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PERCEPTION OF SHOTA RUSTAVELI'S POEM "THE KNIGHT IN PARTHER'S SKIN" IN UKRAINIAN LITERARY REALITY

In the second half of the 19th century representatives of the intellectual part of Ukrainian society became acquainted with the achievements of the Georgian literature. First of all, their attention was attracted by the early medieval Georgian literature, Shota Rustaveli's poem "The Knight in Panther Skin". It was preceded by dramatic circumstances in Ukraine. Taras Shevchenko's companions in the secret "Cyril-Methodius Society" – Alexander Navrotsky and Mykola Gulak – were arrested and strictly punished, having served their prison terms and ended up in Georgia in different ways and different period.

Alexander Navrotsky was an educated person, constantly interested in literary novelties. He read a lot, translated (Mickiewicz, Byron, Ossian, Goethe, Schiller and Homer) and wrote poetry himself. Alexander Navrotsky was interested in Shota Rustaveli's poem "The Knight in the Panther's Skin".

He decided to translate the poem into Ukrainian. It was the first translation of the "The Knight in the Panther's Skin" in the history of translation. Nowadays, researchers have only the Prologue (31 strophes) and four chapters of the poem with the last incompleated chapter. It should be noted that in his work A. Navrotsky used the poem by Sh.Rustaveli in the publication of King VakhtangVI.

Professor Otar Bakanidze, the author of "The History of Ukranian Literature"(in three volumes, in Georgian) carried out extensive work and found unknown autographs of two editions of A.Navrotsky's translations of the "The Knight in the Panther's Skin" in the collections of the Georgian National Centre of Manuscripts. It is worth noting that it was a version of translation of

Sh.Rustaveli's poem into Russian. As, O. Bakanidze notes, the first edition consists of an introduction and the first chapter, totally of 71 strophes. The translator sought to reproduce the original of Rustaveli's "shairi"- an eight-line strophes. The second edition is larger with an introduction and ten chapters, totally 339 strophes. A. Navrotsky attempted to translate the poem into six-line strophe. The translator experimented, looking for the most acceptable version of the strophe for himself. According to O. Bakanidze, these two editions of A. Navrotsky's translation of "The Knight in the Panther's Skin" into Russian formed the basis for the Ukrainian translation which is known to us.

The translator must either speak the original language of the text or have an interlinear translation. A.Navrotsky did not speak Georgian, therefore, he had to use interlinear translation. The Georgian National Centre of Manuscripts has notebook where there is the author's inscription on the title page: "An interlinear translation of Shota Rustaveli's poem "Wearing the Leopard Skin" started by the request of A. Navrotsky in 1889 in T.-Kh.Shura" (Temir-Khan Shura, Dagestan).

The author of this interlinies passage was the famous Georgian figure A. Sarajishvili, who was graduated from the Faculty of Law of Kiev University. He returned to his homeland and then began serving as an officer in Dagestan region, where A. Navrotsky and A.Sarajishvili met each other and became friends. They began their work on preparing translation of "The Knight in the Panther's Skin". In 1892, unfortunately, A. Navrotsky died in Temir-Khan-Shura. A. Sarajishvili reserved A. Navrotsky's papers in his personal archive. Thanks to the first unfinished translation into Ukrainian of Shota Rustaveli's poem "The Knight in the Panther's Skin" which has reached us.

Another member of the "Cyril-Methodius Society", Nikolai Gulak, also lived in Georgia against his own will. In the early eighties of the 19th century, N. Gulak was acquainted with the poem by Shota Rustaveli and decided to translate "The Knight in the Panther's Skin" into Ukrainian. By that time he had already translated many strophes into Russian prose (which was the preparation

for the large and difficult task of translation). It's worth noting that the enforced stay in Georgia turned into a conscious desire to live and work in this region. N. Gulak stayed here until the end of his life. Nikolai Ivanovich was a well-educated and outstanding scientist. He was fluent in multiple languages, ancient and modern. He was a professional lawyer, an excellent mathematician and at the same time he was fond of linguistics and literature. The works of N. Gulak brought him widespread popularity among scientists not only in the Russian Empire but also in Western Europe.

In 1870-80, N. Gulak took up his favorite activity – literature. He was especially interested in the early Georgian literature and literature of the Georgian Renaissance. Starting work on the study of the early Georgian literature and works of Shota Rustaveli N. Gulak, unlike his predecessors, non-Georgians by nationality, set himself the task of mastering the Georgian language in order to be able to familiarize himself in originals with the rich literature of this ancient people. He successfully coped with this task. He was so successful that he was able not only to read and translate, but also deciphered some words and expressions, the meaning of which remained unsolved before him.

Professor Nodar Porakishvili notes that the appearance of N. Gulak's book "The Knight in the Panther's Skin" was an outstanding phenomenon in the cultural life of Georgia. With his work, Gulak made a significant contribution to the development of Rustvelology as an independent science. The book of the outstanding Ukrainian scientist played a significant role in popularizing Rustaveli's poem abroad and strengthening cultural ties between the Georgian and Ukrainian people.

The outstanding Ukrainian poet and translator Nikolai Platonovich Bazhan is the author of the world's best translation of Shota Rustaveli's poem into Ukrainian. During his childhood he heard the melodic lines of Rustaveli's shairi from Georgian soldier who served in a regiment, where the father of the future poet served as an officer too. In the 20s of the twentieth century in Kharkov,

N. Bazhan met a Georgian doctor whom he mastered the Ukrainian language and the doctor began to teach N. Bazhan Georgian. Acquaintance with the Georgian writer Konstantine Gamsakhurdia had a beneficial effect on further creative activity and the meeting with Simon Chikovani grew into a strong long-term friendship. He made friends with Titsian Tabidze, Paolo Iashvili, Valeryan Gaprindashvili, Konstantine Chichinadze and many other representatives of the Georgian literary bohemia.

After the meeting with the outstanding writer Konstantine Gamsakhurdia, N. Bazhan began working on a translation of the “The Knight in the Panther’s Skin” in collaboration with the Rustvelology scholar Solomon Iordanishvili, the author of the most famous, most accurate and scientifically based interlinear translation into Russian of Shota Rustaveli poem.

N. Bazhan devoted seven years to work on translation. His style of translation first involves a deep understanding of the poem and then its reconstruction into Ukrainian. N. Bazhan carefully polished precisely those strophes of the original where Rustaveli’s poetic vision is especially clearly manifested.

The masterful translation of “The Knight in the Panther’s Skin” by N. Bazhan gained high recognition and widespread popularity went through more than one edition. It is still considered as the world’s best translation of this work. N. Bazhan’s translation opened a new stage and raised Ukrainian-Georgian literary and cultural relations of the 20th century to a new level.

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