

## Peculiarities of Translating Metaphors by Rustaveli

**Khatuna Khabadze (Georgia)**

Doctoral Candidate, Batumi Shota Rustaveli State University

[khatuna\\_80@hotmail.com](mailto:khatuna_80@hotmail.com)

**Key words: Rustaveli, metaphor, panther's skin, sun, rose**

Hundreds of years have passed but the epic poem “*Knight in the Panther's Skin*” (“Vefkhistkaosani”) is still exigent and vivid. Rustaveli's language is full of genuine colored derivations and composites, verbalized phrases and words. His ingenious complex and detailed metaphors, profound and beautifully expressed aphorisms and epithets have passed long since into the modern spoken Georgian language.

According to Marjory Scott Wardrop “the *Panther-clad Knight* presents an image of the Georgian outlook on life, and justifies the presumption that merits tested by the experience of a quarter of a million days, most of them troublous, may be apparent to other races, that such a book may be of value to mankind, and chiefly to those peoples which, like the Georgian, came under the influence of Greek and Christian ideals.” (Wardrop 1912: iii). As we can see in the preface by Wardrop for her translation (or as she said “a close rendering”) of “Vefkhistkaosani” which she modestly called “an attempt” she uses *Panther-clad Knight* for interpreting the title of the epic poem by Rustaveli. Indeed this analogue would be the best substitute to the nowadays English title *Knight (or man) in the Panther's Skin*, since it better renders the metaphoric implication given in the original title of the poem.

As it is assumed the image of panther in “Vefkhistkaosani” symbolically embodies Nestan-Darejan one of the lady hero of the epic poem.

911(1/2)

“*khmali gavtkortsne, gardvicher vefkhi shevipkar khelitha;*  
*mis gamo kotsna mominda, vin mtsvavs tsetskhlihta tskhelitha;*

*"I threw away my sword, I leaped down, I caught the panther with my hands,*  
*I wished to kiss it for the sake of her for whom hot fires burn me.*

«*Бросив меч, схватил тигрицу и привлек в свои объятия,*

*«В память той желал лобзанья, от кого огнем объят я.*

“In this humankind the image and symbol of panther dominates and depicts Nestan’s reflection pointing at the fact that Tariel and Nestan’s relationship is rather difficult than love and passionate aspiration” (Натадзе, Цаишвили. 1966 : 97).

657(3/4)

*“rome vefkhi shvenieri sakhed misad damisakhavs,  
amad mikvars tkavi misi, kabad chemad mominakhavs;*

*"Since a beautiful panther is portrayed to me as her image,  
for this I love its skin, I keep it as a coat for myself;*

*«Оттого, что в дивном тигре образ девы мне предстал,  
«Полюбил я шкуру тигра, облачатся ею стал.*

Here the author renders the reason of titling the poem with “Vefkhistkaosani”. As it is common in medieval period epic poems of love stories were titled with the manes of heroes. However Rustaveli chose one name instead of two ones, which bears in itself metaphoric emphasis of two beloved heroes of the epic poem.

None of the translators could render the metaphoric title of the poem in composite. Although Wardrop could find the analogous derived composite ***Panther-clad Knight*** she did not use it in her translation as it seemed rather vague for native English speakers.

Since the whole poem is imbued and inspired with metaphoric narration, depicting things, facts, appearances of the heroes, their feelings, expectations, with tropes, images, symbols, it is hard to render all the peculiarities of Georgian genuine metaphors by Rustaveli in its translations. Though, more or less translators maintained the emphasis from the very layers of those metaphors.

Rustaveli favors several metaphors using them in various contexts with different nuances: sun, lion, rose, narcissus, agate (jet), pearl, ruby etc.

3(1/2)

*vis hshvenis, - lomsa, - khmareba, shubisa far-shimsherisa,  
- mefisa mzis T'hamarisa, ghatsv-badaghsh, tma-gisherisa, -*

*Of that lion whom the use of lance, shield and sword adorns,*

*of the king, the sun T'hamara, the ruby-cheeked, the jet-haired*

*Льва, который с честью носит и копье и меч Тамары -  
Лалом щек и светом взоров солнцу блестящему пары,*

Images of *sun* and *lion* mostly stand for characterizing heroes (Tinatin, Avtandil etc.), though in the introductory quartrines, they are used to describe historical personages, Queen Tamar and David Soslan.( For this reason, similarities in the metaphoric narration while depicting images of heroes, it is assumed that Tinatin and Nestan-Darejan symbolize Queen Tamar).

