

Viktor Nozadze, Rustaveli's *The Knight in the Panther's Skin*, and the Soviet Ideology

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The creative maturity of the Georgian emigre writer and scholar Viktor Nozadze coincided with the period when the newly established communist authorities in Georgia blocked the way for all those that could not adapt to the new political system. During his thirty-year exile in France, Germany, Austria, Argentina, Chile, Brazil, Spain, and finally again France, Nozadze created six monumental volumes devoted to The Knight in the Panther's Skin (Georgian: Vepkhistqaosani) by Shota Rustaveli, reviewing its ideology, worldview, and ethical and aesthetic ideals. Like all Georgians living in emigration, Viktor Nozadze was labeled an "enemy of the people" and, naturally, the totalitarian regime could not permit a place for him among Soviet scholars. In the Soviet Union before Perestroika, the research method for any work in any field was based on Marxist-Leninist philosophy. Viktor Nozadze could not fit into the ideological context governing Georgian research when he created his study of The Knight in the Panther's Skin. Examining the scholarly works at his disposal, Nozadze realized that Rustaveli's personality, perspective, and artistic-aesthetic thinking were viewed and considered superficially and ideologically by Soviet scholarship. This was especially true regarding Rustaveli's religious beliefs and worldview. Consequently, mentioning and citing Nozadze was banned in the Soviet Union, and his life passed in vain expectation of returning to his native land.

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“Every Georgian abroad is a representative of his nation” (Nozadze, *Gardasul*): these are the words of the Georgian emigre writer and scholar Viktor Nozadze (1893–1975), who was doomed to live in exile.¹ His

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creative maturity coincided with the period when the authorities in Georgia, which came under Communist rule in 1921, blocked the way for all that could not adapt to the new political system. The path of his dramatic life covers a fairly wide geographical area: France, Germany, Austria, Argentina, Chile, Brazil, Spain, and finally again France. During his thirty years of wanderings, completely alone without financial support, he created six monumental volumes devoted to the main issues in *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* (Georgian: *Vepkhistqaosani*), a medieval romance by Shota Rustaveli.²

“Those who are not with us are against us”

Viktor Nozadze received his tertiary education at the University of Moscow. His years as a student during the 1910s coincided with an intensification of the revolutionary spirit at leading Russian universities, active participation of students in illegal activities, persecution of “unreliable persons,” and clashes with the police. It is clear that Nozadze was actively involved in all these processes because he returned in Georgia with the first wave of the February Revolution of 1917. The proclamation of the Democratic Republic of Georgia in 1918 found him in Tbilisi. Like all leftist Georgians, he welcomed this historical and political event. Nozadze was one of sixty-nine students

² *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* is a medieval romance (1187–1207) by Shota Rustaveli, who is believed to have been Queen Tamar's (1189–1210) royal treasurer. The plot of the romance unfolds through an Oriental-type framework adapted to Georgian conditions. The social relations of late medieval Georgia described in *The Knight in the Panther's Skin*, called self-and-master relations, are similar to vassalage in medieval feudal Europe. The supreme master of the country is the king (Rostevan in Arabia and Saridan in India). The king has many serfs or vassals; that is, noble feudal lords (Avtandil, an army commander of Arabia, and Tariel, the prince of the seventh Kingdom of India), who are obliged to respect, obey, and faithfully serve their master. Correspondingly, the human ideal described in the romance is the ideal of a knight (heroic and romantic). Rustaveli's characters have all the features of an ideal man (beauty, generosity, modesty, military virtues, and so forth), of which wisdom and intellect are of major importance, and they do all they can to help their friends, eradicate injustice, and achieve their top ideal in this world: love, which is ultimately equal to the victory of good over evil. The characters in *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* achieve their goals relying on their own mental and physical potential and untamable aspiration toward victory. All of this is motivated by love and guided by faith in God and fate. This vision of human potential goes beyond the mediaeval method for resolving this problem and rises to the level of Renaissance thinking.

that the government of Georgia sent abroad to receive their education. The objective of the new government was clear and well-defined. To launch the country's management structure at the necessary level, intelligent young professionals were needed, educated at European universities and imbued with progressive ideas. They were expected to use what they learned in Europe to develop and advance the Democratic Republic of Georgia. This goal was well understood by all sixty-nine envoys. From England, Nozadze wrote to his compatriot, the painter Shalva Kikodze: "We are the first persons sent to Europe; we do not belong to ourselves. We belong to Georgia, and woe to those that return empty and fail to bring anything to the native country" (Sharadze 38).

