

# PURISM

in minor languages,  
endangered languages,  
regional languages,  
mixed languages

*Papers from the conference on  
'Purism in the Age of Globalisation'  
Bremen, September 2001*

Edited by  
Joseph Brincat, Winfried Boeder  
&  
Thomas Stolz

DIVERSITAS LINGUARUM

Edited by  
Thomas Stolz

Volume 2

Universitätsverlag Dr. N. Brockmeyer  
Bochum 2003

## Purity of language in the history of Georgian\*

### Abstract

Purism is not a timeless, immutable and universal phenomenon. Its conceptualisation and its practice differ according to their social and intellectual embedding. The present paper deals with three relevant forms of “purity” in the pre-19<sup>th</sup> century history of Georgian: the purity of language in the pre-8<sup>th</sup> century translations of the Gospels, which was based on a kind of “naive purism”; the purity of language as a constitutive part of 17<sup>th</sup> century poetics, which was opposed to the excessive use of foreign elements in Georgian; and in particular the purity of language as conceptualised in Greek rhetoric and practiced by medieval translators and authors writing on philosophical and theological matters. This last concept presupposes a tradition which can be either continuous, as in the case of medieval Georgian writers of the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> century, or discontinuous, as in the classicist approach of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century revival.

### 1. Introduction

The following observations are meant as a prelude to the paper by SHUKIA APRIDONIDZE. They deal with “purism” in a wider sense, with its roots in pre-nationalistic linguistic practice and in particular with the impact of classical rhetoric on the conceptualisation of the Georgian language for most of its history. This old form of “purism” might serve as a foil to the rather different developments since the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and as an indication that the concept of “purity” and “purism” has to be related to its respective historical framework of ideas. I should make it clear at the very outset that my reconstruction is highly speculative, based as it is on a few, unsystematic

---

\* Many thanks go to NINO DOBORJGINIDZE (NINO DOBORŠGINIŽE, Tbilisi/Göttingen) for her extremely knowledgeable provision of relevant sources, especially the published and unpublished comments of medieval writers like EPREM MTSIRE and others, and for the elucidation of some passages. Without her help, I could not have written this paper. I am also indebted to SHUKIA APRIDONIDZE (ŠUKIA APRIDONIŽE, Tbilisi) for her careful correction of some embarrassing mistakes, to LELA ALEXIDZE (LELA ALEKSIŽE, Tbilisi/Gießen) for a helpful discussion of a passage by IOANE PETRITSI and for providing me additional material, and to R. MC LAUGHLIN (Oldenburg) for correcting my English.

and marginal hints we find in the sources as we know them from the work of Georgian philologists.

Before entering into my cursory survey, let me give a preliminary outline of the historical context of the beginnings.

Georgian is a Caucasian language. The term “Caucasian languages” is primarily geographic and refers to the autochthonous languages of the Caucasus, to the exclusion of Indo-European languages such as Russian and Armenian, and Turkic languages such as Azeri in Azerbaijan. In all probability, Georgian is genetically not related to the fifty-odd other Caucasian languages of the Northern Caucasus such as Abkhaz, Cherkez, Chechen and Avar, nor is it genetically related to the only two other literary languages of the South Caucasus that existed in late antiquity: Armenian, which is Indo-European, and Caucasian Albanian, an extinct language which has nothing to do with the Albanian language of the Balkans, but is an East Caucasian language that (almost) disappeared under the onslaught of the Iranian and Azeri conquerors of what is now Azerbaijan.

## 2. The “pure” Old Georgian language

In or around the 4<sup>th</sup> century the Armenians, the Caucasian Albanians and the Georgians became Christians; distinct alphabets were created for every single language, and the Gospels and other parts of the Bible were translated into Armenian and Georgian – a process comparable to the almost contemporary creation of the Gothic alphabet and WULFILA’s translation of the Bible in an area not so far away from the Caucasus. All these languages became literary languages under very specific conditions: firstly, their alphabets offered a visually manifest identity; second, they were founded on a text that guaranteed a normative stability by its constant ecclesiastic use in the service and in other forms of spiritual life. At the same time, they offered a major factor of national identity besides religion.<sup>1</sup> This applies to Armenia, with its long periods of subjugation, and the persecution and world-wide scattering of its inhabitants, but also to Georgia: for long periods of its history, it was divided into separate political units and dominated by Arab, Iranian, Turkish and other powers. But, as one 10<sup>th</sup> century author says, Georgia was defined as the land whose religious language was Georgian – and only Georgian: a land “wherein the service (lit. ‘the hour(s)’) is celebrated and every prayer is performed

<sup>1</sup> See BOEDER 1994; 1998.

in the Georgian tongue. Only ('but') the Kyrie-eleison is said in Greek.<sup>2</sup> In a sense, we may say that the ecclesiastical Old Georgian form of the language was the dominant norm of literary Georgian for fourteen centuries. It is true that Georgian and its dialects underwent changes on all levels of the language, so that we may distinguish different periods of language history on the basis of innovations, although they tend to be attested only later and unevenly according to the different genres.<sup>3</sup> However, we are not so much interested in the internal changes of language history, but in what the speakers and writers "thought" their language was like, or rather: what their language should be like. In addition, even today, the oldest texts are accessible to educated school students with some help. Whatever the reasons for this conservatism are, one factor certainly was the permanent use and prestige of the old literary norm – a norm that was extremely uniform and "pure" and whose later, pre-19<sup>th</sup> century, variants could be considered as internal, and mostly minor, developments of morphological shape and morpho-syntactic distribution,<sup>4</sup> and of the non-core parts of the lexicon. In a sense, the language remained the same.<sup>5</sup>

But where does the concept of "purity" come in? Like so many languages in intimate contact with other languages, both Old and Modern Georgian are full of loan words and lexical and even grammatical calques.<sup>6</sup> In the 4<sup>th</sup> century, many Iranian and Armenian loan words were probably no longer felt as foreign, in spite of some more or less non-native phonotactic features and the fact that many speakers knew those languages as

---

<sup>2</sup> GIORGI MERCHANT, Life of Grigol of Khandzta: *kueqanaj [...] romelsaca šina Kartulita enita žami šeicirvebis xolo kwrielejsoni Berzulad itkumis* (MARR 1911, Ch. 43)

<sup>3</sup> SARŽVELAŽE 1984b.

<sup>4</sup> This is at least the conception propounded by KORNELI KEKELIŽE (1980: 33): "On the oldest level of its development, this common Georgian language is extremely pure [*es saerto Kartuli ena uayresad cmin-daa*], and whoever learns it will have command of the general, literary Georgian language, whatever its epoch, because the subsequent change will be understood on the basis of the living language that s/he already knows." MIKHEIL TARKHNISHVILI's wording of the passage stresses the organic character of this development: "Die seit dem 8. Jahrhundert allen Georgiern gemeinsame Sprache ist überaus klar, einfach, gut ausgebildet, ja, gewissermaßen geradezu vollendet. Wer sie beherrscht, ist der allgemeinen georgischen Sprache überhaupt mächtig, welcher Zeit sie auch angehören mag, das Neugeorgische ausgenommen. Denn ihre spätere, eher fortschreitende Entfaltung ist nicht sprunghaft verlaufen; sie hat sich vielmehr auf der Grundlage des Vorausgehenden und schon Bekannten schmerzlos vollzogen. Der Unterschied, der sich bei Griechen oder Armeniern zwischen der alten und der neuen Sprache, bei den Russen zwischen Alt-Slawisch und Russisch auftut, lässt sich bei den Georgiern nicht nachweisen." (TARCHNIŠVILI 1955: 24).

<sup>5</sup> BABUNAŠVILI & UTURGAŽE 1991: 61.

<sup>6</sup> For a short survey of borrowed words in Old Georgian, see SARŽVELAŽE 1984a: 156-197.

being different from their own, and could identify their lexical affiliation. Anyway, the language of that time was neither unmixed nor purist. But what is of interest here is a phenomenon observed in many other cases of Christianisation: as in the case of, for example, Old English practice, the early translators avoided borrowing additional lexemes from the source languages (Greek, but also Armenian, Syriac, and later Arabic). There are, of course, borrowings for new concepts,<sup>7</sup> but to translate words for “devil”, “priest”, “apostle”, “disciple”, “service”, “mercy” etc., they used native lexemes, whatever the conceptual distance between the original sense and the new concept to be rendered for speakers so far unfamiliar with the new religion.<sup>8</sup> On the other hand, the translators did not avoid loan translations like “giving light” for “baptism”, which is a calque of a Syriac model.<sup>9</sup> – This is certainly not “purism” *avant la lettre*, but it is the result of an attitude that avoids foreign elements as far as possible. To be more precise: they avoided accommodation on the surface level of linguistic form which is the most suggestive of nativeness and comparable to the visibility of a native Georgian alphabet.<sup>10</sup> Notice that non-accommodation, or non-borrowing, like language maintenance, is no less remarkable than accommodation or borrowing (and language loss), and needs to be explained. We may speculate about the reasons for this “purity”; such could be, for instance, a pastoral intention which minimised the foreignness of a new religion by maximising the nativeness of its linguistic form. What matters here, however, is the existence of a naive, pre-theoretic and pre-nationalist feeling of linguistic foreignness and its impact. Although a term like “giving light” did not make the Christian concept any more understandable than a linguistically opaque word like “baptism”, the formal transparency of “giving light” made a difference, as far as its social acceptability is concerned: transparent words may not be immediately understood, but they promise an easier understanding than elements that are both formally and semantically strange.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Greek *ekklesia*, for instance, is translated into Georgian, where it means ‘gathering, congregation’ (*kre-bul-*), but ‘church’ is new, and therefore rendered by the Greek word (*eklesia*); *syneidēsis* ‘conscience’, that produced loan translations in so many European languages (Latin *con-scientia*, German *Ge-wissen*), is translated (*goneba-*), but some mss. use the Greek word (*swnidis-*) instead of the Georgian one (*ičv-* ‘doubt’) in some special contexts (‘bad conscience’, as in 1 Cor. 27-29); it has become the common word in Modern Georgian (*sindis-*) etc. For some comments see SCHMIDT 1994.

