

The Borrowed Plant Name Stems in the Georgian Gospel

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Resume: Cultural historians and archeologists assume as undeniable fact the relationship between the Caucasus and the Middle East already in VI-V centuries BC, especially between the countries of the South Caucasus and the Middle East. As is known with confidence, the Caucasus had been a carrier and propagator, *Kulturträger*, of the ancient civilization's achievements in the whole Caucasus. Against this background, it is natural to expect the existence of the traces of the ancient areal contacts in the Kartvelian languages. The phonetic and semantic modifications of the borrowed foreign lexical units are interesting and need to be taken into account for the study of the source language as well as of the borrowing language systems, for clarification of certain scientific facts. In this regard, the Georgian Gospel represents an extremely important source of information. According to the purpose of our research a few basic questions arise: how are the plant names transferred to Georgian Gospel texts – via borrowing, translation, transliteration, loan-words, or replacing by the equivalents of the similar semantics? Are there any Proto-Kartvelian roots among the plant names recorded in Gospels? Are there any examples when with the borrowed vocabulary, we also come across with the Georgian (Kartvelian) synonym forms? Did the borrowed material appear in the Georgian language system by way of Gospel texts translation, or did it exist before? Which cultural, religious motives are related to each plant name in the given context? How are the Kartvelian and borrowed roots distributed (for example, depending on whether the plant grows in Georgia or not)? How adequate are the lexical equivalents and how are the errors explained? - We shall try to answer these questions this time using the examples of the borrowed vocabulary.

Key words: *Borrowed Vocabulary; Plant Names; Georgian Gospel.*

The world of plants in the New Testament is not distinguished with chromaticity, but to each plant name, that is generally significant for the Biblical texts, a very interesting, exactly determined, formal-semantic model is related.

Most of the borrowed plant names are non-endemic species for Georgia, and it causes the existence of synonym forms: *alo*, *halo* (Hebr.), *manana* (Hebr.), *nard-* (*lard-*) (the Hebrew origin root, attested in Persian, entered in Georgian through Greek way), *p'it'na* (Pers. Gr.), *t'egan-* (Gr.), *usup'-* (Gr.), *krtil-* (Gr.?), *šrošan-* (Hebr. entered in Georgian through Persian way), *cereco* (Geo.?), *anisul-* Gr., *k'ama* – Hebr.), *zirak'-* (Pers.). *krtil-* and *zirak'-* have apparently Georgian suffixed endings.

The other two complex compound names are the determinants of non-endemic species as well: *danak'is k'udi* (the name produced on a Georgian basis) and *zetis xili*, the first stem of which is of Arabic origin.

In general, the symbolic-sacred definitions are the cornerstone of the allegorical language of the New Testament. In this regard, the vocabulary of plant names testified in the editions of the Georgian translation of the Gospel gives a particular shade to the text.

1. **“alo”, “halo”** (Aloē L.) – *aloe* in the Georgian Gospel is met in two forms: *moiyes ayreuli murisa da alojsaj* Jo. 19, 39; *moiyo muri šezavebuli halojturt* [“and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes”] Jo. 19,39C.

According to a biblical Encyclopedia *aloe* is a well-known exotic plant with wide and very thick thorny leaves. Its juice (also *aloe*) is a medical treatment, it was also used for embalming (cf. Jo. 19,39), and, - at home – for fragrancly.

At the Cape of Good Hope and Ceylon many types of this tree are widespread. Due to the strong and pleasant smell of aloe, people of the East were using it as most precious incense. In the

Holy Scripture aloe according to its aroma is equivalent to *myrrh* and *cassia* (Psalm. 44,9). The tree of aloe was very costly in the East.

According to Hérodote, *aloe* was used for the embalming of the dead in Egypt. It is known that Nicodemus brought the mixture of myrrh and aloe for the burial of Jesus Christ.

In other monuments of Old Georgian we meet: *halo, alove, aloe, alo* forms: “moiyo... muri da *aloeē*” K.Jer. 160. 2; “muri da *aløj* q’ovelta tana sulnelta (movistule)” K.Jer. – Aghdg. 159, 36; “mogala ergasisi lit’raj muri da *aloveē*” Paul. 48,4[1].

Sulkhan-Saba Orbeliani notes that *alo* is *samuravi* (19,39 Jo.). It is a big-leaf grass, it blooms after a hundred years and afterwards yields one fruit, which has a splendid aroma.