However, the Independent Republic of Georgia existed for only three years; on February 25th, 1921, the Soviet army occupied Georgia and Soviet rule was established. The communist regime announced a special ideological struggle against the Georgians that had gone abroad for their education or worked there. Those that managed to return to their homeland and escape the purges of the 1920s were reminded of their "dubious past" during the 1930s and accused of counter-revolutionary activities, spying, and political indifference; they were shot or sent to the gulag.³ Those that had emigrated were deprived of the right of choice: their emigration, which was deemed by many of them to be temporary, turned into a permanent situation after the Second World War.

Years of emigration

Before the Second World War, Viktor Nozadze lived in Paris and was engaged in journalism. He published articles in Georgian emigrant periodicals, the newspaper *Tetri Giorgi*, and the journals *Kartlosi*, *Mamuli*, and *Kavkasioni*. These publications played a very important role in preserving the national and mental identity of Georgian emigres. After Germany declared war on the Soviet Union, Georgian emigrants naively believed that, in the case of victory, Germany would carry out the policy of the First World War, and they therefore saw Nazi Germany as an instrument for restoration of the independence of Georgia, which had been extinguished by the Bolsheviks. However, the so-called Great Patriotic War ended in the victory of the Soviet Union; Soviet Georgia was a member of the "single brotherly family" actively engaged in building the socialist future, and the Georgian emigration lost hope of return-

³ Viktor Nozadze's brother, the futurist poet Paliko Nozadze, was shot in 1937.

ing. Some of the emigres attempted to dispel their nostalgia by means of publishing and scholarship, one of them being Nozadze, who avoided the postwar tensions in South America, where he engaged in scholarly work and started systematically studying Shota Rustaveli's *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* and its connection with world culture. His work made it easier for later researchers to determine the place of Georgian literature—and, specifically, *The Knight in the Panther's Skin*—in the context of world civilization. Nozadze started his study (or, in his own words, “scrutiny”) of *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* during his Berlin period at the end of the Second World War, but the book publication of his work only became possible in South America.

The outcome of Viktor Nozadze's long-term research can be summarized as follows: in the development of world culture, the Georgian nation was not a supplier, but a receiver. It has to be added that, following the views of Richard Reitzenstein and Otto von Wesendonk, Nozadze imagined the nation as an organism, which is why his remarks were not only applied to literary processes. Reitzenstein believed that in observing the development of a nation one should not seek originality or even a unique identity, but ability and power by means of which the nation adopts, processes, and perfects the culture received (Reitzenstein 19). On the other hand, while studying the influence of Persian culture on Georgian literature, Von Wesendonk noted that a national culture is regarded as more developed if it adopts and processes more foreign elements from other cultures (Wesendonk 250). According to Nozadze, the acceptance and transfer of cultural patterns and their processing in one's own national consciousness are not characteristic of all nations: if the Georgian nation was a follower of world culture, it was a result of its high national capability, and this is especially true of *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* (Nozadze, *Vepkhistaosnis pertametqveleba* 75–76).

Inspired by this idea, Nozadze devoted a number of fundamental works to *The Knight in the Panther's Skin*, and he reviewed its ideology, worldview, and ethical and aesthetic ideals. However, his works were completely unknown to Georgian scholars until the 1950s because Nozadze, like all Georgians living in emigration, was labeled an “enemy of the people.” Nozadze's book *The Language of Colors in The Knight in the Panther's Skin* (*Georgian: Vepkhistaosnis pertametqveleba*), published in Buenos Aires, was discovered by the librarian Vakhtang Salukvadze at Moscow's Lenin Public Library when he was sorting literature received from abroad. Salukvadze informed Revaz Baramidze of his find (Kharazishvili 140), and several Georgian scholars became familiar with the book and were amazed by its depth of research, topicality, and

scale. They also observed that the content of the book was not politically contaminated. In his memoirs, Revaz Baramidze shares with readers the impression produced on him by *The Language of Colors in The Knight in the Panther's Skin*:

