

Translations from Armenian into Georgian, 1991 to date
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The legend says that Hayos and Carthlos were twins and their offspring generated two neighbouring friendly peoples, the Armenians and Georgians. And the historical sources (Strabo, Pliny the Elder, Movses Khoreatsi etc) mentioned provinces in the Georgian territory with Armenian population.

The number of the Armenians settled in Georgia increased in the first half of the 5th century, when some Armenian settlements had been taken off the Armenia Major and attached to the Georgian Satrapy. The Armenian-Georgian relations took their origin since that time, and they were conditioned by the invention of the Armenian and Georgian alphabets which were created almost simultaneously, giving rise the translation of mainly Greek and Latin literatures, and it was getting more and more powerful through the time. The activities of many Early Middle Age scientific-cultural and educational centres in the field of translation of biographical, historical, literary and interpretational works from Armenian into Georgian and backward is known very well. The relations of these two peoples especially increased in the 19th century, when Tiflis became the largest scientific-cultural, educational and literary centre for the Armenians in Caucasus. The names of such authors and art and musical workers as Naghash Hovnathan, Sayat Nova, Khachatur Abovian, Raphayel Patkianian, Tserents, Gabriel Sundukian, Leo, Perch Proshian, Raffi, Ghazaros Aghaian, Hovhannes Toumanian, Muratsan, Nar-Dos, Shirvanzade etc, as well as those in the newest time who lived and worked in the Capital of Georgia, were and have been connected with Tiflis. There were many literary-cultural saloons there, the most well-known of them being *Vernatun* (*The Skylight Room*) founded by Toumanian. At present, continuing the tradition, there is a society attached to Georgian Writers' Union named after *Vernatun* and carrying its activities in Tiflis. Besides, books in Armenian have been publishing there, and the literary almanacs, *Kamurdge* and *Vernatun*, have been periodically publishing their issues. It is to be noted that many Georgian speaking Armenian cultural workers had been greatly contributing into the spiritual thesaurus of the Georgian people during many centuries. On the other hand, as it was said above, many of the Armenian classics lived and worked in Tiflis and their works were translated into Georgian making them accessible for the Georgian society. The most



outstanding of them, of course, was Sayat-Nova (1712-1795). Many monographs and studies have been written about this eminent Armenian ashugh, the poet and singer and virtuosic player of the oriental violin, qamantcha, and his poems in Georgian (more than thirty of them) have had many publications. The Armenian poems of the poet who wrote in three languages, Armenian, Georgian and Turkish (Azery), were translated into Georgian and they have come out in separate books. The Armenian most popular poet, Hovhannes Toumanian, the Armenian eminent painter, Gevorg Bashinjaghian and the Georgian prominent author, Ioseb Grishashvili did very much to make the literary heritage of Sayat-Nova popular. The 200th birthday anniversary of Sayat-Nova was arranged by the efforts of them, in May, 1913, when there was celebrated the so called *Vardaton (The Rose day)* of Sayat-Nova, as a guarantee of friendship of the two peoples.

The Armenian literary society has always evaluated the outstanding Georgian writers; for instance, they have always paid great attention to the Georgian poet, Shota Rustaveli (12th century) and his great poem, *The Knight in the Panther's Skin*, which was first translated into Armenian still in 1860.

It is to be noted the contribution of the Armenian eminent play writer, Gabriel Sundukian, into the Georgian culture. His plays (*Pepo, Khatabala, One More Perished* etc.) have been periodically performed in the Georgian stage and, as the Georgian cultural workers say, they stirred the Georgian society, “strongly promoting the progress of Georgian literature, influencing the formation of a whole generation of play writers and translators.”

Gabriel Sundukian and the Georgian poet, Akaki Tsereteli, exhibited a wonderful example of humane and creative friendship. Tsereteli dedicated an ode to the 85th birthday anniversary of Sundukian, and this facts reflects the permanent friendship of the Armenian and Georgian peoples, and there are the following lines in that ode:

Me, a Georgian and you an Armenian,
And we are brothers now

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Born of the same mountainous land

And the same nature under the same sun.

The friendship of Kh. Abovian and the Georgian cultural workers and that of H. Toumanian and I. Grishashvili, A. Isahakian, D. Demirchian and K. Gamsakhurdia, E. Charents and T. Tabidze composed the brightest pages of the friendship of these two cultures. This beautiful tradition was recovered by the friendship of Vardges Petrosian and Nodar Dumbadze on the base of a productive humane-creative cooperation, at the end of the last century. The friendship of the two peoples was reflected in the literary writings on Georgian themes, by the Armenian authors, Kh. Abovian, A. Isahakian and E. Charents, in the novels of D. Demirchian (an Armenian) and K. Gamsakhurdia (a Georgian), in the poems devoted to Armenia, by T. Tabidze, S. Chiqovani and I. Noneshvili (Georgian authors).

