

Questions on the Georgian translation of the Acts of the Apostles

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Abstract. Without claiming to answer the question of knowing from which language, Greek or Armenian, was translated the text of the *Acts of the Apostles* into Georgian, I would just draw attention to few linguistic events noted during a comparative reading of the *Acts* in its three variants – Greek, Georgian and Armenian.

Three points will be discussed here; the first two involve the Georgian and Armenian versions of the Acts, the third one involve the Georgian and Greek texts.

Key words: *Georgian Versions of Bible, Acts of the Apostles*

1. One plurale tantum

1.1. The question of the pluralia tantum, id est substantives used only in the plural, is often put forward to uphold the fact that a text was translated from Armenian; Classical Armenian, as we know, includes a large number of terms which are not used in the singular. I will take here as an example the noun “sky”.

1.2. Երկ-ԾՈՒ ՕՒՐԱՆՈՑ ԵՐԿԻՆ-Ք erkin-k’

The Armenian term ԵՐԿԻՆ-Ք erkin-k’ “sky” is used usually in the plural. As for the Georgian term Երկ-Ո “sky”, it occurs both in the singular and in the plural.

1.2.1. In the *Acts*, the Georgian “sky” occurs three times in the plural, where Greek has a singular and Armenian has a plural.

Here are two of the three Georgian occurrences of “sky” in the plural (the plural is italicized in the examples, the singular is bold):

Ac 2,19

და ვსცე ნიშებ ცათა შინა და სასწაულ ქუეყანასა ზედა, სისხლი და ცეცხლი და არმური კუამლისად

καὶ δάσω τέρατα ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ ἄνω καὶ σημεῖα ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς αἷμα καὶ πῦρ καὶ ἰσχυρὰ καπνοῦ

ს. თაგ სჯასა *ქერქინს* ἰ վեր, ს. სჯასა ქერქիր ἰ ἰუნაჲრ, არქის ს. ხორ ს. მრქჩ სქუთ; ew tac' nšans *yerkins* i ver, ew nšans yerkir i xonarh, ariwn ew howr ew mrrik cxoy.

I will show wonders in the sky above, and signs on the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and billows of smoke.

Ac 7,49

ცანი საყდარნი ჩემნი არიან და ქუეყანად კუარცხბერკი ფერჯთა ჩემთად. რაბამი სახლი მიშწნეთ მე, - თქუა უფალმან, - ანუ რადმე ადგილი იყოს განსასუენებელისა ჩემისად?

Ὁ οὐρανός μοι θρόνος, ἢ δὲ γῆ ὑποπόδιον τῶν ποδῶν μου· ποῖον οἶκον οἰκοδομήσετε μοι, λέγει κύριος, ἢ τίς τόπος τῆς καταπαύσεώς μου;

ქერქინჲ აჲთო ἰნ ს. ს. ს. ქერქირ აყათოანუან ნუიგ ἰნგ. ნრქჩს ἰ თონ ჳხსცეჲ ἰნდ' სას სქრ. სჲმ გჲ'სჯ სქეჲ ხანგუსუნან ἰნგ. *erkink'* at'of im en, ew erkir patowandan otic' imoc'. orpisi? town šinec'êk' inj, asê têr. kam zi'nč' teli hangstean imoy.

Heaven is my throne, and the earth a footstool for my feet. What kind of house will you build me? says the Lord; or what is the place of my rest?

1.2.2. But if these two verses are interesting, it's mostly because they are Old Testament quotations, taken respectively from Joel and Isaiah. Yet, in both instances, “sky” is singular in the Georgian text of the Old Testament, as in Greek.

Joel 2,30 / LXX Joel 3,3

და ვსცე ნიშები ცასა შინა ზე და სასწაულებ ქუეყანასა ზედა ქუე, სისხლი და ცეცხლი და აღმური კუამლისა.

καὶ δάσω τέρατα ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, αἷμα καὶ πῦρ καὶ ἰσχυρὰ καπνοῦ·

ს. თაგ სჯასა *ქერქინს* ἰ վեր, ს. სჯასა ქერქիր ἰ ἰუნაჲრ, არქის ს. ხორ ს. მრქჩ სქუთ; ew tac' nšans *yerkins* i ver, ew nšans yerkir i xonarh, ariwn ew howr ew mrrik cxoy.