<sup>8</sup> It should be mentioned, however, that there had been some contact with a Pre-Christian Jewish community in Georgia.

<sup>9</sup> Calques in biblical translations have been studied extensively by KORNELI DANELIA (see, for instance, DANELIA 1983; 1988)

<sup>10</sup> See BOEDER 1998: 69.

<sup>11</sup> In this I disagree with LEO SPITZER (1918), who in his otherwise brilliant paper on the connection between aggressive purism and aggressive patriotism argues for a full exploitation of foreign words: The

### 3. Georgian as a literary language in the theory of medieval translators

Many centuries after the translation of the Bible, there are two aspects that can be reconstructed for the medieval understanding of the position of Georgian and the properties it should have: the opposition between an ideal form of the literary language and other forms of Georgian on the one hand, and the opposition between good Georgian and deviant Georgian against the background of the relationship between Georgian and Greek, on the other.

As pointed out by SARJVELADZE,<sup>12</sup> the linguistic ideal of the medieval ecclesiastical writers is the *cignuri ena* [lit. ‘bookish language’], that is the literary language of the texts of their *auctores*, which is partially different from the *sopluri ena*, which I understand as the ‘secular [lit. ‘worldly’] language’.<sup>13</sup> The passages where this opposition occurs<sup>14</sup> reveal a double opposition:

- a) *cignuri* is the rigid norm of the traditional Old Georgian ecclesiastical language in contrast to ordinary contemporary Georgian. The difference appears, for instance, to be lexical: instead of *ayebaj* ‘to take up (on oneself)’, *twirtvaj* is ‘usually used by *msopleni*’ (‘secular people’), as I have heard many times from many people’.<sup>15</sup>

The word *medgari*, which in the old literary language means ‘lazy’, is used with

---

fact that native words for scientific concepts are conceptually not easier to understand than e.g. latinate words, and that, as pointed out by DORNSEIFF (1921: 228), opaqueness of a technical vocabulary is even good for scientific reasoning, because it avoids undesirable connotations of natively motivated lexemes: all this is only part of the truth, because it is confined to the conceptual function of language.

<sup>12</sup> SARŽVELA3E 1981, 1984a: 232–236, 1984b.

<sup>13</sup> The German translation (in SARŽVELA3E 1989) uses the term *ländlich* ‘rustic’, which must have the same basis as the translation ‘dialectal’ in the corresponding entry of SARŽVELA3E 1995. But I have some doubts that in this context the Old Georgian *sopel-*, from which the adjective *soplur-* is derived, means ‘village’ or the like (as it does in Modern Georgian), rather than ‘world’. One primary meaning of Old Georgian *soplur-* was ‘worldly’, as opposed to ‘ecclesiastic, monastic, religious’ or the like; cp. SARŽVELA3E 1995 s.v. *soplurobaj ‘amkveqnierebaj’* [...] ‘arasaeklesio ćesit cxovreba’ (‘worldly life, non-ecclesiastic life’), and s.v. *sopluri: iknnis špoti da bgeraj garet da ocnebaj sopluri* ‘there is tumult and noise outside and worldly marvelling’. Cp. the story of a priest who held service in an ordinary garment, which was unacceptable to Byzantine standards: *romelsame žamsa sopluri vinme xucesi axlad čamosuli ćmidisa Swmeonis suetsa zeda gasrul ijo žamis-ćirvad kalamnita da sabečurita, twnier samydelojsa šesamoslisa, vitarca ijo pirvelad ćesi čueni* (EPREM MTSIRE in LOLAŠVILI 1994: 213 § 63) ‘At one time, some *sopluri* minister, a newcomer, had gone out on the column of Saint Symeon to hold the service with sandals and mantle, without sacerdotal vestment, as it used to be the rule among us originally.’ Was this a “rustic” priest? Following an interpretation by NINO DOBORŠGINI3E, I think he was simply clad in a worldly, i.e. non-sacerdotal, mantle.

<sup>14</sup> SARŽVELA3E 1984a: 232–236; 1989; 1995 s.v. *sopluri*.

<sup>15</sup> ćwēul ars qumevad *msopletaganca*, *vitarca me mravalgzis mravaltan masmies* (Asceticon ms. 90r, 28–30a apud SARŽVELA3E 1989: 8).

the meaning ‘sly’ ‘rather in simple conversation’.<sup>16</sup> With regard to the Greek technical term *léxis*, the theologian and translator EPREM MTSIRE (EPREM MCIRE) writes: “you should learn that they call *leksi* a difficult<sup>17</sup> literary word which in the secular language will have a different counterpart, and this word is called *kerakan* in Armenian, but I do not know it in Georgian.”<sup>18</sup>

- b) *cignuri* is the rhetorically refined language in contrast to ordinary Georgian: EPREM MTSIRE says in his preface to the Dialectics of JOHN OF DAMASCUS: “But you should know which books can be adorned, and with which it is hopeless to do so, because you will find, if a “life” or a “martyrdom” or whatever story or narrative is written in secular and unfair speech, they will make it fair, they will adorn it and call it a “metaphrase”, which is adorned”.<sup>19</sup>

But the second opposition is a new development connected with a specific literary movement that led to the linguistic remodelling of older texts to make them “beautiful” by ornament (Greek *kósmos*). Otherwise, the literary language is firmly based on the old traditional standard, however simple and unadorned its language might be: in the same text, EPREM says: “But nobody can dare to touch what the orthodox Fathers have written, as the Holy Gospel and the epistles of the apostle Paul; even if they were written in simple speech, nobody of the wise and orthodox can touch them”.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>16</sup> *medgari mzakuvarad gulisqma-iqopebis uprojsa litonsa saubarsa šina* (Asceticon ms. A 689, 73r ib.). The following passage refers to the same distinction: *cignurad mconaresa uqmobs medgarsa, xolo soplurad mzakuarsa hrkwan medgari twt Kartulsa enasa zeda* (Asceticon ms. A 689, 43r, 13<sup>th</sup> cent. apud SARŞVELA3E 1984a: 233) ‘in the literary language, they call *medgari* a lazy [person], but in the “secular language”, a sly [person] is so called *medgari* in the Georgian language itself’. The interpretation of the bold-faced part is a problem. SARŞVELA3E (1995 s. v. *sopluri*) puts a comma after *hrkwan*, in 1981 before *twt*. Maybe it simply refers to the fact that *medgar-* is Georgian in contrast to Iranian-Armenian *mzakur-*.

<sup>17</sup> *yrma* ‘deep, profound’, which corresponds to Greek *bathys*.

<sup>18</sup> *šeiscave vitarmed leksi yrmasa sitquasa hkwan cignursa, romelsa soplurad nacvali sxuaj akundes da esevitarsa mas sitquasa Somxurad kerakani hrkwan, Kartulad ara vici* (EPREM MTSIRE in RAPAVA 1976: 105).

<sup>19</sup> *garna uçgitmca tu romelta cıgtaj egebis kazmvaj, anu romelta uyonoj ars, rametu ipoos tu “cxoreabaj”, anu “cameabaj”, anu rajcaraj hambavi, gina motxrobaj soplurita da ušuerita sitquita aycerili, mas sitquit ganašuenben, gardahkazmeben da metapras uçoden, romel ars gardakazmuli* (RAPAVA 1976: 68). – A similar, but more extensive comment by EPREM MTSIRE is found in TVALTVA3E 1996: 194 (pointed out to me by NINO DOBORŞGINI3E).

<sup>20</sup> *xolo ćmidata tkumulsa da martlmadidebelta mamata aycerilsa vervin iķadrebs šexebad, vitarca ćmida-saxarebasa da ebistoleta Pavle mocikulisata, raodenmca liitonita sitquita ayceril iquo, brzenta da martlmadidebeltagani vervin šeexebis* (RAPAVA 1976: 68).

For the 12<sup>th</sup> century, SARJVELADZE<sup>21</sup> distinguishes three “styles” of language: the conservative type, continuing the old tradition (“bookish” in sense a); the Hellenophile type, with its artificial calques; and what he calls the “democratic” standard type of non-religious literature which incorporates some of the linguistic changes that have occurred and that are present also in the conservative type – but as unintended breaches of the old norm. It is the conservative and the non-religious standard types that continued to exist side by side in the following centuries, the latter taking a kind of medial position between the ecclesiastical language and the everyday language of educated speakers that must have existed. It was the ecclesiastic end of the continuum that was “pure” or tried to be “pure” in adhering to the old norms as strictly as feasible.