In Soviet days, dozens of collections were published both in Armenian and Georgian, and the works of classic and modern Armenian and Georgian prose and poem writers were published in separate books. In this period the triumphant entrance of the Georgian prose writer, Nodar Dumbadze, into Armenian literature was significant. Since 1960s, his plays and short stories were published in the periodicals of Yerevan and Tiflis, and his plays were performed on the Armenian stages. In 1985 the Armenian TV made a documentary out of his work (the screenplay was written by Hrachya Bayramyan), and the *Sovetakan Grogh Publishers* published (in Armenian) his novels, *The White Banners* and *The Law of Eternity*, then the two-volume collection of his chosen works came out, and his collection of short stories and the novel, *Kukaracha*, came out in Armenian. The true friend of the Armenian People, Nodar Dumbadze, said once, “The Armenians and Georgians are peoples of cultures originated in olden times. We marched from the ancient days up to now together. Though physically we are neighbours, we have the same essence in our spirit, and the same pathos of creation. Our close and friendly relationship was given to us by the fate.”

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The scientific study of the Armenian-Georgian literary relations in Armenia was founded long ago. The productive activities of G. Asatur, L. Melqset-Bek and G. Sevak in this field in Armenia were continued by G. Madoyan, M. Zavaryan, T. Karapetyan, P. Muradyan and other Armenian authors. The Armenian and Georgian literary workers did and do make their contribution by their philological and critical studies into the history of the Armenian and Georgian literary-cultural relations up to day.

The translation from Armenian into Georgian has been enormously grown up nowadays, and the best Armenian and Georgian writers and translators are included in this sphere. A few of them must be especially noted.

Givi Sahnazar has been actively worked in the frame of the Armenian-Georgian literary relations in Tbilisi. He translated the collection of the Armenian poems by Sayat-Nova (1972), the large poem by Paruyr Sevak, *Let There Be Light* (1979), as well as some passages from *Matyan Voghbergutyun (the Book of the Tragedy)* by Grigor Narekatsy. He contributed into the Georgian translation thesaurus by his translations of the works by Nahapet Kuchak, Hovhannes Toumanian, Yeghishe Charents, and by the Armenian poets of the end of 20th century, Hovhannes Shiraz, Hamo Sahian, Hrachya Hovhannisyan, Silva Kaputikian and others. He also has translated some chosen samples of Armenian prose and plays.

Givi Luarsabishvili has continuously been presenting the works of the classic and modern Armenian and the Armenian Diaspora authors to the Georgian reader. As he wrote once, the other peoples of Caucasus, yes, are in close friendship with Armenians, “but the Armenians are one of the first or the closest, for we have surprisingly much in common.”

Zeza Medulashvili, especially since 1970s, contributed greatly into the translation of the classic and modern Armenian authors. Medulashvili has translated the Armenian prose by Hrant Matevosian and poems by Sayat-Nova into Georgian so skillfully that they seem to be written by Georgian authors.

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Zeзва Medulashvili was awarded the Prize for Translation of Holy Mother Throne at Edgemiatsin, 2012.

Maghvala Geurkova has been carrying out incessant translation from Armenian into Georgian and in the backward direction. She has been somewhat like a bridge in the Armenian-Georgian literary relations, translating the works of the classic and modern Armenian authors.

Hrachya Bayramyan, the head of the Georgian Studies Centre at Yerevan State University, is the author of a textbook of the history of the new Georgian literature and many other research papers, critical essays and publications. He translated, composed, commented the works of Georgian modern and classic writers and published them both in the literary media and in the form of separate books. Particularly, He translated the books by Ioseb Grishashvili, Otia Ioseliani, Revaz Mishveladze and others, as well as the above-mentioned two volumes by Nodar Dumbadze. Recently he was awarded the Prize after Ivane Machabeli for his great contribution in the Armenian Georgian literary-cultural sphere.

Anahit Bostanjyan has been translating from Armenian and backward, and she has translated the prose and poetry works of more than 80 classic and modern Georgian authors. She also has authored many literary studies, concentrating on the Armenian-Georgian literary relations. She has been editing the literary annual book, *Kamurdge (Bridge)*.