And I will shew wonders in the heaven and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke.

Isaie 66,1

ცად საყდარ ჩემდა, ხოლო ქუეყანა კუარცხლბევ ფერტთა ჩემთა, რომელი სახლი, ადგილი მიშენოთ მე? - თქუა უფალმან, - და რომელი ადგილი განსუენებისა ჩემისა?

‘Ο οὐρανός μοι θρόνος, ἢ δὲ γῆ ἰσθῆτος τῶν ποδῶν μου· οἶον οἶκον οἰκοδομήσατέ μοι; ἢ ποῖος τόπος τῆς καταπαύσεώς μου;

ერკინჲპ ართო იმ են¹ ხუ ერკիր ყასთოასნჲან სუიგ იანგ; ნ² რაჲსი სთონ ჳინჲგჲქ ინდ ასუ სერ, კამ ნ³ რაჲსი ინჲ იგლ აჲს სთეჲ ხანკასუნან იანი; *erkink’ at’of im en, ew erkir patowandan otic’ imoc’.* o?rpisi town šinic’ëk’ inj asê têr, kam o?rpisi inç’ ic’ê ayn tehi hangstean imoy.

The heaven [is] my throne, and the earth [is] my footstool: where [is] the house that ye build unto me? and where [is] the place of my rest.

Here is a summary table of the Georgian “sky”: plural in the Acts as in Armenian, singular in the Old Testament as in Greek:

Ac 2,19	Joel 2,30 / LXX Joel 3,3	Ac 7,49	Isaie 66,1
ცათა შინა	ცასა შინა	ცანი	ცად
<i>plural</i>	<i>singular</i>	<i>plural</i>	<i>singular</i>
ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ	ἐν τῷ οὐραν	ὁ οὐρανός	ὁ οὐρανός
<i>singular</i>	<i>singular</i>	<i>singular</i>	<i>singular</i>
<i>ქერქისუ yerkins</i>	<i>ქერქისუ yerkins</i>	<i>ერკინჲპ erkink’</i>	<i>ერკინჲპ erkink’</i>
<i>plural</i>	<i>plural</i>	<i>plural</i>	<i>plural</i>

1.3. Although the use of the plural for the noun “sky” in Georgian is nothing exceptional, yet it is remarkable to have a singular form in the two verses in the Old Testament and a plural form for their quotation in the *Acts of the Apostles*. It seems tempting to me to see a trace of the Armenian version in the quotation of these Old Testament verses in the Georgian translation of the Acts of the Apostles.

Other examples could be given, where the Georgian and the Armenian texts show a plural while the Greek shows a singular. I could also give as many examples where the Georgian and the Armenian texts don't match. However I think that cases where the

plural of the Georgian corresponds to an Armenian *plurale tantum* should be considered in the question of knowing how big an influence had the Armenian text of the *Acts of the Apostles* in the Georgian translation.

In my comparative reading of the *Acts* in Greek, Georgian and Armenian, I came across a verb phrase which seemed odd and on which I propose to stop a moment.

2. A singular verb phrase

2.1. The Armenian verb phrase *հրաման տամ* *hraman tam*, literally “to give order”, is quite common. However, the most common verb which means “to give an order, to order” is the verb *հրամայեմ* *hramayem*, which, in the Bible, conveys very often the Greek *κελεύω*; generally, in Georgian, we find the only verb *ბრძანება* as a translation of *κελεύω*.

2.2. There are two occurrences of the phrase *հրաման տամ* *hraman tam* in the *Acts of the Apostles*. In one of these occurrences, in Ac 7,44 , we find, for this verb phrase, the Greek verb *διατάσσω* . However, there is an exact equivalent of the Armenian verb phrase in the Georgian text: *ბრძანების მიცემა* “to give order” .

Ac 7,44

კარავი იგი საწამებელი იყო მამათა ჩუენთა თანა უდაბნოსა მას ზედა, ვითარცა-იგი *ბრძანებაჲ* მისცა მან, რომელ-იგი ეტყოდა მოსეს აღსაქმედ მისა მსგავსად საქმისა მის, რომელ-იგი ეხილვა მას.

