

Translations from Georgian into English

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Introduction

As there is a very low number [43] of works translated from Georgian into English published in England from 1866 to 2011 it is only possible to identify the main tendencies in such publications and present their bibliography.

1. Works by English scholars

These are mainly linguists and historians, so-called Kartvelologists (e.g. Oliver and Marjory Wardrop, David Marshall Lang, Donald Rayfield etc.), who studied Georgian language and culture in depth and translated various valuable texts from Georgian into English in connection with their scientific or cultural research.

2. Works by Georgian scholars translated into English

Well-known and internationally acknowledged art historians (e.g. Shalva Amiranashvili and Vakhtang Beridze) whose works on Georgian art history were translated into English via German and Russian.

3. Individual authors & translators

Who tried to promote Georgian culture or their own work.

Georgian translations to English published in England from 1866 to 2011. Overview.

European curiosity regarding Georgian literature and language had various reasons at different periods. From the 17th century the Georgian theme gradually entered European literature. Classical legend (the story of the Argonauts), historical sources (*The Annals* by Tacitus), the extant traditions and stories about Georgia, brought by Crusaders or European travellers, gradually became the theme of works of European authors. Occasionally fabulous themes of oriental origin are mystified and the development of the plot is transferred to Georgia.

Scholarly studies of Georgian literature started in Europe from the 19th century. This was basically linked to the academic interest in Asia in general, expressed primarily in the foundation of the *Société Asiatique* in France in 1822, which issued the monthly *Journal Asiatique*. The Journal frequently published materials on Georgia. In 1825 M. Brosset (1802-1880) was elected a member of this Society. The commencement of scholarly research on Kartvelian Studies in Europe and Russia is linked to his name [The **Kartvelian studies**, or **Georgian studies** is a field of humanities covering Kartvelian (Georgian) history, languages, religion and culture. In a narrower sense,



the term usually refers to the research activities conducted on these problems outside Georgia].

The subject of Brosset's scholarly research was Old Georgian secular literature. In the first place it should be noted that he was the first European researcher of *Vepkhistqaosani* ("The Man in the Panther's Skin") introducing the plot of *Vepkhistqaosani* to Europe and appraising Rustaveli's poem as one of the best creations of European poetry. He was not only a populariser of the poem but also the establisher and publisher of its Georgian text. Besides *Vepkhistqaosani*, Brosset studied other literary works of the Georgian classical period, laying the foundation for the study of Georgian literature in the context of European literature.

In Britain scholarly interest in Kartvelian Studies developed with the translation of the works of Georgian researchers, and this was linked to S. C. Malan's name. This was preceded by the activity of the Biblical Society, founded in London at the beginning of the 19th century, encouraging the study of Georgian manuscripts. In 1823 the *Asiatic Society* was founded in London, which, for its part, became interested in Georgian literature. In the 1830s the British Museum obtained its first Georgian MSS.

The activities of the English brother and sister Oliver and Marjory Wardrop proved of special importance in the study of Georgian literature. John Oliver Wardrop (1864-1948) was a diplomat and British envoy in Russia. He became interested in Georgian culture. Marjory Scott Wardrop (1869-1909) also shared his affection for Georgia. The Wardrops studied the Georgian language, travelled to Georgia several times, became closely acquainted with the Georgian people and intelligentsia, and made friends with its best representatives. In 1888 O. Wardrop published his book, "The Kingdom of Georgia", in London, which played an important role in the popularization of the Georgian world in Britain. He translated and published several Georgian literary works in London. Marjory Wardrop followed in her brother's footsteps. Her translation of *Vepkhistqaosani*, published in 1912 in London with Oliver Wardrop's notes, played an outstanding role in the popularization of *Vepkhistqaosani* not only in Europe but also worldwide.

In 1909 N. Marr published a Russian translation of the work of the 7th-century Byzantine writer Antiochus Strategus, "The Capture of Jerusalem" (in Russian, in *Teksty i razyskaniya...* book IX, St. Petersburg, 1909), translated from the Arabic into Georgian in the 10th century and preserved in Georgian MSS. In 1910 an English translation of the same work was published in London by F. Conybeare.