I was carried away by the book, by the abundant material studied by the scholar and the depth and large scale of his research. The scholar has discovered the rare regularity in the use of colors by Rustaveli: every color in *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* has a logical function, and by perceiving them we understand the mood of the characters as well as the general situation. Namely, when light, sunny colors predominate in the work, author speaks about the characters of great spirituality, whereas when harsh, dark colors occur in the work, evil powers appear on the scene. I would also like to note here that this book is written at a high professional level and there are no political digressions or anti-Soviet positions in it. (R. Baramidze 30)

Revaz Baramidze also recalls that he introduced a synopsis of the book to academy member Korneli Kekelidze, one of the founders of Tbilisi State University, who was fascinated by the profound and noteworthy observations of the emigrant scholar, and offered that Revaz Baramidze should deliver a presentation at the session of Tbilisi State University Council to familiarize his colleagues with the contents of *The Language of Colors in The Knight in the Panther's Skin*.

However, the situation changed in 1963, after the publication of Nozadze's next book, *The Theology of The Knight in the Panther's Skin* (Georgian: *Vepkhistqaosnis gvtismetqveleb*). Under the supervision of Glavlit,⁴ censorship was exercised over printed matter and references to material present in the list of "politically harmful literature" were suppressed. Repression was especially relentless for emigrants' books, and works by Viktor Nozadze were included on the list. Thus, the renowned scholar Gaioz Imedashvili was heavily criticized for "trying to revive the names of forgotten researchers of Rustaveli (N. Zhordania, V. Nozadze, S. Dolakidze)" in his research on *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* and

⁴ Glavlit (the General Directorate for the Protection of State Secrets in the Press under the Council of Ministers of the USSR) was established in 1966 at the Council of Ministers of the Soviet Union. Glavlit units existed in the cities of all fifteen Soviet republics. As a successor of the Main Administration for Literary and Publishing Affairs under the People's Commissariat of Education of the RSFSR (established in 1922), Glavlit was in charge of the list of "politically harmful" literature that was sent to libraries and bookstores. When an order on banning a book or an author was issued, this literature was kept in the "special collection" or was destroyed. It was also prohibited to refer to the works of such authors in references and citations.

for “failing to pay due attention to native scholars” (A. Baramidze 122). The Georgian emigrant and well-known writer Akaki Papava, on the other hand, demonstrates how the repression affected the existence of the emigrants. In the journal *Kavkasioni*, he wrote:

The emigrant living abroad is absolutely helpless. He does not even have an opportunity to apply to any research institute or any of its researchers, or to write to any scholar and ask to send one or another excerpt ... Every such attempt will end in deathly silence, and will very likely cause great troubles for the addressee. (*Kavkasioni* 141)

The same idea is expressed in private letters of Viktor Nozadze: “I might have written to you concerning other issues as well, but I would not like you to find yourself in an awkward situation because of me ...”; “Due to this reason, I have ceased communication with many persons for fear that my letters may harm someone.” In his memoirs, Aleksandre Baramidze also touches on this issue and notes: “I suspect that his letters failed to reach me. I know that journal *Kavkasioni* sent to me was seized” (Kharazishvili 143).

Literary criticism was therefore under the strict directives of the regime and its Marxist–Leninist philosophy. In the introduction to *Volume I: Old Literature* of the six-volume edition of *The History of Georgian Literature*, one reads:

The present volume one of *The History of Georgian Literature* is based on new literary materials discovered in recent years; whereas the approach must change toward texts that have been known for a long time, they must be analyzed once again on the basis of historical decrees of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party according to the new approaches stated in these decrees. At present, on the basis of the instructions of the Party, the need for critical development of the cultural and literary heritage of the past is noted categorically and definitely. (Leonidze 6)

There existed other methodological approaches to Georgian literature. They are to be found in the works of Shalva Nutsbidze (1888–1969: *Rustaveli and the Oriental Renaissance*, 1947; *Work of Rustaveli*, 1958) and Mose Gogiberidze (1897–1949: *Origins of Rustaveli’s Worldview*, 1937; *The Concept of the Supreme Being in The Knight in the Panther’s Skin*, 1941). Both of them were educated in Germany, at the universities of Leipzig and Berlin, and were acquainted with the evolutionary, psychological, and sociological criticism of the time. On the basis of this kind of criticism, they argued with Marxist scholarship, but they

fell victim to political repression in the 1940s. Gogiberidze was arrested on the charge of being an agent of the Third Reich and died in the Aktobe (Russian: *Aktyubinsk*) gulag.