But how could the opposition of “bookish” and “secular” language be used in a time, when an undeniable “secular” literature had already come into existence? The opposition stems from a time when (almost) the only written language was the one used in the books of ecclesiastical tradition which is preserved either in the “simple” form used in the Gospels and by the Fathers or later – in its rhetorically heightened form. When the “secular” written literature was emancipated from this tradition, the opposition changed its meaning in that “secular language” had to include both the literary form of non-religious literature and the “simple” spoken language.

The question of purity in a broad sense became essential at the peak of medieval literary production, although the term “pure” is never used in the purist sense, as far as I know. To be precise: the problem is reflected in the comments of some of the leading monastic writers on theological and philosophical matters when they encounter problems of translation from Greek during the “Hellenophile” period beginning in the 11<sup>th</sup> century (SARŽVELAŽE 1997). Here are some such comments:

I begin with statements by EPREM MTSIRE, the 12<sup>th</sup> century “legislator” (KORNELI KEKLIDZE) of a whole school whose texts abound with Greek calques.<sup>22</sup> First of all he acknowledges the particular quality of Greek: “the Greek language is unfathomably profound”, but “one word takes on many shades of meaning (lit. ‘mouths, face, category’); hardly would you find a Georgian word that is similar to it”,<sup>23</sup> which means that

<sup>21</sup> SARŽVELAŽE 1997: 5-6.

<sup>22</sup> SARŽVELAŽE 1997: 5.

<sup>23</sup> Comment on the commentary of JOHANNES CHRYSOSTOMUS on the *Acts* (*Sakne Mocikulta*. Teksti gamosacemad moamzada Ilia Abulazem. Tbilisi 1950, p. 209): *Berzenta enaj upskrul yrma ars da erti sitquaj mrvalsa pirsa ayarebs. zlit moupoi Kartuli msgavsebuli sitquaj.* (For *piri* in the sense of Greek *skόpos* ‘goal, what somebody aims, drives at’ and ‘meaning’, see MELIKIŠVILI 1999: 153; 157.)

a translator of Greek texts often has to struggle with enormous difficulties of translation; the Georgian wording does not fit the original “properly”.<sup>24</sup>

Similarly, a commentary from the 11<sup>th</sup> century complains about the “helplessness” of the Georgian language: “because of their helplessness (‘powerlessness’), the Georgians have only the word *suli* (‘soul’)” (whereas the Greeks differentiate between *psukhē* and *pneūma*).<sup>25</sup>

The theologian and philosopher IOANE PETRITSI (IOANE PETRICI), who never shrinks from using artificial terminology,<sup>26</sup> also praises his model language and underlines the necessity of developing a well-defined technical vocabulary: One must know, he says, that the force and activity of the soul (*suli*) is different from that of the mind (*goneba*): “and they are called by their own [special] name in the clear language forms<sup>27</sup> of the Greeks according to their essence. But none of our translators nor anybody else has looked after them, and now it hinders me enormously in my translation, because our people [lit. ‘ours’] say and name it all the same way and alike.”<sup>28</sup> In short, the Greek original often does not “correspond to our language”,<sup>29</sup> i.e. to the language of “our” translations.

The topos where writers complain about the poverty of their mother tongue has different functions depending on its various contexts: it can be apologetic or it can serve as

<sup>24</sup> *ara usakutresad ges* ‘it is not put in the most proper way’. (The term *ara usakutresi* ‘not most proper’ seems to correspond to the Greek concept *akyriología* ‘(semantically) incorrect use’, which is one of the breaches of *hellenismós* and is opposed to *kyriólexis* (SIEBENBORN 1976: 36); cp. *sakutrad* Greek *kyriōs* (RAPAVA 1976: 252 s.v. *sakutari*; *sakutari* ‘proper’ is the opposite of *nardomi* ‘incorrect’ (MELIKIŠVILI 1999: 33).

<sup>25</sup> *Kartvelta u yonoebisagan erti saxeli akus sulisa* (A 217, 322r, 11<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup> cent.; according to NINO DOBORŽGINIŠE).

<sup>26</sup> See MELIKIŠVILI 1999 for a detailed study of his philosophical terminology.

<sup>27</sup> lit. ‘sunlanguages’, i.e. ‘[forms (?) of] lucid expression’. Cp. SULKHAN-SABA ORBELIANI s.v. *mzeenaoba* ‘enamzeoba, ena-natlad metjveleba’. LELA ALEKSIŠE points out to me that PETRITSI’s term and its synonyms (see note 34) refer to the specific “cleanness” or “lucidity” of Greek, whose form enables it to render the sense (of ontological definitions) exactly. She supports her interpretation by an additional passage from PETRITSI (ch. 140): *da dasasrulsa amis ymriebrivisa sxelisasa, romelsaca “ca” uçoda leksman barbarotaman, xolo “orano” Ellinta gonebadyeobam. rametu niadag ze xedavn mortulebaj oronojsaj da samaradisad miiyebis ymerikmnasa* ‘the end of this divine body, which the expression of the barbarians called *ca* [‘heaven’], but the lucidity of mind of the Greeks *ouranos*, for it constantly sees the adomment [kosmos] of heaven [uranos] and gets God’s creation for ever’. (PETRITSI’s etymological reasoning cannot be discussed here).

<sup>28</sup> *da qoveltave Ellinta enamzeobata zeda twsi saxeli hkvian, šesabami twsisa arsebisaj. xolo čuentaman arca targmanta, arca sxuaman vin dasčuritna, da ač me uzomod mišlis targmansa šina, rametu qovelsave eriad da scorad itqwan da dasdeben čuenni* (PETRITSI’s preface of his commentary on PROKLOS’s *Elementatio*; QAUXCİŞVILI 1940: 6).

<sup>29</sup> *ara šeetquebis čuensa (enasa)* (according to NINO DOBORŽGINIŠE, used by EPREM MTSIRE in several places).

a hint at the feat of achievement in the native tongue;<sup>30</sup> for people like PETRITSI, it was a stimulus of linguistic creativity.<sup>31</sup> It is the basis of this stimulus that matters here: the premise of all this reasoning is that everything should be translated and given a purely native form on the morphological and lexical surface level. We may speculate that this is the sociolinguistically decisive level as long as foreign grammar and foreign semantics can be considered as more or less possible, although unfamiliar, registers of one's own language.

One other feature of these remarks is constant comment on Hebraisms that deviate from proper Georgian, for instance an expression “which was used in our psalter according to the usage of Hebrew”,<sup>32</sup> admitting, however, that what is deviant, can become usage: “the unnecessary usage becomes a natural tendency [lit. ‘will’] or a rule”<sup>33</sup> – an idea that we know from GOETHE’s and WILHELM VON HUMBOLDT’s theory of translation and in which some purists might find consolation!

There are, however, exceptions where non-Georgian elements are justified: foreign items that have no counterparts in Georgia may keep their foreign name. EPREM MTSIRE says that he leaves untranslated Greek names of professions that do not exist in Georgian, “because even the Greeks themselves do the same” with fruit grown in foreign countries.<sup>34</sup> Another exception is “respect” for the source language: “As the Greeks, to honour the Hebrews, use many words of the Hebrews, so also the Georgians have many a word in use both from the Hebrews and from the Greeks, wherefore the ignorant are not easily able to distinguish the foreign Greek words from Hebrew. But we introduce words both from Hebrew which the Greeks have introduced, and then also from Greek very many other words, of which one is Christ’s name (Greek *christós* ‘anointed’<sup>35</sup>). Because the Hebrews have another name of the Anointed in their language, which is

<sup>30</sup> See MÜLLER-WETZEL 2000 and HILLE-COATES 2000 for the Western tradition of the *topos* of “egestas patrii sermonis”.

<sup>31</sup> This has been pointed out to me by NINO DOBORŽGINIŠE, who is preparing a comparative study of the Eastern and Western approach to the question of ecclesiastic language.

<sup>32</sup> *romeli čuens sapsalmunesa šina dadebul ars čueulebisaebr Ebraelisa* (unedited commentary on the psalms [specifically Song of Moses 2]: *Psalmunta gamokrebuli targmanebaj*, according to NINO DOBORŽGINIŠE).

<sup>33</sup> *čueulebaj nametnavi nebad bunebitad šeikmnebis, anutu česad* (unedited commentary on Psalm 73, 12; *čueulebaj* ‘habit, usage’ corresponds to Greek (*koinē*) *sunētheia*, which is one of the criteria of purity (SIEBENBORN 1976: 86; 90); see below for these criteria (survey of rhetorics).

<sup>34</sup> *rametu twi Berzennica amasve h̄jopen* (EPREM MTSIRE, *Asceticon*, ms. A-1115, 293 apud SARŽVELAŠE 1997: 9-10).

<sup>35</sup> The example is not particularly convincing in itself, because *Christós* has at least name-like properties; but what matters here is the idea of “respect” for a language.