Ἡ σκηνή τοῦ μαρτυρίου ἦν τοῖς πατράσιν ἡμῶν ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ, καθὼς διατάξατο ὁ λαῶν τῷ Μωϋσῆι ποιῆσαι αὐτὴν κατὰ τὸν τύπον οὗ ἐώρακει.

Խորանն վկայութեան էր ընդ հարսն մեր յանապատին. որպէս հրաման էտ որ խօսէրն ընդ մովսիսի, առնել զայն ըստ օրինակին զոր էտէս: xorann vkayowt'ean êr ënd harsn mer yanapatin. orpës hraman et or xôsêrn ënd movsisi, a'nel zayn ëst ôrinakin zor etes.

Our fathers had the tabernacle of the testimony in the wilderness, even as he who spoke to Moses commanded him to make it according to the pattern that he had seen.

2.3. There is, in this verse of the Acts, a reference to the Old Testament, more precisely to the Exodus. The order that Moses received to make the “tabernacle of testimony” according to the pattern he had seen is given in the verses Ex 25,9 and Ex 25,40:

Ex 25,9

καὶ ποιήσεις μοι κατὰ πάντα, ὅσα ἐγὼ σοι δεῖκνύω ἐν τῷ ὄρει, τὸ παράδειγμα τῆς σκηνῆς καὶ τὸ παράδειγμα πάντων τῶν σκευῶν αὐτῆς· οὕτως ποιήσεις.

According to all that I shew thee, [after] the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make.

Ex 25,40

Ὅρα ποιήσεις κατὰ τὸν τύπον τὸν δεδειγμένον σοι ἐν τῷ ὄρει.

And look that thou make [them] after their pattern, which was shewed thee in the mount:

2.4. Yet in the Armenian and the Georgian Bibles, there is a more accurate matching of Ac 7,44; that is the verse Ex 38,21 which includes both in Armenian and in Georgian, the same verb phrase “to give order”:

Ex 38,21

და ესე არს ბრძანებისა განწესებამ კარვისა მის საწამებელისა, ვითარცა-ოგი *ბრძანებამ მოსცა* მოსეს მსახურებისა მის ყოფამ ლევიტელთა ითამარის მიერ, მისა აჰრონის მღდლისადათა.

Եւ այս էր պայման խորանին վկայութեան. որպէս *հրաման էտ* մովսիսի կազմել զպաշտօնն դէստացոցն ի ձեռն իրամարայ որդւոյ ահարոնի քահանայի: ew ays êr payman xoranin vkayowt'ean. orpêš *hraman et movsisi kazmel zpaštônñ łewtac'woc'n i jeřn it'amaray ordwoy aharoni k'ahanayi.*

This is the sum of the tabernacle, [even] of the tabernacle of testimony, as it was counted, according to the commandment of Moses, [for] the service of the Levites, by the hand of Ithamar, son to Aaron the priest.

2.5. Thus, if in Armenian the phrase is nothing exceptional, on the other hand, its Georgian equivalent ბრძანების მიცემა / ბრძანების მოცემა remains quite singular. It seems difficult to me to explain the use of the verb phrase ბრძანების მიცემა in Georgian in this verse of the *Acts of the Apostles* other than by the Armenian.

The last point of this lecture is about the question of preverb forms.

3. The preverb forms

3.1. The question of preverb forms arises in a whole different way from the question of the pluralia tantum in the debate about the language from which was translated the text of the *Acts of the Apostles* into Georgian. Indeed, at the time the Bible was translated, Armenian knows only very marginally the formation of the verbs by preverbatation; the Armenian text has nothing to say here. On the other hand, the question of the preverb forms is of particular interest in Georgian. Indeed, not only the preverbs are not rare in Georgian but the preverbatation is a common process to form verbs and, if I may say so, an intrinsic way to form words in Georgian. As proof of this, I'll cite the following sentence taken from the *Martyrdom of Shushanik*, text reputed to be the first to have been composed in Georgian:

Martyrdom of Shushanik 16,26,8

თანდაუჯდა და ჰკითხვიდა საღმობათა მათთვის.

He sat down with her and questioned her about her troubles.

where we find the form თანდაუჯდა made up of the preverbs თანა and და.

