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THE GEORGIAN LIFE OF JULIAN-SABA (COD. SIN. GEORG. 6) AND ITS GREEK AND SYRIAC SOURCES (HISTORIA PHILOTHEA BY THEODORET OF CYRUS)

The Georgian translations of the writings of the blessed Theodoret of Cyrus (393-466), one of the most prominent representative of the Antiochene theological school, are mostly rendered in Georgian from the Greek, a few from the Russian and Armenian sources. During the research of the Georgian translations of Theodoret’s writings one of them appeared a work, the direct source of which seems to be the Syrian.

The Life of Julian-Saba, the 2nd chapter of the Historia Philothea by the blessed Theodoret of Cyrus, rendered by an anonymous translator, is preserved in the cod. Sin. Georg. 6, copied in 981 by an anonymous copyist. In the manuscript the author of the work is not mentioned. His name was ascertained by Korneli Kekelidze.1 The work had been published by Simon Janashia (Arili Festschrift, 1925, 1-24; Works, vol. III, Tbilisi 1959, 160-180 (in Georgian)), who did not have an access to the Greek original and compared the Life to another Georgian translation (cod. A 689) by Ephrem Mtsire. He pointed to the differences and admitted that these two translations represent two different versions. The Greek source of the work is published by P.Canivet and A.Leroy-Molinghen in Théodoret de Cyr, Histoire des Moines de Syrie (= HMS). SC 234. Paris: Cerf, 1977, 194-245.

The first part of the manuscript Sin. Georg. 6 includes three pieces: On the Life of the Virgin (2r-12r), Life of Symeon the Stylite the Elder (12r-66v) and the aforementioned work (66v-83r). It seems that these three works represented the manuscript separate from the works that follow. The Life

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1 Janashia S., Works, vol. III, Tbilisi 1959, 156.
of Symeon the Stylite is the only work from this part, the source language of which is established. It is Syriac.²

The rendition of the proper names in the Life of Saba indicates that the Life was also translated from the source written in consonant script. The sources could be Syriac or Arabic. Our attention to the Syriac sources draw the title of the Georgian translation, where the name of Julian (“ούλιανος” ıvliana) is represented in a same way as it is pronounced in Syriac, that is “ıouliana”/“ivliana” (Μαλίανος), as well as other proper names rendered after their Syriac equivalents.


The Syriac translation is quite good rendition of the Greek original, however, sometimes divergences also reveal. They can be admitted at the very beginning of the work, where one toponym is changed, another – omitted. In the Greek text is written that Julian-Saba built his cell in the place called before “of Parthians” and now “of Osroene”. In the Syriac translation instead of “Osroene” is written Αζράνη (arza ayka B) and Αζράνη (azrayna P).⁹ Though arza ayka in Syrian writing somehow resembles Osroene – Ωσρενη (osra ‘yne, cf. ‘Οσροηνη), still it is

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⁴ Zotenberg, Hermann, Catalogues des manuscrits syriaques et sabéens (mandaïtes) de la Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1874, 185, N 6; 187; AMS 6, IX; HMS 1, 62.
⁶ Wright W., op. cit., 700, N 30.
⁷ Ibidem; 1090, N 2.
⁸ Ibidem; 1111, 1113, N 8.
⁹ AMS 6, 380, n. 1.
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mistake. Another toponym mentioned in the Greek original, Ἄδιαβήνη (ἡν Ἄδιαβήνην οἱ μετὰ ταῦτα ωνόμασαν “was called Adiabene by those who came after”), is omitted in the Life of Saba, as it is omitted in the Syrian translation that says instead: “which previously had been called differently” ( asm 6, 381). It seems that translator either could not read these toponyms or could not understand them.

**Life of Saba**

This blessed (man) was from the country, that is called Arzini and made a small tent for himself on the mountain and began to live there far from people. And he was called by inhabitants of this country by the name Saba, the translation of which is 'old man' since every old man in Assyrian is called Saba.

This mountain is very high and its boundary reaches to the end of the large river, which is called Euphrates; it borders with the country of the Greeks (=Romans) and is named Athor, which joins the kingdom of Persians. At first it was the name of this country, but at a later time it was called Ladib by its inhabitants.
AMS (translation)
The Blessed Juliana is he, whom inhabitants with respect call Saba, since this name, Saba, indicates "elder". At first he settled in the place, called Of Parthians, and now is called Arza Ayka (Azrayna P). On it he set up monastic cell. This place to the West attains to the bank of river, called Euphrates, to the East – to the boundary of the Romans' Empire. Then follows Athor (=Syria), which borders upon the Persian Empire and which previously had been called differently.