“Messiah”, but in Greek it is “Christ” instead of the “Anointed”. Therefore it is clear that we say “Christ” to honour the Greeks, but in the psalter we say “Anointed” instead of “Christ”, to make more clear the force of the word.”<sup>36</sup>

Whatever the practical goals of all these translations were (– who were the readers who were unable to read the Greek originals, but able to understand a Georgian translation of a philosophical text?), one thing is certain: the translators were eager to give Georgian a status equal with Greek: “I have taken trouble to make the Georgian language to be like [lit. ‘lead it to’] the Greek language,” EPREM MTSIRE says.<sup>37</sup> Similarly, PETRITSI addresses his reader: “Come and let us imitate (?) the lucidity of the language of the Greeks themselves, as something suited for mental visions.”<sup>38</sup>

#### 4. The rhetorical theory of purity and the status of the Old Georgian language

What is the model of linguistic usage underlying these remarks that were primarily meant to throw light on the problem of translating Greek religious texts and philosophical treatises and of creating a rich technical terminology in Georgian with results lasting for centuries?<sup>39</sup> I think it is primarily the model of Greek rhetoric that used to be a cen-

<sup>36</sup> EPREM MTSIRE in his introduction to the translation of the psalms: *vitar-igi Berzenni pātivisatws Ebraeltajsa mravalta sitquata iqumeven Ebraulta, egretve Kartvelta mravali sitquaj akus saqmrad Ebraulisaganca da Berzulisaganca, vinajca umecarta mier ara advilad ganirčevian ucxoni igi sitquani Berzulni Ebraulisagan. xolo čuen Ebraulisaganca matve sitquata šemovixuamt, romelni Berzenta šemouxuman, da kualad Berzulisaganca sxuata umetesta sitquata, romeltagani erti ars “Kristesi”. rametu Ebraelia twssa enasa sxuaj saxeli akus “Cxebulisaj”, ese-igi ars “Mesia”, xolo Berzulad “Kriste” ars nacvalad “Cxebulisa”. vinajca cxad ars, vitarmed pātivisatws Berzentajsa vitqwt “Kristesa”, xolo Davitta šina “Cxebulsa” vitqwt nacvalad “Kristesa”, rajta umetesad cxad iqos zali sitquataj.* (ŠANIŠE 1968: 92).

<sup>37</sup> EPREM MTSIRE in an unedited comment on the commentary of JOHANNES CHRYSOSTOMUS on the *Acts* (according to NINO DOBORŽGINISE): *xolo me amistws davšuer, enajmca Kartuli Berzulisada mimeqvana.*

<sup>38</sup> moved da Ellentave enad yeobasa uvabadot, vitraca momaržusa gonierta xedvatasa (Chapter 50 of the *Elementatio*, QAUXCİŞVILI 1940: 107,18). It is not clear to me, whether *enadyeoba* really means *enamčevroba* ‘(rhetorical) eloquence’ or SULKHAN-SABA ORBELIANI’s *enasačinooba* ‘excellence of language?’ QAUXCİŞVILI 1940: 262) or rather: ‘clear language/expression’ (see note 24 on *enamzeoba*). In my translation “lucidity of language”, I follow LELA ALEKSISE who points out to me that PETRITSI always uses *dye* ‘day’ in the sense of ‘light’ or even ‘sunlight’; the word, then, means ‘a language that is like the light of the day’. As for “imitate”: *uvabadot* may be related to *badal-* ‘equal, peer’, but how shall we analyse this verb form? QAUXCİŞVILI (1940: 247) translates: *badlad movikcet* ‘let us become equals’ or *mivbažot* ‘let us imitate’. – (*gonieri*) *xedvaj* ‘(mental) vision’ should be read as a calque translation of Greek *theōria* (as opposed to lower forms of knowledge) (L. ALEKSISE). – ‘suited’ is a weak translation of *mo-maržue-* ‘dexterous, apt’; German *befähigt, geschick*.

<sup>39</sup> Notice that these translators created hundreds of new terms which were models for technical neologisms in the last century, and IOANE PETRITSI’s work is a basis of scientific terminology to this very day (BABUNAŠVILI & UTURGAISE 1991: 61).

tral part of any higher education and that lived on in Byzantium to its very end.<sup>40</sup> Let me remind you in this connection of the origin of the term “purity”; the earliest context where this concept became relevant was Alexandrine philology. The problem faced by these Hellenistic philologists was to re-establish a good text of Greek classics such as HOMER or the dramatists – an emendatory practice that was compared to medical healing or straightening.<sup>41</sup> One of the criteria of this pursuit was the correctness of Greek, *hellenismós*, as against barbarous Greek, as used by people who had no full command of this language.<sup>42</sup> Although “barbarism” as against “Hellenism” may have had emotional undertones of despite, this concept of purity is not based on a negation or hostility towards foreign languages, but on the requirement of full knowledge of a language and the full participation in its culture with all its educational implications.<sup>43</sup> During the period of Hellenism, this concept became denationalised: every non-Greek could become a Greek in the cultural sense,<sup>44</sup> and although the Greek language had been considered the appropriate expression of this culture, it became less bound to Greek as a specific linguistic form. Rhetorical education offered one of the means of acquiring this new cultural identity of Greekness,<sup>45</sup> providing the rules of the “*ars bene dicendi*”.<sup>46</sup> When the Romans became Hellenised, they could take up this non-ethnic concept of “Greekness” and could create a non-Greek counterpart of *hellenismós*: this was *Latinitas*, a concept of purity that was equally based on the full command of the language as represented by the usage of the educated members of society and was determined by the standard of good authors. By this time, the concept of purity had already become integrated into two disciplines of education: “grammar” and rhetoric. In rhetoric, purity counts as one of the virtues of speech and, along with perspicuity and appropriateness, contributes to the efficiency of public speech. Here is a survey that shows the place of purity in the system of rhetoric.<sup>47</sup>

---

<sup>40</sup> See HUNGER 1978: 65-74 for a survey of the very numerous compendia and treatises of Byzantine rhetorics.

<sup>41</sup> *diórhōsis*; see SIEBENBORN 1976: 117.

<sup>42</sup> SIEBENBORN 1976.

<sup>43</sup> For some discussion of the concept of “purity” in language and culture in general, see HÄRLE 1996.

<sup>44</sup> GELZER 1978: 27.

<sup>45</sup> TH. GELZER in LASSEUR 1978: 166.

<sup>46</sup> LASSEUR 1978: 167.

<sup>47</sup> For a short survey see LAUSBERG 1963.

a) There are five aspects of rhetorical activity:

1. *inventio* (subject matter to be “found”);
2. *dispositio* (ordering);
3. *elocutio* (elaboration of an efficient text);
4. *memoria* (memorizing);
5. *actio* (performance);

b) the *virtutes elocutionis* (3.) ‘virtues of speech’ are:

1. *aptum* ‘appropriate style’;
2. *puritas* (Greek *katharótēs*); specifically, the *sermo purus* ‘pure speech’ (*léxis kathará*) is *hellenismós* ‘proper Greek’, whose Latin counterpart is *Latinitas* ‘proper Latin’;
3. *perspicuitas* ‘perspicuity = understandability’;
4. *ornatus* (Greek *kósmos, katáskeuē*).

c) the criteria of *puritas* are:

*consuetudo* (Greek *sunētheia, súnēthes*), *usus* ‘usage’ and *consensus eruditorum* ‘consensus of educated speakers’; *auctoritas* (Greek *axiōma, axiōsis*) ‘tradition (usage of the classics, the good authors)’;

d) the breaches of *puritas* are:

*barbarismus* (Greek *barbarismós*) ‘lexical deviation’, *soloecismus* (Greek *so-loikismós*) ‘syntactic deviation’, *improprietas* (Greek *akyriología* ‘[semantically] improper use’ [*verbum improprium*, Greek *ákyron ónoma*]).

The medieval Georgian monks, who were of course familiar with Byzantine rhetoric (Georgian *mčevrmetqveleba* ‘elegant speech’), stood in a similar tradition. Like the Romans, they could become “Greeks” in the cultural sense: “although you are an ethnic Georgian, on the other hand with all your erudition you are a real Greek”, as a Greek patriarch makes the point:<sup>48</sup> erudition and knowledge make Greeks and Georgians “equals”.<sup>49</sup> Like the Romans, the Georgians understood their language as a counterpart of Greek and as a language with the potential of expressing higher culture. Like the

<sup>48</sup> *dayacatu natesavit Kartveli xar, sxwta kula qovlita scavlulebita sruliad Berzeni xar* (EPREM MTSIRE in LOLAŠVILI 1994: 214 (64)).

<sup>49</sup> *šen, hoj nečaro mamao, dayacatu natesavit Kartveli xar, xolo scavlebita da mecnirebita čuenive scori xar* (ib. p. 215 (66)) ‘you, o blessed Father, although you an ethnic Georgian, on the other hand with all your erudition and knowledge are even our equal.’ (This and other passages from EPREM MTSIRE’s *Life of Giorgi the Hagiorite* are cited by BOLKVAZÉ 1999: 275.)

