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**THE RECEPTION OF ARISTOTLE'S RHETORIC IN THE
RHETORICAL THEORIES OF THE MIDDLE AGES
(BASILIUS MINIMUS, EPHREM MTSIRE)**

The writers of the Middle Ages were well-acquainted with the classical and Byzantine rhetorical theories on the concepts of mimesis, style, beauty etc.¹ The paper considers some more examples that attest to Basilius Minimus' (the 10th century) and Ephrem Mtsire's (the 11th century) good knowledge of rhetorical theories, namely, of Aristotle's theory of compositional organization. In this regard, it is important to consider the following three problems discussed in Aristotle's theory and draw parallels with the same problems accepted in the Middle Ages:

1) Aristotle speaks about the beauty of compositional construction of speech (τὸ γὰρ καλὸν ἐν μεγέθει καὶ τάξει ἐστίν. Arist. Poet. 7, 1450 b 9). It implies the introduction and peroration (Rhet. III, 13-14, 1414 b – 1416 a). The classical theory of constructing the rhetorical speech and the beauty of this construction is thoroughly studied in scholarly literature.²

2) Aristotle also explains that the musical prelude (προαύλιον) resembles the exordium (προοίμιον) of epideictic speeches (Arist. Rhet. III, 14, 1414 b 5).

3) According to Aristotle, the epilogue is not always necessary for every speech, for instance when it is short, or the matter is easy to keep in mind (ὁ

¹ Bezarashvili K., Theory and Practice of Rhetoric and Translation. A Study of Georgian Translations of Gregory the Theologian's Writings, Tbilisi 2004, 147-155; 158-259; 530-587 (in Georgian).

² For προοίμιον and ἐπίλογος as for the parts of compositional construction of rhetorical speech in classical theories of rhetoric see Martin J., Antike Rhetorik. Technik und Methode, München 1974, 55, 147. For the traditional definition of an epilogue as a summary statement of proofs see Arist. Rhet. III, 19, 1419b. See also Mannlein-Robert I., Peroratio, in Historisches Wörterbuch der Rhetorik, herausgegeben von Gert Ueding, Bd. 6, Tübingen 2003, col. 778-788.

ἐπίλογος [sc. τῶν ἀποδεικτικῶν] ... ἔτι οὐδὲ δικαίου παντός, οἷον ἐὰν μικρὸς ὁ λόγος, ἢ τὸ πρᾶγμα ἐὺμνημόνευτον. Arist. Rhet. III, 13, 1414 b 1).

Now let us draw parallels with the theoretical perception of the same problems in the 10th-11th centuries.

1) In his commentaries on Gregory the Theologian's homilies, Basilus Minimus (as well as the translator of these commentaries – Ephrem Mtsire) discusses the problem of supplying a speech with introduction and peroration (i.e. exordium and epilogue), and appreciates them as rhetorical art and beauty. These concepts are accepted in the writings of the Greek authors since Aristotle and are widespread in the Hellenistic period, late Antiquity and the Middle ages. E.g., Basilus Minimus defines simplicity ("ლიტონობა" = *litionoba*, cfr. *λιτός*) as writing without rhetorical art (τέχνη), namely, writing without preface. He talks about embellishing homilies with rhetorical art, namely with introductions and rhythmic colons.³ According to him,