33(1/2)

skhva dze ar esva mefesa, marth oden marto asuli,  
soflisa mnathi mnathobi, mzisatsa dastha dasuli;

*No other child had the king save one only daughter,  
the shining light of the world, to be ranked with nought but the sunny group;*

*Не имел Ростан потомства, кроме дочери одной,  
Лучезарной, как светило, солнцу светлому родной.*

39(3/4)

*“shuktha misthaebr sakmetsa ,misi mzebr ganatskhadia.  
lekvi lomisa stsoria, dzu ikos, thunda khvadia”*

*“Her deeds, like her radiance, are revealed bright as sunshine.  
The lion's whelps are equal (alike lions), be they male or female.”*

*«Дел, ее ж лучам подобных, блещет солнечный венец.  
«Льва щенки равны друг другу, будь то самка иль самец».*

As we can see in Wardrop's prosaic translation the metaphoric composites are maintained, though in Russian poetic translation the metaphors are transmitted in narrative way. From the etymological point of view the name Tinatin means “reflection of the sunlight” or in other words “twinkling rays”. Rustaveli uses similies, epithets and metaphors of sun for

rendering Tinatin's beauty and while depicting her stunning appearance he creates marvelous and magic verbalized tropes that is hard to be transmitted in the source languages:

51(4)

*T'hinat'hin mzesas tsunobda, magram mze t'hinat'hinebda.*

*T'hinat'hin contemned the sun, but the sun aped T'hinat'hin.*

*Тинатин затмила солнце, тинатинит солнце лик.*

For rendering the metaphoric emphasis Wardrop uses scholium giving the definition of the name - *Thina'thineba, to reflect rays*". With the help of this footnote and phrase "***the sun aped T'hinat'hin***" Wordrop tries to compensate the loss of verbalized metaphor in translation. The Russian translation gives just metaphoric narration of the emphasis given in the original text.

Should we discuss all the genuine metaphors by Rustaveli our paper supposedly would not come to the end. Thought without discussing the image of rose in the everlasting masterpiece "***The Night in the Panther's Skin***" we dear not to finalize our unpretentious consideration of peculiarities of translating metaphors by Rustaveli.

*Rose* in some verses bears the symbol of human beauty or face, sometimes just the part of face in particular cheeks or lips. It dominates the descriptive narration of heroes of the poem, though with combination of other metaphors like jet, ruby, pearl, it gives much more vivid emphasis:

35(2/3)

*ra vardman misi kvavili gaakhmos, daamtchnarosa,  
igi tsava da skhva mova turfasa sabaghnarosa;*

*When the flower of the rose is dried and withered it falls,  
and another blooms in the lovely garden.*

«Если роза вянет, возраст свой не в силах превозмочь, -  
«Уступает место новой, удалясь из сада прочь».

As we can see human life is meant above. In the following examples we have marvelous personifications:

878

*“vardsa hkithkhes: «egzom turfa raman shegkmna tanad, pirad?  
mikvirs, rad khar ekliani? Povna sheni rad ars tchirad?»  
man thkva: «tkbilsa mtsare hpovebs, sjobs, iknebis ratsa dzvirad;  
odes turfa gaiefdes, arghara ghirs artsa chirad».*

*"They asked the rose: 'Who made thee so lovely in form and face?  
I marvel why thou art thorny, why finding thee is pain!' It said:  
'Thou findest the sweet with the bitter; whatever costs dear is better;  
when the lovely is cheapened it is no longer worth even dried fruit.'*

*«Розу как-то вопрошали: «Ты красива, стан хороша,  
«Но зачем в шипы одета? Путь к тебе с трудом найдешь».  
«Та в ответ: «Путь к сласти - горечь, кто нам дорог, тот пригож.  
«Коль краса для всех доступна, ей цена тогда лишь грош.*

In other verses rose stands for the face and with combination of other metaphors like ruby and pearl, it depicts beauty of the lips of heroes, for instance:

244(3)

*vardisa baghsa mogubda tsremlisa sagubararia.  
In the rose-garden the pool of tears is dammed up  
Ширь же розового сада слезным озером покрыта.*

480(4)

*mun vardsa shua shvenodes dzots-margalitni tkubani.  
there, amid the roses (of her cheeks), shone in beauty coral-pearl twins (lips and rows of  
teeth).*

*«Украшают лал и жемчуг розу, словно близнецы.*

It is obvious that the rose in the source text (verses 480) stands for the lips, though neither in English translation nor in Russian it bears the same emphasis.

In spite of loss of Restiveli's genuine tropes in translation, the reader remains under impression of metaphoric narration and tropical thinking of poet, compensated by techniques of stylistic transformations referred by ingenious translators.

### **References**

The Man in the Panther's Skin. A romantic Epic by Shot'ha Rust'haveli: A close rendering from Georgian, attempted by Marjory Scott-Wardrop, London [1912].

Shota Rustaveli *Vefkhistkaosani*, Tbilisi [2001].

Шота Руставели. Вытяг в тигровой шкурею Поема в стихах. Перевод с грузинского Шалвы Нутсубидзе Москва [1966].

Н. Натадзе, С. Цаишвили Шота Руставели и его Поема, Тбилиси [1966].

Alexandre Baramidze Shota Rustaveli, Tbilisi [1975].

Mamia Duduchava Shota Rustaveli's Aesthetic Thinking, Tbilisi [1966].

Шалва Нутсубидзе Творчество Руставели Тбилиси [1958].