As can be seen, Nozadze's role in Georgian literary criticism is not easy to determine, not only because he was an emigrant but mainly due to his opposition to the ideological context governing Georgian scholarship of the time. The main locus of his opposition, that of Rustaveli's world outlook and religious beliefs, is seen precisely in *The Theology of The Knight in the Panther's Skin*. In this work, Nozadze openly contests the ideological view of Soviet scholarship, and thus the change in the reception of his works in Soviet-Georgian literary criticism should mainly be attributed to this fact.

***The Theology of The Knight in the Panther's Skin* by Viktor Nozadze**

In the first half of the twentieth century, the issue of Rustaveli's world outlook in particular acquired significance among researchers in Rustaveli studies. In his romance, Rustaveli is quite reserved regarding religious issues, and the ritual side of Christianity is not emphasized. Although it is clear that the protagonists of the poem are religious, the name of their deity is never made explicit. Consequently, there hardly remained any historically known religious system in Asia Minor that the author of *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* was not declared to be an adherent and representative of. In the first half of the twentieth century, many pseudo-scholarly theories were created concerning the religious belief and worldview of Rustaveli. Noteworthy among these are the theory of Mohammedanism of Rustaveli argued by Nikolas Marr in his study *The Georgian Poem The Knight in the Panther's Skin by Shota Rustaveli and a New Cultural and Historical Problem* (1917); the theory of Manichaeism stressed by Pavle Ingoroqva in the book *Rustveliana*, published in 1926; the theory of Solarism (Pavle Ingoroqva), which was very popular in the years of the First All-Union Congress of Soviet Writers (1934) and the First Anniversary of Rustaveli (1937); and linking the poet's worldview with Safavid philosophy, advocated by Iustine Abuladze (1914). There were also attempts at a pantheistic interpretation of Rustaveli's world outlook (by Ivane Javakhishvili and Shalva Khidasheli). These theories had one purpose: to deny the traditional and fundamental thesis regarding the Christian faith of Rustaveli, the foundation for which was laid as early as in 1721, when Georgian King

Vakhtang VI (1675–1737) published *The Knight in the Panther's Skin*. This was the first time that *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* was printed by a publishing house, and in his commentaries on the poem Vakhtang VI offered a scholarly substantiated viewpoint on its author's Christian belief. Vakhtang VI proposed a religious-mystical explanation of the main motif of *The Knight in the Panther's Skin*, love, and the entire contents of the romance. Hence, he viewed *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* simultaneously as an "ecclesiastical" and "secular" work, and by means of allegorism sought the divine meaning in the romance. According to his explanation, *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* is secular in its plot, whereas in its meaning it is ecclesiastical (by means of demonstration of love between a woman and man, the work expresses a human being's worship of and reverence for God)—thus, Stanza 32, in which the suffering, shedding of tears, and wandering over the fields by a man in love is interpreted by Vakhtang VI in the following way:⁵ "If a man is crying for Christ, exactly for His sake he wanders and prefers solitude. And it is better, when among other people, neither to appropriate the love for Christ nor boast of His love hypocritically" (Rustaveli, *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* 301).

The tradition of a Christian reading of *The Knight in the Panther's Skin*, which continued even under the severe pressure of Soviet ideology, was most clearly revealed in finding intertextual relations of *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* with the Bible. Research on intertextual relations with Bible was put forward in works by Korneli Kekelidze (1879–1962), Kalistrate Tsintsadze,⁶ Viktor Nozadze, Solomon Iordanishvili (1898–1953), and Akaki Gatsrelia (1910–1996). Thus, by 1936 the issue of Shota Rustaveli's Christian world outlook was already well grounded, but the ideological policy of the regime held it back for three decades, and during those years the issue was repeatedly concealed. The apologists of this idea, Korneli Kekelidze and a small circle of his adherents, had to overcome numerous struggles. For example, Solomon Iordanishvili's work *The Search for the Christian Trace in The Knight in the Panther's Skin* was written in 1916, but its publication only became possible in 1990. Korneli Kekelidze, who had received a tertiary religious education, was also forced to create the artificial term "Biblical Christianity" and, in contrast to his view, to write:

⁵ Stanza 32 reads: "If the lover cries and weeps for his love, tears are the lover's due. / Solitude suits him, the roaming of plains and forests suits him, too. / When he's by himself, his thought should be of how to worship anew. / But when a lover is in the world, he should hide his love from view" (Rustaveli, *Knight* 15).