In recent decades, Hovhannes, Artashes and Archil Davityans, Ivane Beglaryan, Suren Avchyan, Aram Sahakyan, Sahak Manvelyan, Hovhannes Karayan and Mamikon Tagvoryan (all they are Armenian authors) have had significant contribution who have written both in Armenian and Georgian greatly contributing the literary thesauruses of both peoples.

After the fall of the USSR every post-soviet republic was closed in its separate home. Moreover, tides of chauvinism and negation heaved up in their territories, in contrast to the

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former slogans of internationalism, brotherhood and the soviet way of life (though false but better than many of the new ones.) The new slogans led to mutual attacks on belonging of some cultural heritage, especially those of the historical monuments. The ice was moved (as they say) in 2006, when the Armenian Writers' Union invited the delegation of the Georgian writers (leading by the well-known short story teller, Revaz Mishveladze) to its third meeting, and this was followed by the analogical invitation by the Georgian writers' Union to their 21st meeting. These two meetings opened a new phase in the Armenian-Georgian literary relations' newest history. There have taken place mutual visits of the writers of both countries, discussions and new book presentations have been arranged, and joint literary meetings have been held. For instance, now the Armenian reader has a full idea about the modern Georgian literary values; the Georgian authors, Chabua Amiredjibi, Revaz Mishveladze, Maghvala Gonashvili and other well-known writers have taken part in the Armenian literary life. The same can be said about the Armenian authors' participation in the Georgian literary life.

Thus, summing up the Armenian-Georgian literary and translation relations in the post-independence period, we can make a number of conclusions, and the most important of them is **the continuation and expansion of the mutual translation traditions despite the breaks conditioned by the regional conflict consequences.** The evidence of this continuation and expansion is the list of dozens of books translated from Armenian into Georgian. The statistics show that these books were translated both by the efforts of the well-known publishers (*Merani, Sakh(e)lebi, Amaras, Caucasian Tun* etc) and the private ones (*Hayos Kartlos* etc). The map of publishing is rather wide; its greater part has been in Tbilisi, a few were published in Batumi, Akhalkalak and Akhaltsikha. The only political publication included in the list is the work by the Armenian author, Zori Balayan, titled as *Hayos-Kartlos; More than a Legend*, published in Yerevan. It is to be noted that the books published at the end of the last century in Adjara didn't mainly have an ISBN, which was conditioned by the legislation mess of the publishing field in that period.



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It is also to be noted that in these years only (with a few exceptions) the valuable literary works (from the point of view either of their genre or their theme variety) of the outstanding authors have been translated, including both the Armenian classic and modern authors. Neither the folklore is neglected. From the classic authors the following writers were published: Nahapet Quchak, Sayat-Nova, Paruyr Sevak and Silva Kaputikian, for their works are more treasured by the Georgian reader. The modern works have been presented in the format of the genre anthologies that were put into circulation since 2006, when an agreement of a mutual cooperation was signed between the Armenian and Georgian Writers' Unions, which was put into life by and by, through a systematized programme.

The anthologies of the translated works of the poets and story tellers of the new generation have been periodically published, and the youth have actively taken part in the annual meetings arranged by the Armenian Writers' Union at Tsaghkadzor, as well as in the joint annual literary contests. Of course, such meetings mutually promote the Armenian and Georgian literatures, and they also enrich the 'creative laboratory' of both literatures with their genre, style and theme variety.

Taking care of a more complete presentation of Armenian literature, the books of the Armenian Diaspora (by Zahrat, Zareh Khrakhuni, Roper Hattechian, Sona Van) have been translated into Georgian and published.

It is noticeable that four Armenian-Georgian dictionaries were published in the last decade, which, by all means, shall make the work of the translators easier.

By the way, the list of the books translated from Georgian into Armenian is as rich and diverse as that from Armenian into Georgian, and this fact witnesses that there an active 'two-direction bridge-like literary traffic' has been formed in the post-independence period.

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THE SOURCES

1. The National Library of Armenia.
2. The Library of Armenian Writers' Union.
3. The Centre of Georgian Studies at Yerevan State University.
4. The Editorial *Vrastan* newspaper.
5. The Embassy of Georgia in Armenia.
6. The Embassy of Armenia in Georgia.
7. Anahit Bostanjian's private library.
8. Levon Ananyan's private library.
9. Hrachya Bayramyan's private library.
10. Felix Bakhchinyan's private library.
11. Van Bayburt's private library.

