proof that the asomtavruli script was natural for the scribe, thus the reason for him being unable to avoid these types of errors: „არა ოტეობენ კაცთა წარმატებად“ (they do not let men advance) (Sin. 35, 48r) etc. The incorrect usage of the letter ჳ in

the same text is also especially remarkable. In most cases, it is used as an ornament. In contrast to this text, the second copy, Sin. 25, has been copied in khutsuri by a learned scribe. There is the hypothesis that it was copied from the same original source as Sin. 35, yet the orthography is well preserved within it and similar kinds of errors are rarely encountered.

It is peculiar that in Sin. 25 and Sin. 13, ჳ has been replaced almost everywhere by the letters გო and is presented in the correct position. It is also significant that these additions of Sin. 35 are appended to the text by the scribe in khutsuri instead of asomtavruli. This gives rise to the thought that khutsuri is more natural to him than asomtavruli. Stemming from this, it can certainly be surmised that the errors made by the scribe are conditioned by the fact that he had selected a source text in asomtavruli, which was already outdated by that time (907). It is notable that the additions placed at the top of certain segments in the text of Sin. 35 are included directly in the text of Sin. 25 and Sin. 13. The thought that these copies did not originate from instead, but instead have a mutual source text is also corroborated by this phenomenon.

When using the diphthong ჳ, the following orthographic characteristics of Sin. 35 stand out: ჳ is frequently presented alongside გ when a common noun ending in გ is in the nominative case. In such a position as this, the გ is extraneous, because the nominative case itself is implied by ჳ (გო). These spots, in most cases, are corrected by the scribe of Sin. 25 and Sin. 13 according to the norms of the old literary language, except he writes the letter ო. Ex: მრავალსახე ჳ სიმძიმე (Sin. 35, 50r); მრავალსახე გ სიმძიმე (Sin. 25, 54v) (Many other kinds of heavy burdens).

According to Z. Sarjveladze, the literary language is comparatively more conservative and artificial than the colloquial language. Because of this, colloquial speech changes and develops more rapidly than the literary language [8, 90]. It is

completely possible to think that at the time when the copy of Sin. 35 was created, the perception of the diphthong ჳ in colloquial speech is disappearing, especially if the fact is considered that it had been created as an analogy to the Greek diphthong. The text's scribe attempts to follow the rule accepted in the Georgian literary language, but it seems the eradication of this diphthong in his circle of work is already quite apparent and the scribe places it after the ე vowel as a sort of ornament. This idea is confirmed not only by many examples of the incorrect usage of ჳ after nouns, but also with other suffixes.

It is also notable in both texts (Sin. 35 and Sin. 25) that names beginning with the o vowel, are in a few places shown with an iota. Ex. აკობი, ოვანე, ოუდა. Ex.: გინა ოვანე ნათლისმცემელი (Or John the Baptist) (sin. 35, 50r; sin. 25, 54v).

Here it must be noted that the Sin. 35 manuscript is characterized by correct as well as incorrect forms of the ჳ diphthong, when in analogous situations in Sin. 25 and Sin. 13, ე is in place of it almost everywhere. It is thought that this fact indicates that the use of the ჳ diphthong is acceptable where the scribe of the first manuscript works in Mar Saba, whereas it is replaced by ე on Mt. Sinai, or this difference is an individual peculiarity of the scribes.

Based on the cited examples, it can be surmised that all three copies reflect the peculiarities of the place and time when they were copied. It seems Sin. 35 was copied in an environment where the use of ჳ is considered normal, yet the colloquial language is gradually forgetting its function. Stemming from this, the scribe of this manuscript frequently places it in an incorrect position. As for Sin. 25, its scribe must be from the school where it was acceptable to write out the diphthong with two letters. In the case of Sin. 13, however, it must be hypothesized that the usage of this diphthong at this time is so diminished in both the colloquial and literary languages, that the scribe frequently no longer

writes it. In other words, the manuscript copied by him is closer to the norms of the new Georgian literary language. It is thought that all three copies originate from another mutual copy and not from each other, except the scribes frequently write the same words with forms they deem correct, or in the form accepted in the environment in which they work.

As it is known, the preverb ჩა appears in Old Georgian manuscripts after the year 906 [4: 106]. It is notable that this preverb is only encountered in one place in Sin. 35 and is presented in an older form there: შთაიყვანებს უფსკრულთა ჯოჯობეთისათა ცათაგან ცათაღსა (he shall be dragged down into the abyss of hell from the highest heaven) (Sin.35, 55v).