Sulkhan-Saba writes about the stem *sabr. sabri* (Bal.) is not a Georgian stem, it is called *azua* Za. *azua* (Bal.) *sabri* ZABCab. It is not interpreted; *udi* (tree) is an aromatic tree ZABCB[20].

The interpretations of *azua* and *udi* are not attested in any extant texts and Dictionaries.

As it turns out, *sabri* in Georgian is an Arabic borrowing. Arab. [ṣabr] : Geo. sabri.

In Abu Reihan Biruni’s (973-1048) well-known work[23] *sabri* is explained as [ṣabir, sabur] aloē. It is noted, that aloē is called [álbā] in Syrian, in Persian – [albā], in Indian – [būlū]. In Indian, the plant [sabur] is called [subār], in regions of Maghreb its name is [sabbāra].

Some heralds tell that the plant [ṣabir] is what Arabs call also [maḳir].

According to Abu Ubaida, from [maḳir] i.e. from aloe initially is separated [ṣabir], then [ḥuḍaḍ], and at last it is left pressing, which is called [maḳir] as well.

Azo, azua as a correspondent to Aloē, Ud is attested in Zaza Panaskertel-Tsitsishvili [17].

What about the Greek ἄλον?, - In H. Hewy’s opinion, it is of Hebrew origin, derived from the plural form ’āhālām or ’āhālōt.

On the other hand, he considers it possible to restore a dialectic form of Indian root – aghil (=skt. agaru, aguru)[14].

Alo, halo forms confirmed in the Georgian Gospel redactions are derived from Greek *ἀλόη* (compare Syrian *'alwa*; Persian *albā*); together with it, in Georgian is also met *sabri*, the later borrowing from Arabic *ṣabr*. As the Georgian variant of these words of foreign origin, *Sulkhan-Saba Orbeliani* assumes *azua*, the trace of which in Modern Georgian, Kartvelian languages and dialects is not shown.

2. “**manana**” (Erica L.) – *manana* is the food, which according to biblical tradition (Exodus 16,14), during forty years every morning had been falling upon the Jews departed from Egypt while travelling in the wilderness: *mamata tkuenta č'ames mananaj udabnosa zeda da moc'q'des* [“your fathers did eat *manna* in the wilderness, and are dead.”] Jo. 6, 49; *mamata mat čuenta č'ames mananaj igi da udabnosa mas moc'q'des* [“our fathers did eat *manna* in the desert;”] Jo. 6,31C; *vitar igi č'ames mamata tkuenta mananaj* [“not as your fathers did eat *manna*”] Jo. 6,58; *mamani č'amdes mananasa udabnosa zeda* Jo. 6,31 [“fathers did eat *manna* in the desert”].

In other monuments of Old Georgian: *manana*, “t'ak'uk'i okrojsaj, savsē *mananajta*” Hebr. 9, 4; “uc'wma *mananaj* sač'mlad” Pslm. 77, 24.

M. Nedospasova, concerning this stem notes: [manna] – *manana*, according to the Bible, is a sweet and fecund food, which was falling from the sky for the Israelis during their travel in the desert, and it is a Hebrew word. It denotes a sort of *ialyuni's* fruit (Tamarix galiccamannifera), from which' adhesive sweet juice dropps onto the ground. With the influence of the Greek Holy Scripture, this word has been widespread in many languages with the form *manna* (instead of the Hebrew long vowel in Greek the consonant is duplicated, cf. myrr). In this regard, Georgian and Armenian are exceptional, where we have the *manana* form [16, p. 74-75].

Biblical *manana* “manna” means the species of *ialyuni* (Tamarix) from the Sinai Peninsula. Tamarix – [tarfā'] – *ialyuni*; Salix – [safšāfa] – *t'iripi*. The Arabic name of *ialyun-i* is phonetically very similar to the Georgian *t'irip-i* (Salix), but the proper Kartvelian stem denoting this plant is **z'ec'in-*, which is restored on the basis of following accordance: Geo. *zec'n-*, Megr. *zič'on-* and Svan *gžnc'iš-*.

3. “**nardi**” (Nardus L.) – *nard-* (nardus, siler, oleum nardeum) the plant and the aromatic oil distilled from it in the Georgian Gospel is met in the following examples: moiyo lit'raj erti nelsacxebeli *nardisa* [“then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard”] Jo. 12,3; akunda alabast'rita nelsacxebeli *nardisa* sarc'munojsaj [“having an alabaster box of ointment of spikenard very precious”] Mrk. 14,3.