⁶ Kalistrate Tsintsadze (1866–1952) was Catholicos-Patriarch of Georgia.

Speaking about Biblical Christianity, the following circumstance should be borne in mind. Rustaveli fully rests on the first source of Christianity, the Bible, the "Holy Scripture"; in this regard he is a representative of so-called Biblical Christianity. Dogmatic-ecclesiastical Christianity, which originated on the basis of the scholastic-mystical mental acrobatics of ecumenical councils and subsequent periods, is strange to him; all the ballast that merged with Christianity afterwards, over the centuries, against which the forerunners of the Reformation boldly raised their voice for the first time in the fifteenth century in western Europe, is also alien to him. In this we should look for the reason for the fact that if, in the subsequent centuries, a certain circle persecuted him on religious grounds, it persecuted him not because he was not generally Christian, but because he was not a follower and admirer of dogmatic Christianity. (Kekelidze 204)

Kekelidze was well aware that the term "Biblical Christianity" was artificial and ambiguous, which is why he indicated in brackets that "this was a term of a relatively new period." It is absolutely inconceivable for the scholar, who at the same time was a clergyman, to refer to the writings of the founders of Christian dogmatics and theology as "ballast." It is obvious that the author, who was one of the first Georgian scholars to consistently formulate the theory of the Christian worldview of Rustaveli, was instructed to present the author of *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* as a Christian whose worldview was based only on the *Bible* and who rejected Church dogmatics.

Nozadze, living in exile, was free from Soviet ideological pressure and he was among the rare scholars that grounded the concept of Rustaveli's Christian world outlook from the philosophical and theological viewpoint. He made the following critical remark concerning the position of Soviet scholars in issue 11 of the journal *Kavkasioni*, fully dedicated to the eight-hundredth anniversary of Shota Rustaveli's birth:

Rustaveli is praised as an advocate of atheistic ideas. He is glorified as a pantheist and materialist. He is lauded as a standard-bearer of democracy . . . He is praised and glorified as a person expelled and persecuted by the Georgian church. Incense is burned to him especially because he, as it were, "is consonant with the contemporaneity," the Communist period. And this is obscenity, indecency, folly. (Nozadze, "Dante" 109)

Unlike his Soviet colleagues, Nozadze had a quite different approach to research. In his opinion, to study the theological philosophy of *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* one needs thorough knowledge of Christian theology, but it is also necessary to study each analyzable phrase, symbol, or metaphor thoroughly. Although this proves to be a difficult task

for any researcher, without such a basis it is inconceivable to understand and interpret the contents of the text (Nozadze, *Vepkhistqaosnis ghvtsimetqeleba* 40–42). Hence, Nozadze approached to the study of Rustaveli in the context of various philosophical and religious teachings. However, with his focus on the main objective-thematic motifs of *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* (concepts of good and evil, love and Providence, and the physical world and the otherworldly), as well as terms and phrases (the names of the Supreme Being used by Rustaveli and aesthetics of light), Nozadze shows that Rustaveli's worldview is based on Christian theology rather than on religious or philosophical teachings such as Platonism, Neoplatonism, Zoroastrianism, Mithraism, Gnosticism, Sufism, Pantheism, and Manicheism. Unlike his Soviet colleagues, Nozadze studied these issues using comparative and hermeneutical methods. In the analysis of theological issues, when it was related to Rustaveli's interpretation of the biblical passages, his research was based on the views of Gregory of Nyssa, Saint Augustine of Hippo, Athanasius the Great, Gregory of Nazianzus, and Dionysius the Areopagite.