Toponyms in the Life of Saba do not follow the Greek original. They are rendered without Greek -η suffix, following Syriac pronunciation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Life of Saba</th>
<th>HMS</th>
<th>Syriac equivalent</th>
<th>AMS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>στάδος (Arzin)</td>
<td>[Ἀρζανή]</td>
<td>Αρζούν (2.1)</td>
<td>Αρζούν Arzoun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ασσύρια</td>
<td></td>
<td>Osra 'yne</td>
<td>Αρζούν Arza ayka (B)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Αθόρ (Athor)</td>
<td>Ασσύρια (2.1)</td>
<td>=</td>
<td>Arza ayka (B)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Λαδίβ (Ladib)</td>
<td>Αδιαβήνη (2.1)</td>
<td>سكبد (2.1)</td>
<td>Αθόρ Athor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Γανσιρίς (Ganshiris)</td>
<td>Χυνδάρος (2.9)</td>
<td>=</td>
<td>Σκόντιا Gandares</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Σαλάβα (Halab)</td>
<td>Βέρολα (2.9)</td>
<td>=</td>
<td>Σαλάβ Khalab</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Syria (Ἀσσυρία), the equivalent of which in the Life of Saba is “σομῆν” athor, in Syriac is pronounced similarly:  (AMS 6, 381). The same can be said about Βερολα (2.9) of the Greek text, instead of which in the Life of Saba appears “σομῆν” Halab, the Syriac equivalent of this form (AMS 6, 391).

Another toponym, “εἰσοδοῦθα” Ladib (Ἀδιαβήνη of the Greek original, which is spelled in Syriac as khadyb or khadyab) does not preserve in Georgian Greek -η prefix and is written in the same way as it could be represented in the consonant source: as khdyb (resp. ladib). As to the difference of the first letters “la” and “kh”, it seems that in the Syriac manuscript source  (‘kh’) was written in a greater size and the Georgian translator read it as “la” (cf. ByD1/ByDx ladyb/khdyb). In the Syriac edition Adiabene or Ladib is not mentioned. Instead there is written: AMS 6, 381, that it “previously had been called differently”. These two words, “differently” and “khadiab”, somehow resemble each other, that could make a ground for the mistake.

In the same fragment “εἰσοδοῦθα” arzini (“the country Arzin”, Arzanene) is mentioned. Arzanene in Syriac is pronounced as Arzoun (Arz).10 In the AMS edition (arza ayka, B) and (azrayna, P, 380) represent the equivalents for this toponym, being the misreading of the Greek Ὀσρόην and Syriac “osra ‘yne).”

The equivalent to the next toponym, “Ganshiris”, is “Gindaros” in Greek original (ἐν τοῖς περὶ τὴν Γινδαρον χωρίας, 2.9, HMS 1, 214). The term alike with Ganshiris in the Encyclopedia of Islam only “Hanshir” can be found, however, it is not a geographical name, but a form of land tenure in the ancient Maghrib.11 The most relevant explanation of the word can be made in Syriac ground. To this toponym in Syriac translation of the AMS

corresponds (b-gndrs, բ ‘b’ being preposition “in”, AMS 6, 391). It seems that while translating into Georgian the Syrian (D) ‘d’ and (ʃ) ‘sh’ consonants where confused (cf. gns/rs/gndrs), which is easily assumed in written Syrian text but not in Arabic (cf. د ‘d’ and ﺷ ‘sh’), or in Greek where ‘sh’ consonant does not exist.

The comparison of the toponyms of the Life of Saba with those of the Greek original reveals that mistakes in the Life are the result of translating from the consonant source, particularly, from the Syrian.