Nard (Nardostachys jatamansi) is an aromatic precious plant known in the East (Jo. 12,3-5). Mostly it was brought from India. In Palestine and its neighbourhood it blooms on mountains and lowlands. It has purple - red flowers and fragrant leaves. They were distilling precious oil from its roots, which cost more than 300 Dinar (Mr. 14,3; Jo. 12,3), and they were kept in alabaster jars.

Ioane Bagrationi writes about *nard* that it grows in India and has a nice aroma.

Sulkhan-Saba Orbeliani notes that *nard* is an aromatic and motley flower, which the Persians call *sumbul*.

It seems that the stem *nard* confirmed in the Georgian Gospel comes from Greek through the translations of Gospel texts. In the Greek etymological dictionary *νάρδος* - *nardi* is explained as a stem derived from Semite (Phinikian); compare Hebrew *nērd*, Aramaic *nirda*, Babylonian *landu*.

4. “**p'it'nak'i**”, “p'it'na” (Mentha L.) – *p'it'na* in the Georgian Gospel is met in the following contexts: moiyebt ateulsa *p'it'nak'isa* da cerecojsasa da z'irak'isasa [“for ye pay a tithe of mint and anise and cummin”] Matthew 23, 23; ateulsa ayiyebt

p'it'nak'isasa da *t'eganisasa* da q'ovlisa mxlisasa ["for ye tithe *mint* and rue and all manner of herbs"] Lk. 11,42.

According to Iv. Javakhishvili Georgian "p'it'nak'i" is correspondent to the Greek ἡδύσμον, Latin *mentha*, Armenian *ախախնի* [*anahun*], and it should be known in Georgia from the ancient time.

In Southern Europe and our country mint grows also wildly. This plant has been widespread in Palestine as well. According to Pliny the Younger, the Greek name of mint should be derived due to its pleasant aroma, though in parallel it should also have been called "minth" and our ancestors have learnt from them (Natur. hist., lib. 19, cap. 47). Mint was used during various illnesses as a medical treatment.

In P. Gorgijanidze Dictionary "p'it'na" is equal to Arabic "nana" and Persian "pudna".

Phonetical correspondance of Georgian *p'it'nak'* and Persian *fudan* || *fudna* "mint" is so evident that it is obvious that *p'it'na* in Georgian is Persian borrowing: *pudina* > *putina* > *pitina* > *pitna*.

5. "t'egani" (*Ruta graveolens* L.) – Plant *t'egani* is confirmed in the Gospel of Luke: *ateulsa ayiyebt p'it'nak'isasa da t'eganisasa da q'ovlisa mxlisasa* ["for ye tithe mint and *rue* and all manner of herbs"] Lk. 11,42.

According to Sulkhan-Saba Orbeliani *t'egani* is tarragon. In Greek it is called other grass and in Latin and Armenian – other ZA.

t'egani – Greek πήγανον, Latin *ruta*; Armenian [fegana]. From the Georgian sources it is not seen how widespread this plant was in ancient Georgia. Vakhushti doesn't mention it; Ioane Bagrationi notes Pyra, *Rutha graveolens* nacre grass, *t'egani*; a bush plant from South Europe.

Sulkhan-Saba Orbeliani thought that *t'egani* was the same as tarragon and that it is borrowed from a foreign language, but he did not specify exactly from which language it was borrowed. R. Eristavi considers *t'egani* || *tarragon* as synonyms as well.

In Iv. Javakhishvili's opinion, the Georgian *t'egani* is a disfigured Greek name *p'eganon* [πήγανον]; we also share this opinion.

6. **“usup'i”** (*Hyssopus* L.) – *usup'* in the Georgian Gospel: č'urč'eli ayavses zmrita mit *usup'sa* tana [“and they filled a sponge with vinegar, and put it upon *hyssop*”] Jo. 19, 29.

H. Lewy in his important research “Die Semitischen Fremdwörter im Griechischen“ about ὕσσωπος mentions that the name of this plant spread in Cilicia comes from Hebrew *'ezōb*. This opinion share also Renin and Müller [14, p. 38].

This stem of Greek origin is also borrowed in Arabic through Aramaic (compare with the Georgian *usup'i*, a bush with aromatic leaves)[16, p. 34].

usup'i – *hyssopus* in the Old Georgian dictionary is explained as “sprayer”, “bile”, and *nayveli* (“bile”) – as bitterness, “hyssop”. Such variation of explanations should be due to the polysemantic nature of the root, which, as it seems, should be connected to the ritual use of this plant.