Romans they could rely on a feeling of the difference between good Georgian and deviant Georgian; good – and pure – Georgian was the language of ecclesiastical texts beginning with the early translation of the Bible: these were the *auctores*, their authority, their tradition (Greek *parádosis*). Deviant Georgian, the counterpart of *barbarismós*, could be found in the calques of Greek and Hebrew models in some ill-advised translations. All this is not meant as a hostility against the Greek model; on the contrary, it is possible to borrow a few Greek words “to honour the Greeks”, as EPREM MTSIRE says. What these authors had in mind was to give Georgian the same cultural status as Greek, and paradoxically, this “approximation” of Georgian to Greek was best done by avoiding Greek elements and by creating pure Georgian in analogy to the pure Greek of rhetorical theory.

But rhetoric is not the only approach to purity. For an educated scientist of the classicist period, the question of purity could also be embedded in the quest for terminological clarity and consistency. One revealing source is the treatise on the *Differences of Pulses* by GALEN OF PERGAMON (AD ca. 130-200), the famous Greek physician who worked in the Rome of the emperor MARCUS AURELIUS, who wrote his “Meditations” in Greek. In connection with his call for unambiguous language use in the sciences,<sup>50</sup> he argues for the unaltered preservation of the language chosen: “For as we know that the currency in each of the cities is a token used for purchase and sale and that those who forge it are chastised by the legislators, so we know that there are many types of language which we ask everybody to preserve who has chosen one of them, whichever it might be.”<sup>51</sup> GALEN is not in favour of the so-called *koiné*, but of Attic Greek: “and it is this language we try to preserve carefully and to commit no outrage against it, nor to introduce an adulterated currency of language, nor forge it.”<sup>52</sup> “But if none [sc. of the Greek dialects] is chosen, but one [sc. of the languages] of the barbarians, it should be declared; I only try to preserve it undefiled, whichever [sc. language] it might be.”<sup>53</sup> In GALEN’s view, linguistic purity was probably a generalized form of linguistic consistency. – It is true that GALEN is convinced of the superiority of Greek and declines to

<sup>50</sup> See HANKINSON 1994 for a discussion of GALEN’s views on “usage and abusage” of language.

<sup>51</sup> II,5 (ed. C.G. KÜHN, 584) ἡμεῖς μὲν γὰρ, ὡσπερ νόμισμα καθ’ ἔκαστην τῶν πόλεων ἴσμεν σύμβολον ὀνής καὶ πράσεως, δι τοὺς παραχαράττοντας οἱ νομοθέται κολάζουσιν, οὕτω καὶ διαλέκτων χαρακτῆρας ἴσμεν πολλοὺς, οὓς φυλάττειν ἀξιοῦμεν ἔκαστον τῶν ἐλομένων ὄντιναοῦν ἐξ αὐτῶν.

<sup>52</sup> ib. (p. 585) καὶ ταύτην τὴν διάλεκτον πειρώμεθα διαφυλάττειν, καὶ μηδὲν εἰς αὐτὴν παρανομεῖν, μηδὲ κίβδηλον ἐπεισαγεῖν φωνῆς νόμισμα, μηδὲ παραχαράττειν.

<sup>53</sup> ib. εἰ δὲ οὐδεμίᾳ τούτων, ἀλλά τις τῶν βαρβάρων, καὶ τοῦτ’ εἰπε, μόνον πειρῶ φυλάττειν αὐτὴν ἄχραντον.

learn any other language,<sup>54</sup> but the point here is his insistence on the requirement of purity in the use of any language: he has strong feelings against those who “do not compose any Greek unmixed, or any barbarian [sc. language] all simple, but one mixed from all [sc. languages] like a *karyke* [“a rich sauce, invented by the Lydians, composed of blood and spices”, LIDDELL-SCOTT s.v.] or something even more colourful and strange than a *karyke*, as anybody chooses.”<sup>55</sup>

It is well possible that the medieval Georgian monks – and the early Bible translators, too – were familiar with this position. But the main point here is that the concept of “pure language” obviously had several different sources. GALEN’s argument testifies not only to a rational acknowledgement of a fundamental linguistic equality between Greek and the barbarian languages (impaired though it was by the supremacy of Greek), but also to a very positive evaluation of linguistic purity in general. This evaluation in all probability continued to exercise its influence in medieval Byzantium and Georgia.

## 5. The “classicism” approach

The later developments are complex. On the one hand, the old ecclesiastic language continues to be the language of religious texts. On the other hand, we have the non-ecclesiastical language in the literary works of “worldly” literature, for instance in the epic of RUSTAVELI, the national poet (around 1200), and the prose and lyrics of various other authors whose position with regard to “purity” remains to be determined. After the vicissitudes of political subjugation and occupation we have a kind of revival in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century.

One of the earliest representatives of this renaissance was SULKHAN-SABA ORBELIANI (1658-1725), who, apart from a didactic collection of fables (*The Wisdom of Lies*), wrote a monolingual lexicon which has its roots both in the exegetical tradition of medieval Georgia and in contemporary European lexicography, as transmitted by Italian missionaries in Georgia (BABUNAŠVILI & UTURGAJZE 1991; UTURGAJZE 1999). In his introductory “bequest” (*anderzi*), he says that no lexicon of the Georgian language was available to the Georgians any more; therefore “the Georgian language has degenerated

---

<sup>54</sup> See BOEDER 1994: 69-71 for some discussion of GALEN’s attitude towards non-Greek languages.

<sup>55</sup> ib. II,2 (p. 568) ἐπει δὲ οὐχ Ἑλληνικὴν διάλεκτον εἰλικρινῶς οὐδεμίαν, οὐδὲ βάρβαρον ἀτλῶς, ὅλα τινα μικτὴν ἔξ ἀτασῶν, οἷον καρύκην, ή τινα ποικιλωτέραν τε καὶ ἄλλοκωτέραν καρύκης συντιθέασιν, ὡς ἔκαστος αὐτῶν βούλεται.

at their arbitrary whim [lit. ‘according to their will’]”.<sup>56</sup> Therefore King VAKHTANG VI asked him to go to work, and kept a critical eye on it: one reason for the project was political (BOLKVAZÉ 1998: 77-78).

In other words, his lexicon is a means of restoring a former ideal that might serve as a model of “learning” the language. In explaining his lexicographic method, he gives us an idea of what this ideal is for him: “What I found in the written texts,<sup>57</sup> I excerpted, in the Holy Scriptures and theological books, from the books of profound philosophers [for instance PROCLUS, PORPHYRIUS and others]”.<sup>58</sup> “Some [words I have excerpted] not according to them in their tortuous [manner]. But I found them intelligible ['easy'] [as interpreted] by the Holy Fathers, and the intelligible [ones] I have written down, so that they [sc. the Georgians] may learn the Georgian language, which was perfected and spread by PARNAOZ, the first king of the Georgians, who was wise and intelligent.”<sup>59</sup> Historical change is interpreted as a deviation from the original norm: a lexical item is marked by a special symbol not only if it is a foreign word (*sxvata enata* ‘of other languages’), but also if it is “an unusable word which has been adopted through the temporal developments of the world and by corruption (“spoiling”). I have taken this down, too, to let students know what is usable and what unusable, what is proper and what is improper”.<sup>60</sup> As in medieval reasoning, the “world’s” changeable language stands in opposition to the old norm as represented by ecclesiastical writers.

SULKHAN-SABA ORBELIANI, then, considers the old language as the language of the Georgians which is connected with the foundation of Georgia’s statehood and perfected at its very beginning – which means that “learning” it is not backwardness, but a recovery of an ideal primeval and (therefore) perfect state (which was the result of wise planning). On the other hand, he makes a clear difference between several forms of Geor-

<sup>56</sup> *ena Kartuli tvista nebazed gaerqvnat* (SULKHAN-SABA ORBELIANI 1991: 27).

<sup>57</sup> SULKHAN-SABA ORBELIANI (ib.) s.v. *cerili*: ‘everything written with a pen or printed’; he goes on to distinguish between: *saymrto cerili* ‘divine writing(s)’, which are ‘chronicles of the Old Testament and the New Testament’, *cmidata cerili* ‘the writing(s) of the saints’, which are ‘their translation and the theological texts and the narratives of the [lives of] saints’; *gareše cerilni* ‘the external writings’, which are ‘the worldly narratives, poems and any fables and the like (*msoplioni hambavni, leksni da igavni rameni da mistanani*)’.

<sup>58</sup> *romelica cerilta šina vnaxe, gamoviye. sayto cerilta da γ̄tismetqvelebata šina, romelime γ̄rmata pilosopta cignebtagan* (ib. pp. 27-28).

<sup>59</sup> *romelime ara matebr γ̄varčnilad, aramed cmidata mamatagan saadvilo vpoe da saadviloni aγ̄vceren, rata isčaon ena Kartuli, šesrulebuli da ganrcelebuli Parnavaz Kartvelta pirvelisa mepisa mier, bržnisa da gonierisa* (ib. p. 28).

<sup>60</sup> *uqmari sitqvaa da soplis(a) žamta vitarebat(a) mier da çarqvnatagan šemoγevuli. amistvis eseca davcere, rata scnas mosçavleman saqmari da uqmari, žerovani da užero* (ib. p. 26, version C).

gian which are of unequal relevance for his undertaking: the old conservative standard; the “tortuous” language of some – probably Hellenophile – writers; and the ordinary language of his time, including the spoken (“heard”) language – which is not free of “unusable” and “improper” words and which serves as a check sample in addition to written documentation: “many words I have omitted, some because I have not heard them or have not seen them written, some because manuscripts are lost or because they are forgotten.”<sup>61</sup> In addition, he distinguishes between native and non-native: he indicates the foreign origin of some words and offers a purely Georgian equivalent; some of them are characterised as “unusable”.<sup>62</sup> His method, then, is largely empirical, but stylistically selective (no “tortuous”, nor “improper” language).