The Life of Saba and the Historia Philothea differ also in translation of anthroponyms.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>στρίος/στρος</td>
<td>‘Αστέριος</td>
<td>Άστριος</td>
<td>(2.7; 2.10, 2.12, 2.16; 2.21)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Astrios, Ostros)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ιβλιανάς</td>
<td>‘Ιουλιανός</td>
<td>Ιβλιανάς</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Ibliana)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ιβλιανός/Ιβλιανάς</td>
<td>τοῦ ὄμωνύμου</td>
<td>“his namesake”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Iblianoz/Ibliana)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Αλίς (Valis)</td>
<td>Οὐάλης</td>
<td>Οωλης</td>
<td>(2.15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Diaruros)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Αφραῖτης</td>
<td>'Αφραϊτης</td>
<td>Αφραϊτης</td>
<td>(2.16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Pharlit)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Three anthroponyms are represented in 2.16: “saint men Pavlios and Diarios and Pharlit”. They correspond in the Greek original to “Φλαβιανός καὶ Διόδωρος... καὶ Ἄφραῖτης” (2.16.7-9). In the second name, Diarios (Diádoros, AMS, 397, cf. Διόδωρος), it seems that instead of syriac ʃ ‘d’ the translator red ɾ ‘r’. These two letters differ from
each other only with the dot which is placed under the letter in \( \dot{d} \), and above in \( \check{r} \). As to the third name, Pharlit, the AMS edition does not mention him. However, it seems that in the immediate Syriac source of the Life of Saba, the name had been represented by its Greek equivalent (cf. V"Rp" afr'a'at). The first letter of this name is not translated since by the rules of the Syrian pronunciation " Alef, if it is the first consonant and is written without vowel, is not pronounced.\(^\text{12}\) As to the letter \( \Delta \) in this name, in written Syriac " Alef and \( \Delta \) Lamed can be easily mixed up (cf. frlt/(a)fr(a)at).

The pronunciation of the name “\( \varepsilon\upsilon\alpha\nu\varsigma\upsilon\lambda\varsigma \)” Valis, \( \upsilon\alpha\nu\lambda\eta\varsigma \) in Greek (2.15), can also be explained by the rules of the Syrian pronunciation. The name is written in Syriac as \( \varphi\sigma\upsilon\upsilon\varsigma \) u(a)lis (AMS, 395\textsuperscript{17}), however, since first letter \( o \) ‘u’, before the vowel is pronounced as \( v \), the name has to be rendered as “valis”, as it is represented in the Life of Saba.

There can also be found in the Life of Saba other proper names. It is remarkable that the translator attempts to make semantic difference in the same names by their different vocalization. In the Historia Philothea the name Asterios (\( \alpha\sigma\tau\epsilon\rho\alpha\varsigma \), 2.7, 2.9, 2.15) is represented as the name of two different persons, of the disciple of Julian-Saba, and of the heretic sophist Asterios. In the Georgian translation the disciple is named as “Aistrios” (2.7) and “Astrios” (2.10, 2.12, 2.16), and the sophist – “Ostros” (2.21). It seems that the translator did not know how to render the name. It is significant that the Syrian edition for both persons, for ascetic (2.7, AMS, 389\textsuperscript{4}; 2.10, 391\textsuperscript{14}; 2.16, 397\textsuperscript{6,13}), as well as for the heretic (2.21, 402\textsuperscript{15}) has the same name: “Asteris” (\( \alpha\sigma\tau\epsilon\rho\alpha\varsigma \)).

There is another attempt to make semantic difference in the anthroponyms. The name Julian in the Life of Saba is represented as the first name of the ascetic Julian-Saba, ivliana (title, 2.1) and as the name of the emperor Julian the Apostate – ivlianoz/ivliane (2.14). However, in the Greek and Syriac texts the name of the emperor is not indicated but mentioned that he was Julian-Saba’s namesake: “Then he learned about threats of his namesake (\( \pi\zeta\theta\iota\nu\mu\zeta \) impious emperor” (AMS, 394\textsuperscript{10,11}; Μαθών δὲ τοῦ ὁμώνυμου μὲν, δυσσεβοῦς δὲ βασιλέως τὰς ἀπειλὰς).

The rendition of the proper names with mistakes can be found in other Georgian translations that were rendered from Syriac. There are many examples of it in the Life of Symeon the Stylite, that is preserved in the same manuscript as the Life of Saba (Sin. Georg. 6 and A 397). These names are: 


The traditional proper names are translated correctly, for example: “μελετιοσ” Meleti (cf. Melevtio”, 2.15, ταξιν Μιλητος Militos, AMS, 396), “ακακιοσ” Akaki (cf. ’Ακακιοσ, 2.9,16, Ακακις Akakis, AMS, 3915, 3974), “διονισιοσ” Dionosi (Διονυσιοσ, 2.21; Διονυσιός Dionesios, AMS, 402).