³ See the Greek text and its Georgian translation by Ephrem Mtsire: Οὗτος ὁ λόγος πάσαις ταῖς τεχνικαῖς ἀπαραλείπτως ἐγκεκαλλώπισται μεθόδοις· ἀθρεῖ γὰρ ἐν προομίοις εὐθέως, ὅσαις ἀρεταῖς πληθῆι, τῇ ἔξ ἐπεμβολῆς περιβολῆ, τῇ ἔξ αἰτίας κατασκευῆ, τῇ τε μακροκλίᾳ ... "ყოველთავე ჳელოვნებითა ღონისძიებითა უნაკლებოდ შემკობდეს არს აწინდელი ესე სიტყუაჲ ... რამეთუ განიცადე მჳის დასაბამსავე სიტყესასა რადენითა შუენიერებითა შემკობდეს არს შესავალვნად შემოსილობითა, მიხეზონად შენაწევრებითა გრძელშენადგამობასავე თანა" (Or. 43, com. prooemium. Cantarella R., Basilio Minimo, II, in *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, 26, 1926, 128-31; cod. Iber. Jer. 15, s. XII, f. 22r); *κάλλος, κατασκευή, καλλωπίζεσθαι* belong to the corporeal, i.e. outward, ornamental merit of the word (ἀρετῆ λέξεως). See Martin J., *Antike Rhetorik*, 339, 340, 342; 252. Jo.Ch.Th. Ernesti, *Lexicon Technologiae Graecorum Rhetoricae*, Leipzig 1795/ Darmstadt 1962, s.v. *καλλωπίζεσθαι*.

The Greek text of Basilus Minimus' commentaries is quoted according to the published texts: Cantarella R., Basilio Minimo, II, in *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, 26, 1926, 1-34; Basilius Minimi in Gregorii Nazianzeni orationem XXXVIII commentarii, ed. a Th. Schmidt, in *Corpus Christianorum, Series Graeca*, 46. *Corpus Nazianzenum*, 13, Turnhout-Leuven 2001; also, according to unpublished manuscripts (cod. Vat. Gr. 437, s. X; cod. Paris. Coisl. Gr. 240, s. XI; cod. Paris. Coisl. Gr. 52, s. XI). Ephrem Mtsire's translation of Basilus Minimus' commentaries is quoted everywhere from the text prepared for publication by T. Otkhmezuri. T. Otkhmezuri does the numbering of commentaries of Basilus Minimus according to the Georgian translations of these commentaries by Ephrem Mtsire. The microfilms of the Greek texts of Basilus Minimus' commentaries (the most part of which has not yet been published) are collected by Prof. J. Mossay and kept in the study of Gregory the Theologian at the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Catholic University of Louvain-la-Neuve. I thank T. Otkhmezuri, also J. Mossay and B. Coulie for giving me an opportunity to use the texts prepared for publication and the microfilms and photos containing the above-mentioned commentaries for studying them in comparison with Georgian translations.

furnishing a homily with an introduction and making its form perfect means avoiding simplicity, artlessness (ἀπλῶς – "ლიტონად").⁴

The same is true about writing without an epilogue. Basilus Minimus talks about closing homilies with prayers, i.e. the traditionally accepted masterly form of an epilogue (ἐπίλογος – "ბოლომ") in Christian literature that belongs to rhetorical art (τέχνη, ὄροι ῥητορικοί – "ჰელონებანი მეტყუელთანი").⁵

2) Basilus Minimus also speaks about the practice of writing without a preface, which was turned into a new rhetorical canon by Gregory the Theologian: his homily on Maccabees starts strictly with the statement of case;⁶ the Christmas Homily also begins directly with chanting praise to God.⁷ The explanation presented by Basilus Minimus is mainly based on

⁴ See Basilus Minimus's text and its Georgian translation by Ephrem Mtsire: Τελέσας τὸ τῆς ὅλης ὑποθέσεως προοίμιον, οὐχ ἀπλῶς εἰς τὸ γένος, ἀλλὰ μετὰ τινος προοιμιακῆς ἐννοίας εἰσβάλλει. "სრულ-ყო ყოველივე წინადაწკება შესავალისა მიხეზთა და ამიერთგან არა ლიტონად, არამედ წინაშესავალთგანადვე იწყებს ნათესავთათჳს დიდისა ზახიდისთა სიტყუად" (Or. 43, com. 15. Cantarella R., Basilio Minimo, II, 231. cod. Iber. Jer. 15, f. 23v).