In copies containing the Old Georgian translation of Ammon's epistles, some locative preverbs are found. ex: თანა-წარჰყვდეს ყოველთა მათ კელმწიფებათა მტერისათა (Sin.35, 44r). (all the authority of the enemy shall perish along with him). Locative preverbs are secondary and inorganic for Georgian, thus Greek locative preverbs are frequently correlated with postpositions and preverbs by Georgian. This is the reason for an excess of location adverbs having the function of locative preverbs. The Greek language, however, is found to have a certain role in such an activization [5:145].

It seems our manuscript is also characterized by this influence of the Greek language, where location adverbs are frequently used as locative preverbs. Later on, however, there is no sign of their influence in secular literary works.

In St. Ammon's epistles, primarily the norms of Old Georgian are followed when using the postpositions წინაშე, თანა, and ზედა. In Sin. 35 there is a case when the postposition ზედა is shown in the dative case with an animate object: განსაცდელი არა მოიწევს კაცსა ზედა (Sin.35, 54v). (a temptation shall not befall a man). The usage of these postpositions is sharply delineated by the literary language according to

whether a noun is animate or inanimate, but based on the cited example, it is possible to surmise that their equalization in the colloquial language had already begun and were gradually becoming established in the literary language as well.

remarkable fact is that Sin. 25 uses the ძრიელ form, when the original ძლიერ form is preserved in Sin. 35. Ex.: განძრიელდით სულითა (strengthen yourselves in spirit) (Sin.25,52v); This characteristic of Sin. 25 must be ascribed to the influence of a regional dialect.

there is a case when a name is put in the ergative case with the corresponding marker: იაკობმან არა წარწყმედა კურთხევად იგი მისი (Sin.35, 51r). (Jacob did not waste his blessing). It seems at this time, names are appended with case markers in the nominative and ergative cases when speaking, like common nouns. The scribe attempts to follow the linguistic norms, but this specific occurrence indicates that although the literary language is conservative and artificial, forms acceptable in colloquial speech have already started to make some incursions.

There is an attempt to differentiate the inclusive-exclusive first-person plurals in the manuscripts. Yet in the cited examples, it seems that the concept of this category must be faulty. In the next segment, it is quite clear that at times the მ- prefix and other times the expected გუ- prefix are used in the same combination of persons: განმათავისუფლნეს ჩუენ და გუეჟმნეს ჩუენ შორის მცველ და [გუა] სწავებდეს ჩუენ თითოეულსა მას, რომელსა შევცუევით უმეცრებითა, ნუუკუე განმიყენოს და ... არა შემიწყალნეს ჩუენ, ანუ ვითარცა მასწავა ჩუენ უფალმან ჩუენმან ... (Sin. 35, 61; Sin. 25, 68r). (He shall free us all and be our protector and teach us all what we do in error, let Him not cast us aside and have us fall into the hands of the enemy, or not forgive us, or as our Lord ...taught us).

There are some occurrences of the incorrect usage of the inclusive:

There are also such cases when in the same verb, the plurality of the object is preserved in one text, yet at the same spot in the second text, it is already dysfunctional and presented without this marker. It must be hypothesized that in this case, the violation was caused by the conflict of two markers, compare: არავინ აცთუნეს (Sin.35,46r); აცთუნნეს (Sin.13,65v) (Let no one tempt him).

It seems the plural object marker ნ is consistently shown in verbs in the pre-Athonite epoch. Such consistency is especially characteristic of the Mar Saba school, whereas in Sin. 25, its absence in about two spots already indicates that their use was already diminishing in the Mt. Sinai literary school due to the colloquial language's influence. The fact is also remarkable that object plurality is preserved everywhere in the version of Sin. 13.

In consideration of the history of person markers, some occurrences when ჰ- is shown in place of the ს- prefix as a second-person subject and a third-person object marker are quite interesting. Primarily the Sin. 25 manuscript is characterized by this. Compare: სჯდე რად სენაკსამენსა... (Sin. 35, 63r); ჰჯდე... (Sin.25, 62v) (If you are sitting in your cell...).

From the standpoint of the usage of different lexical units (synonyms), the manuscript copies containing Ammon's epistles are not very notable. Only a few occurrences are encountered: წინამოსავი – წინამოსაჯული (*undefined* – accuser). უფალი – ღმერთი (Lord – God). ლეპტა – წულილი (penny – spare change, coin).