On the other hand, he shows a very liberal position with regard to decent language, and his humorous justification is worth mentioning: “In these writings are noble and wicked terms, praiseworthy and blameworthy, unfortunate and bad terms. I have not written them down for abuse, that they may be taken as something objectionable, but I have written them down for the completeness of the language. And if you abolish the unfortunate word, then what is worst will lack what is inferior, and only “God” will be left as the best and nothing else and the Georgian language will be diminished.”<sup>63</sup> In other words, he tries to cover the whole spectrum of real Georgian, of which Old Georgian is an eminent part. His explanations in “simple” language bridge the gap between old and contemporary forms and “convince the reader of the homogeneity of his mother tongue” (BOLKVAZÈ 1998: 78-79).

One of the earliest pieces of evidence indicating a reaction against the enormous influx of foreign words is found in the poems of King ARCHIL II (1647-1713), who criticises the abundance of Persian and other foreign elements in the poetry of King TEMURAZ I (1589-1663) (see SH. APRIDONIDZE in this volume). The latter had lived at the court of the Persian Shah and found the Georgian language “heavy”, whereas the “sweetness of the Persian language” had made him strive for “musicality”.<sup>64</sup> He says: “I

<sup>61</sup> *mrawali siçqva damišta, romelime ara smenita da çerilta unaxaobita, romelime nusxata dakargvita da davicqebita* (ib. p. 29).

<sup>62</sup> 313IGURI 1957: 161; BOLKVAZÈ 1998: 80.

<sup>63</sup> *am cigna šina arian saxelni ketilni da boročni, sakebelni da sazagebelni, ubadoni da cudni. ara tu kicxevisatvis aymiceria, rata sakirdalad ipqrat, aramed enisa sisrulisatvis aycere. tuca ubado saxeli aymoiqocos, merme-ya udaresi moakldes uayressa da yti ya darčes uketesi da sxva arara, da šemcirdebis ena Kartuli* (ib. pp. 29-30).

<sup>64</sup> *Sparsta enisa sičkoman masurva musikobani* (*Leil-Mežnuniani* 4,1-2 of TEIMURAZ I apud 313IGURI 1957: 161).

only added [some] Persian / Tatar [i.e. Azeri Turkish] also did I admix, did praise their essence [?].<sup>65</sup> ARCHIL ironically gives him the advice to be consistent: “the language of the Georgians appears heavy to you, so speak Arabic!”<sup>66</sup> Although the knowledge of other languages is useful, it should not result in language mixing: “Do not think I do not know other languages, too, like other people / but it is bad to mix something into the Georgian language like other people [?].”<sup>67</sup> He himself tries to avoid mixing as much as possible: “I have told it in Georgian, no other language is mixed into it; / I know you will unfailingly notice if I have admixed a word.”<sup>68</sup> The concept of “purity”, on the other hand, is still reserved for rhetorical qualities. For instance, ARCHIL praises poets who do not admix elements from other poets: “Form their mouth purely comes a sweet well, they do not **cloud** it.”<sup>69</sup> Notice that ARCHIL’s criticism is not so much directed against “language-mixing” in general, as against mixing in poetry. In fact, “pureness” of form and meaning is a constitutive concept of his poetics.<sup>70</sup> But whatever his attitude towards “Persianness” was: although his rejection of Persian elements is not “nationalistic”, it has a basis that matters in modern purism: the perception of excessive use of foreign lexemes. RUSTAVELI, the great authority in the Georgian poetry of that time, also had used many Persian (and Arabic) words, but less often than TEIMURAZ. One possible hypothesis about purism is that high token frequency is indeed an important factor in purist reactions, because in that case foreign elements can no longer be interpreted as quoted or mentioned or serving a particular functional goal.

In the next century, the ancient concepts of literary and linguistic developments were still alive in the minds of people like the patriarch of Georgia, the Catholicos ANTONI I BAGRATIONI (1720-1788), who compiled philosophical and religious literature and wrote a very remarkable grammar of Georgian, which was for him “our, the Georgians”,

<sup>65</sup> *me oden Kartul enasa martlad urte Sparsuli, / Tatrulic gamirevia, mikia mati arsuli* (TEIMURAZ I apud 313IGURI 1957: 161).

<sup>66</sup> *mzimed gčans ena Kartvelta, maš, brzane Arabulita!* (*Gabaaseba Teimurazisa da Rustvelisa* 85).

<sup>67</sup> *nu ggoniat, sxva ena nec ar vicode sxvasavit, / magram cudia gareva Kartul enaši sxvas avit* [sic apud 313IGURI 1957: 161; inspite of the rules of madjama, I translate *sxvasavit*].

<sup>68</sup> *mitkvams Kartulis enita, sxva ena ar urevia; / vici, šeitqobi ucdurad, to sitqva amirevia* (*Samižnuronis* apud 313IGURI 1957: 160).

<sup>69</sup> *matsa pirsə t̄kbili cqaro ćmidat mosdis, ar amvrevan* (*Gabaaseba Teimurazisa da Rustvelisa* 59).

<sup>70</sup> ARČIL criticises the 17<sup>th</sup> century poet MANUČAHR CICIŠVILI who had “supplemented” the national epic of Šota Rustaveli: *Nanučas Rustvlis natkvamši bevri ram čaurevia, / sabralos ver šeuçqvia, ćminda ram aumvrevia* (KEKELIŠE 1980 II: 267) ‘Nanucha has mixed much into what Rustaveli has said, / the unfortunate could not chime in, he has **clouded** something pure.’

dexterous language".<sup>71</sup> Again, as in the case of SULKHAN-SABA ORBELIANI, it was the royal family (of which he himself was a member) that encouraged work on a grammatical counterpart of the dictionary. After King VAKHTANG VI, who had been looking for Georgian manuscripts "to have his kingdom prepared for the light of knowledge",<sup>72</sup> "both these kings [TEIMURAZ II and EREKLE II] were very eager to find a grammar [comprising] the laws of grammar",<sup>73</sup> which guaranteed the homogeneity of its norm and – as we may add – gave it the basis of historical stability and continuity: "when I looked at the sayings of the Georgian Holy Fathers, [I saw that,] although they are of various types, they still do not confuse the laws of syntax [sc. of case]."<sup>74</sup> But while the medieval classics were good linguistic models they did not offer a systematic description of the language: "nowhere could a grammar by the translators, our Holy Fathers, be found among us. These are the translators from the language of the Hellenes into Georgian, "who sowed many [seeds] and also gathered through the blessing of the sowers of good seed."<sup>75</sup> So ANTONI set out to enter what he saw as the "door of wisdom"<sup>76</sup> and to do his duty "to get the dexterity [arising from] knowledge of our language", and he had "to make an extremely extensive quest in this connection".<sup>77</sup>

He took the medieval writers as his model sources: while the writers of the 12<sup>th</sup> century saw their language as a continuation of the old literary tradition, authors like SULKHAN-SABA ORBELIANI and ANTONI, in turn, base their description on the language of the medieval ecclesiastic writers whose names they carefully list in their "prefaces". The Fathers were not seen as "historical" and "remote": as far as I can see, they never speak about them as "old", and their approach is not antiquarian.<sup>78</sup> What mattered for them is rather the recognition of what "is – still – there" (in the form of available manuscripts). In other words, they seem to have lacked a feeling of discontinuity that is char-

<sup>71</sup> čuēn, Kartuēlt, enaj maržue (ANTONI 1997: 379, from the preface of the first version of ANTONI's grammar).

<sup>72</sup> rata mecnierebisa natlisa mimart miizadamca samepoj twsi (ib. p. 376).

<sup>73</sup> priad sadame çadnojt çadnoodes ornive ese mepeni povnasa yrammatikisa kanuntasa (ib. p. 378).

<sup>74</sup> ganvsçuriten ra tkmulni çmidata mamata Kartuēltani, dayatu sxuadsxuaguarobs, magra ara ayslis kanunta sintaksisata (ib. p. 380).

<sup>75</sup> çmidata mamata metargmaneta čuēnta mier ara sada poebul ars čuēn šoris yrammatika. eseni arian metargmaneni Kartulad Eladelta enisagan, "romelta steses mrauali da šeikribesca kurtxevit mtesvelta teslisa ketilisata" (ib. p. 375).

<sup>76</sup> kari sibržnisa (ib. p. 377; 378).

<sup>77</sup> rajtamca čuēnisa enisa simaržue mkondamca mecnierebisa da me priad priad aramciredi ziebaj še-meknnodis amas zeda (ib. p. 378).