⁵ See Basilus Minimus's commentary: α) τὸ ἔσχατον μέρος τοῦ ὅλου λόγου οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ κεκλημένος ἐπίλογος, εὐχῆς τύπον ἐπέχων, ὡς αἱ τέχναι θεσιπίζουσιν. β) ἐν ταῦτα τὸ τελευταῖον τῶν κεφαλαίων ὁ ἐπίλογος τύπον ἔχων εὐχῆς, ὡς θεομοὶ καὶ ὄροι παραδηλοῦσι ῥητορικοί. "ესე არს ბოლო საკითხავისა ამის, რომელსა ლოცვის სახე ზედა-აც, ვითარცა ჰელონებანი მეტყუელთანი განახინებენ" (Or. 43, com. 216. Cantarella R., Basilio Minimo, II, p. 32₁₅₋₁₉, cod. Iber. Tbilis. A 109, s. XII-XIII, f. 69v).

⁶ According to Basilus Minimus and his translator Ephrem Mtsire, it is erroneous to consider that this noble man's (= Gregory's) starting the encomium "On Maccabees" without an introduction is simple and accidental. Such a method is presented as the property of the new, Christian rhetorical art: ὁ γὰρ ὡς ἔτυχεν οἶον τε τοσοῦτον ἀξίωμα λέγειν καὶ γράφειν ... καὶ οὐ αὐτὸ τοῦτο διὰ τοῦ ζητητικοῦ καὶ ἡμίξατο μορίου προτίθεις αὐτο; τῆς λύσεως τῶν ζητουμένων δεικνὺς διὰ τῆς ἀνασκευῆς τῶν ἐναντιολογουμένων ἀξίως ἔγκωμιων. "რამე მკაბელნი?" რამეთუ არა საეჭუ არს] add. ლიტონად და ვითარ დამთხუევით რასმე თქუმა ესოდენისა დირსებისა კაცისა მიერ ... მყის საძიებლით მარცვლით იწყო და აღჰსნასა წინამთაქცია საძიებელი და ახუენა იგი ღირს შესხმისა..." (Or. 15, com. 1. cod. Paris.Coisl. Gr. 240, s. XI, f. 187r; cod. Iber. Tbilis. A109, f. 220r).

⁷ In the commentary on this homily ("On the Theophany") Basilus Minimus considers that starting a homily with chanting (instead of introduction) is a new pattern of rhetorical preface, for it expresses the joy and sweetness brought by the great Christian feast. And here, vice versa, this type of beginning is presented as the merit of new, Christian rhetoric: εἰκότως καὶ; προοιμίαν τάξιν εἰληφε ταῦτα, προχορεύοντας καὶ; προσκირπῶντος καὶ; οἶον προανακρουομένου τοῦ Πατρὸς τῆ τῆς ἡδονῆς τε καὶ εὐφροσύνης ὑπερβολῆ. "სამართლად ნაცვალად წინაშესავალისა მოიპოვა აქა დიდმან ამან მოძულურთა შორის წინამძიებლობა და წინააღმდეგელობა, ვითარცა გარდამატებულისა სიტკობისა და სიხარულისა წინამცემელ იყო ეზნისა" (Or. 38, com. prooemium. Cantarella R., Basilio Minimo, II, 522-25; Th. Schmidt, Basilio Minimi com. in or. 38, 10-11; cod. Iber. Jer. 15, f. 10v).

Aristotle's explanation that the musical prelude (*προαύλιον*) resembles the exordium (*προοίμιον*) of epideictic speeches (Arist. Rhet. III, 14, 1414 b 5). In this case we touch upon the problem of rhetorical theory, which was a special property of a new type of speech, but even in this case it takes its origin from a treatise of classical theorist, though it is interpreted in a new spiritual context.

3) Ephrem Mtsire's colophon appended to the second denunciation of Julian the Apostate (Or. 5) displays his knowledge of classical and Byzantine theories about the compositional units of rhetorical speech as well as his awareness of the category of beauty. The colophon deals with the question of the epilogue of the literary work and at the same time touches the problem of closing a speech without an epilogue, which is also regarded as a rhetorical skill: "For let nobody thinks that it (= Or. 5) is incomplete because of being left without an epilogue, for it is delivered in this way by the Holy [Father] in Greek, not *simply*, and not like other writers, but because the studies of Greeks consist of twelve arts, and each writer writes according to how he has studied from this twelve ones [NB: here Ephrem names 12 subjects of general education] ... But the saint and the great Theologian, as he was educated in all these [subjects], adorns his writings with all this. That is why appending an epilogue is one kind of art, and omitting it is another. And I did not have the silken cloth to sew the cloak; that is why I could not make it out of rough cloth. And according to closeness to Greek [literally: according to comparison with Greek], I translated the [homily] without an epilogue as it was without an epilogue [in Greek] and [I translated the homily] appended with an epilogue as it was appended with an epilogue [in Greek] ..." (A292, 215v).⁸