There can be found some other fragments which are closer to the Syrian text and can be better explained by the Syrian source than by the Greek. The 5th subchapter contains the following phrase:

**Life of Saba**

2.5. “διοπτοσαμένασοσ ο σωματοσ- 


“gave to the Lord due adoration bending down the back”).

Syrian  כ means ‘the loin’ and ‘the back’. Thus the fragment is closer to the Syrian translation than to the Greek.

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Life of Saba

2.6. “...to stand up instantly and turn to his place, where he dwelt. And again desired Saint Saba to go away to the desert as usual.”

The Greek text says that the ascetic went to his cave. The Georgian text follows the Syriac source, where ἀρχεῖον means to ‘go’, ‘walk’, ‘journey’. The translator rendered its last meaning, specifying where Saba could walk.

Another example from 2.10:

Life of Saba

“...selected figs, two modios”

Modius (modius, plur.: modii) is the Roman measure of weight and it values 1/6 of medimnus. It is noteworthy that the Georgian text does not match “medimnus” of the Greek original, but follows the Syriac source.

One more example from the same chapter:

Life of Saba

“...put it down, for I will eat it now in front of you!”

In the Greek original of the sentence neither “to eat”, nor “to bring” is mentioned. It seems that the mistake in the Georgian translation arise from similarity of the verbs θαλάκω ‘to bring’, and θαλάκω ‘to eat’. These verbs differ only with the last consonant.

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14 A Compendious Syriac Dictionary, 179.
The Syriac text can explain the mistake in the Georgian translation, which narrates about the sickness of Saba’s disciple, while in the Greek original Saba himself becomes ill (2.18). Perhaps the translator did not pay attention to the punctuation mark between two sentences:

"But soon, to realize that he (Saba) also was a man, (he) became ill with violent fever. Blessed Acacius looking at the approaching plentitude (of visitors), became sad about his (Saba’s) disease“ (40015-4011).

It seems that the disease of Acacius in the Life of Saba originates from the misreading of the Syriac text and, especially of its punctuation marks. Perhaps the translator read the dot after “the blessed Acacius”. It is obvious that for the Georgian translator it was difficult to understand the sentence, since in the whole subchapter there is only one proper name mentioned and this proper name is Acacius.

In the last, 2.22 chapter occurs one more mistake caused by misreading of the consonant text.

"and when (he) advised to the King the impious advice“ (40316-18).

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"and when (he) advised to the King the impious advice“ (40316-18).
It is clear, that the reason of the mistake lies on misreading of Syriac text, particularly, of these three words:

 Empresa ‘to counsel’, ‘advise’; ‘to reign’, ‘be king’, ‘begin to reign’, ‘come to the throne’; ‘to make king’, ‘crown king’;

 Empresa, Ḥalak ‘a king’, ‘ruler’;

 Empresa, Ḥalak ‘counsel’, ‘advise’.\textsuperscript{15}

It seems that translator could not understand the real meaning of his unvocalized source to be rendered.

The influence of the Syriac text can be found once more in the same, 2.22 chapter:

\begin{tabular}{lll}
\textbf{Life of Saba} & \textbf{HMS} & \textbf{AMS} \\
\textit{“But the saint Saba went to the dwelling”} & \textit{Ενθέειδε τοίνυν ἀποδημήσας καὶ τοὺς θιασώτας καταλαβὼν.} & \textit{But after this the blessed set off and went to his monastery (ἡμῶν) and disciples} \textsuperscript{(404\textsubscript{5,6}).} \\
\end{tabular}

\textbf{Life of Saba} \textit{“The dwelling”, that is the monastery of Saba, is not mentioned in the Greek text, but only in the Syriac.}