3.2. But back to the Acts of the Apostles. In his article published in *les Mélanges offerts à Gilles Dorival*, Bernard Outtier introduced a list of two preverbs verbal forms in Georgian which correspond to a two preverbs verbal form in Greek. There are four in the Acts of the Apostles, or more precisely three different verbs for four occurrences:

Ac 1,26 : თანა-შე-ერაცხა: συγ-κατ-εψηφισθη.

Ac 3,18: წინადასწარ-ად-უთქუა: προ-κατ-ηγγειλεν.

Ac 12,25: თანა-წარ-იყვანეს: συμ-παρα-λαβοντες.

Ac 15,37: თანა-წარ-იყვანა: συμ-παρα-λαβειν.

It should be emphasized that there is an exact match between the first preverb of the Georgian text and the first preverb of the Greek text in these verbal forms:

სυν-	თანა-
προ-	წინადასწარ-

But should we conclude from this that the Georgian necessarily depends on the Greek? Yes, you say. But wouldn't it be too simple?

The data, in fact, are complex. Indeed, we may as well find double preverb forms in Georgian, corresponding to a single preverb form in Greek, and vice versa, single preverb forms in Georgian corresponding to a double preverb form in Greek.

3.3. Thus, we can oppose the verse Ac 7,52 to Ac 3,18: the two verses have the same Greek double preverb verb *προ-κατ-αγγέλλω*. If in Georgian we find a double preverb form in Ac 3,18, however, in Ac 7,52, we find a single preverb form – I put aside the question of the grammatical nature of *წინადაწარ*, preverb or simply adverb.

Ac 3,18

ხოლო რომელი-იგი ღმერთმან *წინადაწარ* აღუთქუა პირითა ყოველთა წინადაწარმეტყუელთა მისთა მიერ, ვნება ცხებულისა მისისად, აღასრულა ესრჳთ.

ὁ δὲ θεὸς ἦ *προκατήγγειλεν* διὰ στόματος πάντων τῶν προφητῶν παθεῖν τὸν Χριστὸν αὐτοῖ ἐπλήρωσεν οὕτως.

But the things which God announced by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he thus fulfilled.

Ac 7,52

და მოწყვდნეს, რომელნი-იგი *წინადაწარ* უთხრობდეს მოსლვასა მას წმიდისასა... [OGL *წინაწარ* უთხრობდეს]

καὶ ἀπέκτειναν τοὺς *προκαταγγειλантаς* περὶ τῆς ἐλεύσεως τοῦ δικαίου...

they killed those who foretold the coming of the Righteous One...

Similarly, if in Ac 12,25 and Ac 15,37 the double preverb verb *συμ-παρα-λαμβάνω* is translated *თანა-წარ-ყვანება*, double preverb verb, on the other hand, the first preverb, *συν-*, of the Greek verb is not translated in Ac 15,38, which has a "simple" *წარყვანება*:

Ac 12,25

*თანაწარ*ყვანეს იოვანეცა, რომელსა სახელი წოდებული იყო მარკოს

συνπαραλαβόντες καὶ Ἰωάννην τὸν ἐπικληθέντα Μάρκον
also taking with them John whose surname was Mark

Ac 15,37

ბარნაბას ესრე უნდა, რადთამცა იოჰანე *თანაწარ*ყვანა

Βαρνάβας δὲ ἐβουλεύσατο *συμπαραλαβεῖν* τὸν Ἰωάννην
Barnabas planned to take John, who was called Mark, with them also.

Ac 15,38

არა წარყვანებად იგი
μὴ *συμπαραλαβεῖν* τοῦτον
not to take with them

3.4. Conversely, in Ac 15,39, we find the double preverb verb თან-
წარ-ყვანება in Georgian, where the Greek has a single preverb verb
παρ-λαμβάνω:

Ac 15,39

და ბარნაბა თან წარყვანა მარკოს
τόν τε Βαρναβᾶν *παρ*λαβόντα τὸν Μάρκον
Barnabas took Mark with him.