Or. 5 has no epilogue in Greek, and consequently, there is no epilogue in the Georgian translation of Ephrem Mtsire. On the other hand Ephrem rendered homilies with endings with endings because he was true to the Greek original. Ephrem explains that such form of "being without epilogue"

⁸ "ხოლო უბოლოდ დატევევისათვის ნუვის უსრულიცა ჰკონიეს, რამეთუ ბერძულად ესრეთ არს თქუძული წმიდისა, არა ლიტონად, არცა სხუათა აღმწერელთაებრ, არამედ, ვითარ-იგი ათორმეტ არიან კვლოვნებანი ბერძენთა სწავლულებისანი და თითოეული აღმწერელი მით სახითა აღმწერელობს, რადცა კვლოვნება ესწავოს ათორმეტთა მათგან ... არამედ წმიდა ესე და დიდი ღმრთისმეტყველი, ვითარცა ამით ყოვლითა სრულიად სწავლული, ყოვლითავე ამით შეამკობს თქუძულთა თვისთა. ამისთვის სხვისა კვლოვნებისა არს დაბოლოება და სხვისა – არა დაბოლოება. ვინაცა მე, ვინაძგან ოქსინოი არა მაქუნდა საოლაგად სკამარანგისა, ფლასითა ვერ დავოლკედი. არამედ შედარებულად ბერძულდისა, უბოლო უბოლოდ და დაბოლოებული დაბოლოებულად მითარგმნია..." cod. Iber. Tbilis. A 292, a. 1800, f. 215v. Bregadze T., Description of the Georgian Manuscripts Containing the Works of Gregory Nazianzen, Tbilisi 1988, 171-172 (in Georgian).

("ეპილოგი") is not conditioned by the simplicity of speech ("ლიბონად ოქჳმას") or by the manner of other writers as it is in some other cases, but it is created by scholarship and rhetorical art that was very well known to Gregory the Theologian. This was the knowledge that ornamented his works.⁹ Lack of an epilogue is a natural, and not occasional, phenomenon. According to Ephrem, appending an epilogue is one kind of rhetorical art, while omitting it is another kind. The reason is that an epilogue, being a constituent part of compositional construction, may be used as embellishment of a speech.

Here Ephrem may imply the classical theory of constructing the rhetorical speech and the beauty of such construction (see above: Arist. Rhet. Poet.). As it was told above, according to Aristotle, the epilogue is not always necessary for every speech, for instance when it is short, or the matter is easy to keep in mind (Arist. Rhet. III, 13, 1414 b 1). Really, the point of Gregory's denunciative homily¹⁰ was easy to keep in mind, for the denunciation runs throughout the whole speech; and the short ending did not need any other addition.

The problem concerning the contents of Or. 5 is discussed below. Gregory the Theologian ends the denunciative speech (λόγος στηλιτευτικός) with ironical words to Julian instead of closing it with an epilogue. He says that the speech is the eternal monument for Julian in the pejorative meaning of this phrase (Or. 5, c.42. PG35, 720A). Such an ending does not need any epilogue to summarize the statement of proofs.