A variant of the old term for a monk's attire ფიჩუ is found in our copies: ფუიჩუ (ფვჩუ): ნუ იმოს ფუიჩუსა სხუათა თანა (do not wear the cloak around others). It is defined as a cloak, „წამოსასხამი, ჩენწო“ [6:227].

It is possible to conclude:

As shown by the analysis, the norms of the Old Georgian language are frequently not followed in the manuscript copies. Many discrepancies also show up between the

manuscripts indicating the varying linguistic experience and speech habits of the scribes. There are also some cases in the manuscripts that are more characteristic of manuscripts from a later time period.

The Old Georgian translation of this literary work was done in the pre-Athonite period in the realm of Mar Saba. They are an invaluable source in getting to know not only Byzantine

literature, but also translated Georgian literature.

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ენათმეცნიერება

წმინდა ამონას ეპისტოლეთა ძველი ქართული თარგმანის მნიშვნელობა და თავისებურებანი

ქ. მამასახლისი

თბილისის სასულიერო აკადემია და სემინარია, თბილისი, საქართველო

(წარმოდგენილია აკადემიის წევრის ა. არაბულის მიერ)

მონასტრული ცხოვრების წიაღში შექმნილი წმინდა ამონას ზნეობრივი დარიგებანი სულიერ სამწყსოსთან ურთიერთობის მრავალწლიანი გამოცდილების შედეგია. წმ. ამონას ეპისტოლარული მემკვიდრეობიდან ქართულ ენაზე შემოგვრჩა 16 ეპისტოლე, რომლებიც დაცულია რამდენიმე ხელნაწერში: Sin. 35 (907 წ.), Sin. 25 (X ს.), Sin. Geo. N. 13 (X ს.). X საუკუნის სინურ ხელნაწერებში დაცული ეს ეპისტოლეები წინათონურ ეპოქას განეკუთვნება. აღნიშნულ ნუსხათაგან Sin. 35 თარიღიანია. ქრონოლოგიური თვალსაზრისით, იგი ყველაზე ძველი ხელნაწერია და, ამავე დროს, ყველაზე სრულყოფილად შეიცავს ამონას 16-ვე ეპისტოლეს. შეიძლება ვივარაუდოთ, რომ ის არის წყარო Sin. 25 ნუსხისა (X ს.), რომელშიც ამონას მხოლოდ ოთხი ეპისტოლეა წარმოდგენილი. ანდა ორივე მათგანი ერთი და იმავე ხელნაწერიდან არის გადაწერილი. იგივე შეიძლება ვიფიქროთ Sin. 13 ეტრატზეც (X ს.), რომელიც პალიმფსესტია. Sin. 35, Sin. 25 და Sin. 13 ნუსხები ათონური და იერუსალიმური ხელნაწერებისგან მნიშვნელოვნად სხვაობს, რადგან ისინი გაცილებით ადრეა შექმნილი და მათ, შესაძლოა, ქართული ლიტერატურის დასაბამთან მიგვიყვანონ; Sin. 35-ის შექმნის არეალად საბაწმინდის მონასტერია მიჩნეული, ხოლო დანარჩენი ორისინის მთაზე უნდა გადაწერილიყო. იქიდან გამომ-

დინარე, რომ Sin. 25 ნუსხაში წარმოდგენილია მხოლოდ ოთხი ეპისტოლე, გვავარაუდებინებს შემდეგს: სავსებით შესაძლებელია, აღნიშნული ნუსხის სახით საქმე გვაქვს ამონას ეპისტოლეთა ე.წ. კვინობიტურ რედაქციასთან, რომელსაც პრაქტიკული დანიშნულება ჰქონდა მონასტრული ცხოვრების ყოველდღიურ ყოფაში. ჩვენ არ ვიცით ამონას ეპისტოლეთა ქართველი მთარგმნელი, მაგრამ დაბეჯითებით შეგვიძლია ვთქვათ, რომ ზემოთ დასახელებული ნუსხები ერთმანეთის ვარიანტებია და ტექსტობრივი თვალსაზრისით მეტ-ნაკლებად სხვაობენ. როგორც უკვე აღვნიშნეთ, სავარაუდოა, რომ Sin. 25 და Sin. 13 მომდინარეობს Sin. 35-დან, ანდა ერთი და იმავე დედნიდან. ამ მოსაზრებას გვიმტკიცებს მათი ურთიერთშედარების შედეგად გამოტანილი დასკვნები: სამივე ნუსხა გადაწერილი უნდა იყოს ერთი და იმავე დედნიდან, რომელიც დაწერილი უნდა ყოფილიყო ასომთავრულით.

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