It should be noted that the above mentioned stem is reflected in the ancient Georgian mythos *Amirandarejaniani* as the proper name of a man – Usup, a brother of Amiran.

7. **“krtili”** (*Hordeum* L.) – *krtili* [*keri*] in Georgian Gospel: ayavses namusrevita mit atormet'i k'ueli xutta mat *krtilisa* p'urtagan [“filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley *loaves*”] Jo. 6,13C; romelsa akus xut queza *krtilis* da or teviz [“which hath five barley *loaves*, and two small fishes”] Jo. 6, 9C.

Sulkhan-Saba Orbeliani notes: *krtili* cf barley ZAB (Bal.) autumn barley CDE. *keri* – sowed in spring is called *keri*, and in autumn – *krtili*.

In A. Makashvili's “Botanical Dictionary”: *keri* (*Hordeum*) Svan č'gmin.

According to Iv. Javakhishvili: “it is hard to believe that because of the difference of the sowing time one and the same plant has two different names. So, we should think that *krtili* and *keri* initially were the names of two different species of hordeum.

Moreover, *krtili* was sown in autumn, and *keri* - in spring... It is noteworthy that this plant has one name in Greek – κριθή, and Latin – hordeum[12, p. 352].

The coincidence of Georgian *ker-* and Greek κριθη stems witnesses their common origin. *keri* “barley” is confirmed also in Zan and Svan but not - the stem *krtil-*. In Svan there is met also another stem - *č'gmin-*[24, 6, 5, 8]. Compare Ossetian *kær-* Georgian borrowing with more general meaning “food”[21, p. 83-88] and Abkhazian *ak'ar-*, Armenian *gar-* “barley”.

8. “**šrošani**” (*Lilium candidum* L.) – *šrošani* in Georgian Gospel is confirmed in the following examples: ganicadet *šrošani*, vitar-igi ayoržindis: raca šurebis, arca hstavs [“consider the *lilies* how they grow: they toil not, they spin not”] Lk. 12, 27; mixedet *šrošanta* velisata [“consider the *lilies* of the field“] Matthew 6, 28.

M. Nedospasova shares the consideration of well-known Semitologists and Iranists about the Hebrew origin of Persian [sūsan]. It seems that this Hebrew word has entered in Arabic via Aramaic (cf Greek κρίνον Armenian šušān).

H. Lewy relates Greek κρίνον to Hebrew [šušān][14, p. 49].

Georgian *šrošan-* is derived from Persian [sūsan], which in turn is a Hebrew stem.

9. “**cereco**” (*Anethum graveolens* L.) – *cereco* (*k'ama*) is confirmed in the Gospel of St. Matthew: rametu moiatevsit p'it'nak'isaj, *cerecojsaj* da žirak'isaj [“for ye pay tithe of mint and *anise* and cummin”] Matthew 23, 23.

Iv. Javakhishvili in connection with *cereco* notes: Geo. *cereco*, Megr. *ceroce* || *coroce*, Greek ἄνεθον, Lat. *Anethum* - ancient Georgian correspondent of these stems is survived until today. Iv. Javakhishvili considers *cercw*, *cercoj*, *ceroce*, *coroce* and *rog'i* stems together, singles out *rcv-* root and considers as a name of “seed”, “grain”. Though such a conclusion seems logical, to our mind it appears somehow doubtful.

10. “**žirak'i**” (*Cuminum cyminum* L.) – *žirak'i* is presented in the Gospel with *p'it'na* (mint) and *cereco* (anise): rametu

moiatevsit p'it'nak'isaj, cerecojsaj da *zirak'isaj* [“for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and *cummin*”] Matthew 23, 23.

Iv. Javakhishvili relates this plant name attested already in ancient Georgian translated monuments to the Greek κύμινον, Latin *cyminum* and Armenian շամբու [12, p. 240-242].

While analyzing the stem [kimm] – *zirak'i*, M. Nedospasova witnesses famous Semitologists, according to whom, the stem should be coming from Aramaic. Akad. *kamūnu* < Shum. *gamun*. This stem from Semitic has entered in Greek and Latin, and from here into other languages (cf Geo. *k'ama*).

There is a different point of view concerning the origin of this word, according to which the Arabic word comes from Greek [kammunun][16, p. 65].

Georgian *zira* must be borrowed from Persian [zīre] “cummin“, “plum“. Etymologically – “bottom“, “under” – in Persian as well as in Georgian.

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