3.5. There are also cases where, in front of a double preverb form in
Greek, the Georgian has a form without a preverb. As follows:

Ac 1,6

კუალად მოაგო სასუფეველი ისრაჴლსა
ἀποκαθιστάνεις τὴν βασιλείαν τῷ Ἰσραήλ
you are now restoring the kingdom to Israel

where the adverb კუალად translates in a way the preverb ἀπο-
or:

Ac 22,21

და მრქუა მე: "წარვედ, რამეთუ მე ნათესავთა შორიელთა
მიგავლინო შენ".
καὶ εἶπεν πρὸς με, Πορεύου, ὅτι ἐγὼ εἰς ἔθνη μακρὰν *ἐξαποστελῶ* σε.
He said to me, 'Depart, for I will send you out far from here to the
Gentiles.'

3.6. In this verse Ac 22,21, there is the Greek verb ἐξ-απο-στέλλω.
However, in front of this verb ἐξ-απο-στέλλω, the Georgian may
have a verb with no preverb as here in Ac 22,21 but also the same
verb with the preverb წარ- (Ac 7,12) or another verb with the
preverb გან- (Ac 17,14):

Ac 7,12

და წარავლინნა მამანი ჩუენნი პირველად
ἐξαπέστειλεν τοὺς πατέρας ἡμῶν πρῶτον
he sent out our fathers the first time.

Ac 17,14

მუნქუსვე განყვანნეს ძმათა მათ პავლე და წარგზავნეს იგი ზღვსკიდით კერძო

ἐπέπεσε δὲ τότε τὸν Παῦλον ἔξαπέστειλαν οἱ ἄδελφοὶ πορεύεσθαι ὡς ἐπὶ τῆν θάλασσαν

Then the brothers immediately sent out Paul to go as far as to the sea.

3.7. Note, finally, that the single preverb verb წარ-ვლინება found in Ac 7,12 to translate the double preverb verb ἔξ-απο-στέλλω, also translates the single preverb verb ἀποστέλλω in Ac 7,14:

Ac 7,14

წარვლინნა იოსეფ...

ἀποστείλας δὲ Ἰωσήφ...

Joseph sent...

3.8. We could multiply such examples, but I will only give a non exhaustive list of the verses that contain a double preverb form in Greek or in Georgian:

Georgian	Greek	occurrences
2 preverbs	2 preverbs	Ac 1,26 3,18 12,25 15,37
2 preverbs	1 preverb	Ac 6,10 7,8 7,51 15,39 27,40 (OGL), etc.
1 preverb	2 preverbs	Ac 7,12 7,52 13,31 15,5 15,38 17,14 20,10, etc.
0 preverb	2 preverbs	Ac 1,6 11,22 12,11 13,41 15,3 18,28 22,21, etc

3.9. I haven't found an example of a Georgian double preverb verb corresponding to a Greek form with no preverb, but if we don't limit ourselves strictly to the verbal forms, the list goes on with the following example:

Ac 27,40

და კავნი იგი მოჰყვანნეს და უტევნეს ზღუად, და მას თანა მიუტევნეს თანაშესაუღლებელნი იგი საჭეთანი, და აღიპყრეს აფრად იგი მცირე, და ქართთ კერძო ეპყრა კიდედგან.

καὶ τὰς ἀγκύρας περιελόντες εἶων εἰς τὴν θάλασσαν, ἡμᾶ ἀνέντες τὰς ζευκτηρίας τῶν πηδαλίων, καὶ ἐπάραντες τὸν ἄρτέμωνα τῆν πνεούσην κατεῖχον εἰς τὸν αἰγιαλόν.

Casting off the anchors, they left them in the sea, at the same time untying the rudder ropes. Hoisting up the foresail to the wind, they made for the beach.

where თანაშესაუღლებელი “strap” which translates ζευκτηρία is a derivative of a verb not documented elsewhere.

3.10. What I'd like to emphasize in conclusion to this question of the preverb forms, is that if it happens that there is correspondance between Georgian and Greek on a certain number of double preverb forms, there is nothing systematic, nothing automatic. At the opposite, the Georgian translator of the *Acts of the Apostles*, if he had a Greek text before him, at no time shown servility but acted very freely, translating the double preverb forms sometimes with a double preverb form, sometimes with a single preverb form, sometimes by a form with no preverb or by a verb with an adverb.

4. At the end of this linguistic journey which took as its starting point the Georgian “sky” and the point of arrival the preverb forms through the verb phrase “to give order”, it seems reasonable to think that the Georgian version of the *Acts of the Apostles* depends on the Greek, but it is not excluded that it retains here and there some traces of the Armenian text.