Ephrem is aware of the peculiarity of Byzantine theories concerning the composition. However, he adds, as was told above, that writing without an epilogue does not mean simplicity and is a skill. The question of the art of writing without an epilogue in Ephrem's theoretical source must be related to the classical Aristotelian theory (see above Arist. Rhet. III, 13, 1414 b 1), as

⁹ Gregory the Theologian's art and technique are evaluated in the same way by Michael Psellos (the 11th century): his works display the knowledge of all sciences (ἐπιστήμη) and art (τέχνη). See Τοῦ ὑπερτίμου Ψελλοῦ λόγος σχεδιασθεὶς πρὸς Ἰθόβον βεστάρχηρ ἀξιῶσαντα αὐτὸν γράψαι τοῦ θεολογικοῦ χαρακτήρος, in Mayer A., Psellos' Rede über den rhetorischen Character des Gregorios von Nazianz, in *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, 20, 1911, 48-60, c. 14²⁵⁴⁻²⁷³. See also Bezarashvili K., The Treatise of Michael Psellos (XI c.) Concerning a Theological Style of Gregory Nazianzen's Writings (Research, translation of the text, commentaries), in *Reader in Byzantine Literature*, III, Tbilisi 1996, 146 (in Georgian).

¹⁰ For the classical origin of denunciative, i.e. invective, speech (ψόγος, ψεκτικός), as the kind of epideictic genre (γένος ἐπιδεικτικὸς – genus demonstrativum), the so-called negative encomium (ἐγκώμιον), which turned into Christian λόγος στηλιευτικός, see Menander Rhetor, *Περὶ ἐπιδεικτικῶν*, I, 331¹⁻⁹. Edited, translated and commented by D.A. Russel, N.G. Wilson, Oxford 1981. Hunger H., Die hochsprachliche profane Literatur der Byzantiner, Bd. I, München 1978, 120-122; Payr Th., Enkomion, in *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum*, Bd. V, Stuttgart 1962, 332-343 Cf.; Guignet M., St. Grégoire de Nazianze et la rhétorique, Paris 1911, 76-77.

well as to the Christian theory of rhetoric and aesthetics. If compared with the classical theory, the exordium is considered to be the beauty of the ornament of a rhetorical speech (κόσμου χάρις), while its absence makes the speech extempore.¹¹

Ephrem justifies himself and writes in the colophon that the art of rhetoric is valuable and luxurious. That is why he cannot attain it and cannot add an epilogue on his own account ("I did not have the silken cloth to sew the cloak, and that is why I could not make it out of rough cloth"). In rhetorical theories that embellished deep contents, cloak or frame as an outward ornament of the form was considered to belong to rhetorical skills.¹² Although, the concept of beauty is not directly mentioned here, as was shown above, Ephrem Mtsire refers to the beauty of the art of composition as explored in Aristotle's Rhetoric and Poetics and in Basilus Minimus's commentaries, and names the valuable ornaments of rhetoric, among which the art of compositional arrangement is mentioned.

It has already been considered in research works that Ephrem presents the aspects of the concept of beauty in this colophon as well.¹³ It becomes obvious that Ephrem also presents here the concept of compositional construction of a rhetorical speech, namely, either appending an epilogue to a speech or sometimes ending it without a conclusion according to the theories of rhetoric.

It is clear that Ephrem Mtsire was well acquainted with classical and Byzantine theories of rhetoric; having their methodology in mind, he translated Gregory the Theologian's writings into Georgian and composed his own colophons concerning the literary-theoretical problems. The example analyzed above also confirms the opinion that Ephrem was interested in the theories of rhetoric from the earliest period of his work (when Or. 5 was translated by him)¹⁴. It means that Ephrem from the very beginning of his activities accepted Hellenophile cultural orientation to the literary processes taking place in Byzantium, while his translation method became hellenophile only gradually.

¹¹ Gorgias of Leontini's encomium on the Eleans is named as example of the speech extempore (Arist. Rhet. III, 14, 1415b12-1416 a 1).

¹² Adornment of the deep philosophical ideas of St. Gregory the Theologian with rhetorical ornaments is compared by Michael Psellos to setting the valuable pearl of the Gospel (Matth. 13, 45-46) into a frame of gold and precious stones (Psellos, *Ad Pothum*, A. Mayer ed., c. 585-90).

¹³ Bezarashvili K., *Theory and Practice of Rhetoric and Translation*, 573-576.

¹⁴ About the chronology of translating Gregory the Theologian's works into Georgian see Bezarashvili K., *Theory and Practice of Rhetoric and Translation*, 413.