<sup>78</sup> This contrasts with the antiquarian pride in a glorious past that plays an important role in contemporary European discussions on the excellence of the vernaculars (see JONES 1953, chapters VII-VIII).

acteristic of classicism. But after what was felt as a period of barbarisation and linguistic disorderliness, they must have seen their move – “learning” and “opening the door of wisdom” – as a return to authors who were by now classics and authorities.<sup>79</sup> In this sense they were classicists in the typological sense. Purity in this framework meant adherence to the old, exemplary ideals. The *classici scriptores* were exemplary in that they served as a canon and could be imitated.<sup>80</sup> Imitation (Greek *mimēsis*) according to ancient thought meant more than superficial copying: it was an appropriation of the exemplary authors’ spirit and mental qualities<sup>81</sup> – a process that was certainly welcome where the models were Christian and orthodox. The gap between the exemplary writers’ language and the language of the “renaissance” had to be bridged over by systematising practical tools:<sup>82</sup> a lexicon like SULKHAN-SABA ORBELIANI’s, and a grammar like ANTONI’s, which – apart from European impulses – had their own native tradition reaching back to the linguistic thinking of medieval interpretative work<sup>83</sup> which was done by “our first grammarians”.<sup>84</sup>

Notice that in his own writings, ANTONI favoured the complex language and style of medieval writers like PETRITSI. But in his grammatical “theory”, he did not at all exclude as inadmissible linguistic (e.g. morphological) variants from his own time.<sup>85</sup> Obsolete though it was empirically in everyday conversation, medieval Georgian continued to be a natural model, and ANTONI was not an archaizing purist, but aimed at what he considered an adequate form of his linguistic heritage.<sup>86</sup> ANTONI was not a modern descriptivist, he did not see his task in an account of linguistic forms that “are there”.<sup>87</sup> He wanted to be an educator, and what he chose to teach was what he considered the highest developed form of Georgian. Contrary to the empirical and selective differentiation of language variants explicitly reflected in SULKHAN-SABA ORBELIANI’s selective ap-

<sup>79</sup> For this typological feature of classicism see GELZER 1978: 11.

<sup>80</sup> See again GELZER 1978: 10-11; 34-35.

<sup>81</sup> FLASHAR 1978: 87.

<sup>82</sup> ABULAZE 1940: 141.

<sup>83</sup> SARŠVELAZE 1989; DOBORŠGINIŠE 1998.

<sup>84</sup> *pirvelni čuenni γrammatikosni* (ANTONI 1885: 169 § 258,3). For ANTONI, a *γrammatikosi* was the author of a grammar in the narrow sense, but also a rhetorician, a stylist, a learned man in general etc.; in particular the medieval learned authors (CAGARELI 1873: 15).

<sup>85</sup> BABUNAŠVILI & UTURGAÏBE 1991: 70.

<sup>86</sup> Ib. p. 72.

<sup>87</sup> In this sense it is futile to criticise his neglect of contemporary Georgian or to demonstrate that he was not that “non-progressive”, after all. He did not want to be a “linguist”, and he didn’t want to be “progressive”, either.

proach, “naturalness” was not the criterion of his choice: he saw no need to shun the “tortuous” language of some medieval writers.<sup>88</sup>

## 6. Conclusion

Specific people have specific models of their language which need not be shared by all members of the speech community. They comprise, among other things, the relative social position of the native language in comparison with other variants of the same language, or with different languages; the evaluation of its artistic or intellectual potential (its expressivity); and some idea of what its “good” or “real” form is or what it should look like. “Purity” is embedded in, and has to be understood on the basis of, these variable models. Purity and purism, then, vary and change in the course of time, as do other concepts in the history of ideas. The results of different forms of purism, “pure language”, may be the same, but the bases of purity differ according to all sorts of historical conditions.

What I have tried to characterise are three phenomena that are embedded in different historical models of Georgian: the purity of language in the earliest Bible translations, which I called “naïve purism”; the purity of language as an ideal of poetic texts opposed to the excessive use of foreign elements in Georgian; and the purity of language as conceptualised in Greek rhetoric and practiced by medieval translators and authors writing on philosophical and theological matters. This last concept presupposes a tradition which can be either continuous, as in the case of medieval Georgian writers of the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> century, or it can be felt as such, in spite of factual discontinuity, as in the classicist approach of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century revival.

All the phenomena described above are not purism in the narrow sense. It was only in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, with its advent of Russian, and thereby European, domination, that purism and language policy became possible in the modern sense: the young people

---

<sup>88</sup> Nor was he interested in language planning to further communication between different groups of society. As was pointed out to me by TINATIN BOLKVAZÉ (University of Tbilisi letter of March 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2002), this certainly diminished the “efficiency” and “acceptability” of his work in the sense of EINAR HAUGEN’s criteria of language planning: “Antoni directly transferred the language characteristic of Georgian spiritual writings and thereby committed codificational mistakes.”

who studied in St. Petersburg and at other universities prepared new concepts of a national language that had to be pure. But this is a topic I will leave to SHUKIA APRIDONIDZE.

## References

- ABULAŽE, ILIA (1940): Kartuli gramatikuli literaturis adrindeli zeglebi, in: *Sakartvelos Saxelmçipo Muzeumis Moambe / Bulletin du Musée d' Etat de Géorgie* 10, 141-159 [= I. Abulaže: Šromebi II. Tbilisi: Mecniereba 1976, 169-187].
- [ANTONI I. KATALIKOSI] (1885): *Kartuli ყრამატიკა შედგენილი ანტონ I-ის მიერ*. Gamocemuli Aleksandre Episkoposis sapasit [T. Rap. Eristavi: "Cinasitqvaoba"]. Tbilisi: Ekvtimé Xelazis stamba.
- [ANTONI I. KATALIKOSI] (1997): Anton Pirveli: *Kartuli ყრამატიკა* (meore redakcia 1767). Teksti gamosacemad moamzades Elene Babunašvilma, Nargiza Gozugzem, Lia Kiknagzem, leksiķoni daurto Elene Babunašvilma. Tbilisi.
- BABUNAŠVILI, ELENE & UTURGAİZE, TEDO (1991): *Anton Pirvelis "Kartuli ყრამატიკა" da misi erovnul-istoriuli mnišvneloba / "Gruzinskaja grammatika"* Antonija Pervogo i ee nacional'no-istoričeskoe značenie [Russian résumé pp. 80-85] (Sakartvelos Mecnierebata Akademia, Enatmecnierebis Instituti). Tbilisi: Mecniereba.
- BOEDER, WINFRIED (1994): Identität und Universalität: Volkssprache und Schriftsprache in den Ländern des alten Christlichen Orients, in: *Georgica* 17, 66-84.
- BOEDER, WINFRIED (1997): Sprachen und Nationen im Raum des Kaukasus, in: HENTSCHEL, GERD (ed.), *Über Muttersprachen und Vaterländer: zur Entwicklung von Standardsprachen und Nationen in Europa*. Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 183-209.
- BOEDER, WINFRIED (1998): Sprache und Identität in der Geschichte der Georgier, in: *Georgien im Spiegel seiner Geschichte*. Zweites Deutsch-Georgisches Symposium, 9. bis 11. Mai 1997, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Preußischer Kulturbesitz. Vortragstexte. Herausgegeben für die Berliner Georgische Gesellschaft e.V. von BRIGITTA SCHRADE und THOMAS AHBE. Berlin, 68-81.

- BOLKVAZÈ, TINATIN (1998): Sulxan-Sabas "Sitqvis kona" da enis ķodipicirebis principebi / Gruzinskoj slovar' Sulchan-Saba Orbeliani i principy kodifikacii jazyka [résumé p. 82], *Macne*. Enisa da literaturis seria 1998: 76-82.
- BOLKVAZÈ, TINATIN (1999): Aymosavlur-Kristjanuli tradicia da Kartuli ena, in: *Macne*. Enisa da literaturis seria 1999 (1-4), 271-280.
- CAGARELI, ALEKSANDRE (1873): *O grammatičeskoj literature gruzinskogo jazyka*. Kritičeskij očerk. Sanktpeterburg: "Tipografija Imperatorskoj Akademii nauk".
- DANELIA, KORNELI (1983): *Kartuli samçerlo enis istoriis sakitexbi* / Voprosy istorii gruzinskogo jazyka po drevnegruzinskim versijam poslanij Pavla [résumé pp. 387-415]. Tbilisi: Tbilisis Universitetis gamomcemloba.
- DANELIA, KORNELI (1988): Ucxoenovani gramatikuli elementebi 3vel Kartul ćerilobit çqaroebi / Some cases of foreign language influence in Old Georgian written documents [résumé pp. 37-38], in: *Pirveli saertašoriso Kartvelologiuri simpoziumis masalebi* / Proceedings of the First International Symposium in Kartvelian Studies. Tbilisi: Tbilisis Universitetis gamomcemloba, 28-38.
- DOBORŽGINIŽE, NINO (1995): Gramatikuli xasiatis ganmarṭebi "Psalmunta targmanebidan", in: *Saenatmecniero ziebani* 4, 105-109.
- DOBORŽGINIŽE, NINO (1998): "Psalmunta gamokrebuli targmaneba" da 3veli *Kartuli lingvisturi azrovnebis sakitxebi* / Nino Doborjginidze: Die altgeorgische Kartenüberlieferung der Psalmenkommentare und das Problem des altgeorgischen linguistischen Denkens. Avtoreperati mecnierebata kandidatis samecniero xarisxis mosapoveblad (Tbilisis saxelmipo universiteti). Tbilisi.
- DORNSEIFF, FRANZ (1921): Das Zugehörigkeitsadjektiv und das Fremdwort, in: *Germanisch-Romanische Monatsschrift* 9, 193-200. (Kleine Schriften Band II: Sprache und Sprechender. Leipzig: Köhler & Amelang).
- 3I3IGURI, ŠOTA (1957): Purclebi enis siqmindisatvis bržolis istoriidan, in: *Mnatobi* 3, 160-170.
- FLASHAR, HELLMUT (1978): Die klassizistische Theorie der Mimesis, in: FLASHAR, H. (ed.), 79-134.
- FLASHAR, H. (ed.) (1978): *Le classicisme à Rome aux premiers siècles avant et après J.-C. Entretiens préparés et présidés par Hellmut Flashar* (Entretiens sur l'Antiquité Classique [Fondation Hardt] 25). Genève: Vandœuvres.