In the \textit{Life of Saba} the Bible is frequently cited. Each citation corresponds to the Greek original of the \textit{Historia Philothea}. However, the citation of the Psal. 36.4 differs from the Greek text and follows the Syriac, both of them including the citation of the Psal. 36.7:

\begin{tabular}{lll}
\textbf{Life of Saba} & \textbf{HMS,Septuagint} & \textbf{AMS} \\
\textit{“(36.7) ὁ θεὸς ὑμῶν ἀκομαθεῖ ὑμᾶς ἀπὸ τοὺς ἁστυνήματα καὶ σοὶ τὰ αἰτήματα τῆς καρδίας σου.”} & \textit{Κατατρύφησον τοῦ κυρίου, καὶ δώσει (δώσει Sept.)} & \textit{(36.7) οἱ θεοὶ ἐπιθυμήσουν} \textsuperscript{(36.7)} \\
\textit{“(36.4) καὶ φίλαξεν σοι τὰ αἰτήματα τῆς καρδίας σου.”} & \textit{καὶ δώσει (δώσει Sept.)} & \textit{καὶ φίλαξεν σοι τὰ αἰτήματα τῆς καρδίας σου} \textsuperscript{(36.4)} \\
\textit{“(36.7) Subordinate yourself to the Lord and enslave (yourself) to him”; 36.4: “and he shall give you each desire of your heart”) (2.2).} & \textit{καὶ δώσει πρὸς τὸν θεόν καὶ ἐπιθυμήσουν σοι τὰ αἰτήματα τῆς καρδίας σου} & \textit{“(36.7) Ask from the Lord and pray before him, (36.4) and ask from God and he’ll give you the desires of your heart”, 382\textsubscript{8,9}).} \\
\end{tabular}

\textsuperscript{15} A Compendious Syriac Dictionary, 277.
In the Greek text of the sentence only Psal. 36.4 is cited. It makes the citation different from the Greek source and adjacent to the Syriac. In the Syriac the first part of the citation is identical to the Psal. 36.7 of the Syriac Psalterium (ادات فانكو طالك صحله،)\(^{16}\) while another one, with some differences follows the Psal. 36.4 (ادات فانكو طالك صحله،)\(^{17}\) It is significant, that the first part of the Life of Saba, that is the 36.7 (“Subordinate yourself to the Lord and enslave (yourself) to him”) does not exactly match the Syriac translation (ادات فانكو طالك صحله،)\(^{18}\) Thus, this citation represents the noteworthy example of the influence of the Syriac edition and simultaneously, of the earlier translations of the Georgian Bible.

Nothing indicates that the Life of Saba was rendered from the Greek source. Besides, for the toponym Ganshiris ‘sh’ consonant cannot be found in Greek. It is not rendered from Arabic either, since in this case the toponym Ganshiris/Gandares should have ‘j’ as its first letter. Herewith, in the same toponym in Arabic handwriting ‘sh’ and ‘d’ letters cannot be mixed (cf. د ‘d’ and ش ‘sh’). Moreover, the only earlier Arabic manuscript, which preserves few chapters of the Historia Philothea (Jer. S. Marc 38A: 1732, 1178 ፶),\(^{19}\) does not include the Life of Julian-Saba. As to the rest of Arabic manuscripts, G.Graf indicates only one, Šarfeh syr. 11/6, 29, but it is of the 17th c.\(^{20}\)

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\(^{16}\) "Pete a domino, et ora coram eo" (Psalterium Syriacum, Halae, 1678, 83).

\(^{17}\) "(Spera in Domino), et dabit tibi petitionem cordis tui" (Psalterium Syriacum, 1678, 83).

\(^{18}\) G. Graf, Geschichte der Christlichen Arabischen Literatur, Studi e Testi 18, Città del Vaticano: Bibliotheca Apostolica Vaticana, 1944, 367; HMS 1, 63.

\(^{19}\) Graf G., Geschichte der Christlichen Arabischen Literatur, Studi e Testi 18, Città del Vaticano: Bibliotheca Apostolica Vaticana, 1944, 367; HMS 1, 63.

On the basis of comparing the examined fragments, we may assume that the *Life of Saba* is rendered from the source written in unvocalized consonant script, to be exact, from the Syriac source. It is also clear that the Syriac AMS version, though stands close to the *Life of Saba*, is not the immediate source of the work. Therefore, the Georgian translation should be compared – and at the next stage we intend to compare – with the rest of the Syriac translations preserved in the rest of the manuscripts.

Despite intensive cultural relations with Syria, there are very few works that claim to be translated from this language. Therefore the Georgian *Life of Julian-Saba* is an important literary work not only for the history of the Georgian translations, but for the history of the translations of Theodoret’s writings.