

CHRONICLE OF EVENTS

ქართველოლოგიური ქრონიკა

The New Translation of *The Knight in the Panther Skin*

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On 13th of October 2015 Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University warmly welcomed Lyn Coffin, a new translator of *The Knight in the Panther Skin* from Georgian into English. The American poet, playwright and translator published the fifth English translation of *The Knight in the Panther Skin* in September 2015. The new translation was prepared by the publishing house “Poezia”. Ms. Coffin started to work on the translation of the poem in 2012 together with Professor Dodona Kiziria, who made a word for word translation of the poem. This translation was based on two editions: one, prepared by the Commission for stating the text of MPS and published in 1965 and the other, the school edition by Prof. Nodar Natadze.

At the presentation of the book Lyn Coffin was introduced to the public by Prof. Darejan Tvaltadze, Dean of the Faculty of Humanities, at Tbilisi State University, who thanked the translators for the new English translation of the greatest Georgian poem. Academician Elguja Khintibidze, Head of the Chair of Old Georgian Literature of Tbilisi State University in his welcome speech addressed the translator and noted that this translation is valuable because it is a fact that it was published recently in the 21th Century whereas previous translations were published in the 20th century. Professor Khintibidze also talked about a different textual form from the previous translations and paid attention to the metre and rhythm employed by Rustaveli and added that the fact that the translator is a famous American poet, the author of many translations from Russian, Czech etc., is encouraging. Professor Iness Merabishvili an internationally acknowledged scholar and translator from Georgian into English and *vice versa*, Head of the Byron Society in Georgia also made a speech of welcome to Lyn Coffin. She emphasized the value of the new translation and paid attention to some of the difficulties of transposition of several key moments from the source language to the target language. Khatia Mikaberidze, a TSU PhD student, who is interested in the poem's translations and is also involved in its literary analysis, also welcomed the honoured guest.

The translator addressed the audience as well and she talked about how the process of the translation had started. She has also translated and published other works from Georgian, namely *The Anthology of Georgian poetry* which was published in the USA (editor Professor Dodona Kiziria).

This anthology included 19th century Georgian poetry. In addition, Lyn Coffin has translated works by modern Georgian poets: Dato Barbakadze, Giorgi Kekelidze, Givi Alkhazishvili and Zaza Abzianidze. The Georgian translations of her own poetry made by Gia Jokhadze were published in 2012 in Tbilisi. Lyn Coffin also discussed the advantages of her translation of the *MPS* compared with the others. She believed that the 16 syllable stanzas, the translation's rhythm and musical characteristics, makes it unique among the other 4 translations of the *MPS*. As well as this, she also mentioned that the word for word translation was made by Professor Dodona Kiziria. The translator also added that she was often asked how she could have embarked on the translation of such a difficult work especially when she did not even know much about the plot. Her own answer to this question sounded very original: she argues that Rustaveli did not know what would happen in the end of the story either. About the manner of her translating, when she started translating the story she did not know how it would end and the word by word translation was made by Professor Dodona Kiziria. At the end of the meeting, the American translator read some stanzas from the new translation of the *MPS*.

Translation of *The Knight in the Panther Skin* into other languages and especially into English is very important from the point of view of its promotion all over the world especially if and when it is made by an experienced professional.

I hope this new translation will make many people interested in the poem. Every new translation is a new way to the original text. Nowadays, sadly there are not many ways leading to *the Knight in the Panther Skin*. Our aim is to create many more translations, to refine the style and technique and comply them with the ruled of the modern theory of translations.

Scholars are in agreement that there is no ideal translation. Translation cannot mirror the original text, but there are good translations which meet the demands of the translation theory. Only by hard work, taking a great interest in the original text and relying on the accumulated experience will we be able to achieve if not an ideal, but quite "close to the ideal" translations.

The new translation of the *MPS* by Lyn Coffin assists the popularisation of the Georgian culture and if only for this, it deserved our special attention. As for its closeness to the original text, the transformation of the content, context, images and implications in the translation this is a matter of time and future studies.