- GELZER, THOMAS (1978): Klassizismus, Attizismus und Asianismus, in: FLASHAR H. (ed.), 1-78.
- HÄRLE, GERHARD (1996): *Reinheit der Sprache, des Herzens und des Leibes. Zur Wirkungsgeschichte des rhetorischen Begriffs puritas in Deutschland von der Reformation bis zur Aufklärung* (Rhetorik-Forschungen 11). Tübingen: Niemeyer.
- HANKINSON, R.J. (1994): Usage and abusage: Galen on language, in: EVERSON, STEPHEN (ed.), *Language* (Companions to Ancient Thought 3). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 166-187.
- HILLE-COATES, GABRIELE (2000): Bibelsprachen – Heilige Sprachen. Zur Legitimierung des Hauptsprachenmodells im Spannungsfeld von Latein und Volkssprache im Mittelalter, in: SANDER & PAUL (eds.), 206-238.
- HUNGER, HERBERT (1978): *Die hochsprachliche profane Literatur der Byzantiner. Erster Band: Philosophie - Rhetorik - Epistolographie - Geschichtsschreibung - Geographie.* (Byzantinisches Handbuch im Rahmen des Handbuchs der Altertumswissenschaft 5. Teil, 1. Band). München: Beck.
- JONES, RICHARD FOSTER (1953): *The triumph of the English language. A survey of opinions concerning the vernacular from the introduction of printing to the restoration.* Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- KEKELIŽE, KORNELI (1980): *Kartuli literaturis istoria or țomad.* Tomi I; II. Tbilisi: Mecniereba.
- LASSERRE, FRANÇOIS (1978): Prose grecque classicisante, in: FLASHAR, H. (ed.), 135-173.
- LAUSBERG, HEINRICH (1963): *Elemente der literarischen Rhetorik.* München: Hueber.
- LOLASVILI, IVANE (ed.) (1994): *Eprem Mcire: Cxovreba Giorgi Mtaçmidelisa.* Teksti gamosacemad moamzada da gamokvleva da leksikoni daurto Ivane Lolašvilma. Tbilisi: Mecniereba.
- MARR, NIKOLAJ JA. (ed.) (1911): Georgij Merčul: *Žitie sv. Grigorija Chandztijskago.* Gruzinskij tekst. Vvedenie, izdanie, perevod N. Marra [...] (Teksty i razyskanija po armjano-gruzinskoj filologii 7; Izdanija Fakul'teta vostočnykh jazykov Imperatorskago S.-Peterburgskago universiteta 5). S.-Peterburg.
- MELIKIŠVILI, DAMANA (1999): *3veli Kartuli pilosopiur-teologiuri terminologiiis istoriidan* (Tbilisis saxelm̄cipo Universiteti; Klasikuri pilologiis, bizantinistikisa da neogrecistikis Instituti; Sakartvelos Sapatriarko Gelatis Mecnierebata

- Akademia). Tbilisi: Tbilisis Universitetis gamomcemloba; Sagamomcemlo programa “Logosi”.
- MÜLLER-WETZEL, MARTIN (2000): Der Topos von der Spracharmut. Typen seiner Funktionalisierung in der lateinischen Literatur der Antike und Spätantike, in: SANDER & PAUL (eds.), 120-145.
- QAUXCİŞVILI, SIMON (ed.) (1940): *Ioane Petriçis šromebi*. Tomi I. *Prokle Diadoxosisa platonurisa pilosoposisa kavşirni*. Kartuli teksti gamosca da gamokvleva da lekskoni daurto Sim. Qauxčišvilma/Ioannis Petrizii Opera. Tomus I: Procli Dia-dochi Versio Hiberica. Textum Hibericum edidit commentariisque instruxit S. Kauchtschischvili. Tbilisi: T.S.U. gamomcemloba.
- RAPAVA, M. (1976): *Ioane Damaskeli: Dialektika*. Kartuli targmanebis teksti gamosca, gamokvleva da leksikoni daurto Maia Rapavam/Ioann Damaskin: Dialektika (Sakartvelos SSR Mecnierebata Akademia, Xelnacerta Instituti). Tbilisi: Mecniereba.
- SANDER, ULRIKE-CHRISTINE & PAUL, FRITZ (eds.) (2000): *Muster und Funktionen kultureller Selbst- und Fremdwahrnehmung. Beiträge zur internationalen Geschichte der sprachlichen und literarischen Emanzipation*. (Veröffentlichung aus dem Göttinger Sonderforschungsbereich 529 “Internationalität nationaler Literaturen”. Serie B: Europäische Literaturen und internationale Prozesse 5). Göttingen: Wallstein.
- ŠANIZE, MZEKALA (1968): Šesavali Eprem Mciris psalmunta targmanebisa (Teksti da šenišvnebi), in: *3veli Kartuli enis katedris šromebi* 11, 77-122.
- SARŞVELAΖE, ZURAB (1981): ‘cignurisa’ da ‘sopluris’ šesaxebe, in: *Literaturuli Sakartvelo* 20 noemberi 1981, 10.
- SARŞVELAΖE, ZURAB (1984a): *Kartuli saliteraturo enis istoriis šesavali* (Vvedenie v istoriju gruzinskogo literaturnogo jazyka). Tbilisi: Ganatleba.
- [SARŞVELAΖE, ZURAB] SURAB SARDSCHWELADSE (1984b): Die Frage der Geschichtsperiodisierung der georgischen Literatursprache, in: *Georgica* 7, 5-12.
- [SARŞVELAΖE, ZURAB] SURAB SARDSCHWELADSE (1989): Aus der Geschichte des georgischen sprachwissenschaftlichen Denkens, in: *Georgica* 12, 7-9.
- SARŞVELAΖE, ZURAB (1995): *3veli Kartuli enis leksikoni*. Masalebi (Sulxan-Saba Orbelianis saxelobis Tbilisis saxelmçıpo Pedagogiuri Universiteti. Targmnis sagamomcemlo centri “Xomli”). Tbilisi: Tbilisis Universitetis gamomcemloba.

- SARŞVELAZE, ZURAB (1997): Enobrivi situacia XI-XIII saukuneta Sakartveloši, in: *Tbilisis saxelmçıpo Pedagogiuri Universitetis Šromebi* 1, 3-11.
- SCHMIDT, KARL HORST (1994): Zu den linguistischen Prinzipien der altgeorgischen und altarmenischen Bibelübersetzungen, in: CANISIUS, PETER; HERBERMANN, CLEMENS-PETER & TSCHAUDER, GERHARD (eds.), *Text und Grammatik. Festschrift für Roland Harweg zum 60. Geburtstag*. (Bochumer Beiträge zur Semiotik 43). Bochum: Universitätsverlag Dr. Norbert Brockmeyer, 307-316.
- SIEBENBORN, ELMAR (1976): *Die Lehre von der Sprachrichtigkeit und ihren Kriterien. Studien zur antiken normativen Grammatik*. (Studien zur antiken Philosophie 5). Amsterdam: Gruner.
- SPITZER, LEO (1918): *Fremdwörterhatz und Fremdvölkerhaß. Eine Streitschrift gegen die Sprachreinigung*. Wien: Manzsche Hof-, Verlags- und Universitäts-Buchhandlung.
- SULXAN-SABA, ORBELIANI (1991): *Leksikoni Kartuli*. Avtografiuli nusxebis mixedvit moamzada, gamokvleva da ganmarṭebata leksikis sažiebeli daurto Ilia Abu-lazem. I; II (Sakartvelos Mecnierebata Akademia). Tbilisi: Merani.
- TARCHNIŠVILI, M. [MIXEIL TARXNIŠVILI] (1955): *Geschichte der kirchlichen georgischen Literatur auf Grund des ersten Bandes der Georgischen Literaturgeschichte von K. Kekelidze*, bearbeitet von P. Michael Tarchnišvili in Verbindung mit Dr. Julius Assfalg ( Studi i Testi 185). Città del Vaticano: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana.
- TVALTVAZE, DAREŽAN (1996): Eprem Mcire – Bizantiuri mcerlobis komentatori. Candidate's Thesis. University of Tbilisi.
- UTURGAZE, TEDO (1999): *Kartuli enis šesçavlis istoria. Naçili I / Istorija izučenija gruzinskogo jazyka*. Čast' I (Russian résumé pp. 224-302). Tbilisi: Kartuli ena.