The study of Georgian ecclesiastical literature gradually became closely linked to Medieval and Byzantine Studies.



At the turn of the 20th century the well-known English Armenist F.C. Conybeare (1856-1924) commenced his study of Georgian ecclesiastical literature. His friendship with the Wardrops and travels to Georgia helped him study the Georgian language. In 1896 he published two studies on the two cardinal problems of Georgian ecclesiastical literature: the provenance of the first redaction of the Georgian New Testament and the Georgian redaction of the *Balavariani*. This was followed by his study of the MSS of Mount Athos and publication of English translations of the Georgian redactions of individual works of Byzantine literature.

In 1932 William Edward Allen's monograph "A History of the Georgian People", came out in London, forming a new stage in the development of Kartvelian Studies in Britain. David Marshall Lang continued Allen's work. Being the most productive Kartvelologist among British researchers, he directed the Caucasian Studies Department in London University for a long time, taught the Georgian language and delivered lectures on cardinal problems of the Georgian language, literature and history. From the standpoint of literary criticism special mention should be made of his numerous studies dealing with questions of the Georgian *Balavariani*. Among his translations of Georgian literary works and abridged English translations of Georgian original hagiographic works and exact scholarly translations of both Georgian redactions of the *Balavariani* are notable.

In 1935-1937 the journal *Georgica* was published in London in English. Only three volumes came out in five parts, published by the Georgian Historical Society. The journal dealt with general Georgian and Caucasian studies, as indicated in its subtitle "Georgia, a Journal of Georgian and Caucasian Studies". It carried papers on problems of Georgian classical literature, mainly on "The Man in the Panther's Skin".

In Soviet times, especially after the Second World War some Georgian titles were also translated into English via Russian to promote the Soviet lifestyle and its multicultural society. Most of them were published in Moscow and distributed in London by Central books. There were also similar publications by Soviet Booklets in London.

In the 1970s and 1980s books about Georgian art and culture by the well-known and internationally acknowledged art historians Shalva Amiranashvili, Rusudan Mepisashvili and Vakhtang Beridze were translated into English via German and Russian.

In the 1970s the English-language reader received two new translations of "The Man in the Panther's Skin". One is by the English author and well-known Kartvelologist Katharine Vivian. She also translated parts from *Kartlis-tskhovreba* ("The life of Georgia") and Sul Khan-Saba's *Sibrdzne-Sitsruisa* ("The Book of Wisdom and Lies").



She publishes studies on Rustaveli's poem, and generally on the classical period of Georgian secular literature.

In 1991 Georgia came onto the world map as an independent country. Being opened to the new opportunities Georgia was endeavouring to introduce and promote its culture. Random but increasing number of works by Georgian translators started to appear among English publications.

At the meantime the already established English scholars continued their work with Kartvelian studies. In 1997 a Georgian-English, English-Georgian dictionary and phrasebook has been published by Nicholas Awde and Thea Khitarishvili which was followed by a comprehensive Georgian-English dictionary by Donald Rayfield in 2006. In the 1990s some other grammar and text books were also published.

The English researcher Donald Rayfield continues to study Georgian literature. He has translated with comments, modern Georgian poets and he also studies the lives and works of Georgian symbolists. His substantial work "The literature of Georgia: a history" first appeared in 1994 followed by the 2nd and the 3rd editions in 2000 and 2010.

Publishers

Among random publishers available at different times to different Georgian translations, there are a few specialising in Oriental and Asian studies.

Oxford University Press must be specially mentioned because of its collection of Georgian books and MSS in the Oriental Department of the Bodleian Library, and also as one of the main publishers of Georgian materials published in England.

School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London [SOAS] is another significant place historically connected to Georgian studies.

Under the SOAS imprint, the School has published many academic books and monographs which contain contributions to the knowledge of Asian and African languages, culture, history, religion and literature.

Bennett & Bloom is publisher of books linking the peoples and cultures of the Caucasus, Central Asia & Middle East

Curzon Press, Richmond Publishers offers a comprehensive resource for scholars of translation and intercultural studies and for researchers and teachers in related disciplines including



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