To show but a few parallels, I draw on Nozadze's interpretation of Stanza 842 of *The Knight in the Panther's Skin*. In the text, one reads:

He said, "Divine sun, said to be the image of the Sunny Night,
Image of the Three-in-One, Timeless Time, Everlasting in might,
Whom the heavenly bodies obey to the second, as is right,
Turn not away, I pray, till she and I have each other in sight." (Rustaveli, *The Knight* 183)

Nozadze resorts to the view of the holy fathers concerning the similarity of the Holy Trinity and the sun. Thus, according to Nozadze (*Vepkhistqaosnis ghvtsimetqeleba* 95–96), Saint Basil the Great (330–379) proposes the following analogy in explaining the mystery of the Trinity: "And One is Three, who is Divinity, as three suns set one into another, one radiation of light"; furthermore Saint Gregory of Nazianzus (330–391) declares: "Light is the divine light This is one and the same Divinity with three hypostases, as three suns, totally unified, radiate only one and the same light We must worship the Trinity in one and the One." Saint Athanasius (295–373) also defines the binding of the Trinity in terms of sun: "The Trinity is one sun and its light The Father is brilliance, the Son light, the Holy Spirit enlightening power"; and Saint John Chrysostom (344–407) refers to a sunlight image in describing the relation of the Father and the Son: "The Son (Jesus) is inalienable from the Father, as light from the sun."

The main idea of *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* is the victory of good over evil, which is expressed by several aphorisms: "Why would he, who created good, create evil by its side?" (Rustaveli, *Knight* 35); "Evil is defeated by Good. Good will forever be our aid" (290); "God creates only good; He lets no evil in the world arrive" (318). In the romance, the source of this idea is named: "Dionysus, the wise"; that is, Dionysius the Areopagite. Nozadze draws a direct parallel between the quoted aphorisms of *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* and the teaching of Dionysius the Areopagite, who states: "Every essence derives from graciousness: good is the basis of every essence, whereas evil is nonexistent" (*Vepkhistqaosnis ghtismetqveleba* 179).

The study of the issue from this viewpoint led Nozadze to conclude that in *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* God is the "Creator of the Universe," "the Providence"; in short, he is the almighty God (*Vepkhistqaosnis ghtismetqveleba* 624–625), and thus Rustaveli's Supreme Being refers to the God of the Christian religion and that is why Rustaveli's world outlook has nothing in common with atheism, pantheism, pantheist materialism, or any "isms" (*Vepkhistqaosnis ghtismetqveleba* 626). Nozadze firmly adheres to the opinion that all other views ascribed to *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* are to be considered errors and can be explained by a lack of understanding of the theology of *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* and, moreover, by its deliberate distortion (*Vepkhistqaosnis ghtismetqveleba* 596).

This and other works by Viktor Nozadze that failed to reach not only the general public but even the narrow circle of Rustavi specialists were well known at the Ideological Department of the Central Committee of Georgia. The position of the Soviet officials was clear and unequivocal: the standard reaction was to leave any differing point of view without a response or to be limited to short but aggressive remarks. Thus, in the article "Glorious Path of Georgian Soviet Scholarship" in the newspaper *Zarya Vostoka* signed by the Chairman of the Presidium of the Georgian Academy of Sciences Niko Muskhelishvili, Nozadze was incidentally mentioned as a "maliciously breathing scholar" (Kharazishvili 147).

In 1966, the eight-hundredth anniversary of the birth of Rustaveli was celebrated in Georgia. It was held under the aegis of UNESCO, and therefore preparations for the event began not only in Georgia, but also throughout the entire Soviet Union. The All-Union Governmental Anniversary Committee was approved, which was responsible for organizing and holding the anniversary events. The Central Committee of the Georgian Communist Party and the Government of the Republic passed a resolution that was entered by the World Peace Council in the

work of its congress. The chairman of the Georgian Writers' Union, Irakli Abashidze, noted:

These are the days when we are standing face to face with the high thought of the entire civilized world and before the eyes of this world summarize the entire eight-hundred-year-old history of Georgian culture. During these days, Georgian literature and art will be a new discovery for many visitors, having arrived from distant corners of the world.⁷ (Abashidze, "Didi erovnuli" 1)

Elsewhere he wrote: "During the anniversary of Rustaveli, the Georgian people will face the high culture of the civilized world and will make a report on how they have lived from the times of Rustaveli until the present day" (Abashidze, "Verny idealam" 9). It should be noted that by this period (after appointment of Leonid Brezhnev as general secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party in 1966), the "Thaw" of Khrushchev's times was in fact over, but it was impossible for Soviet officials to limit at one stroke the freedom obtained to a certain extent from 1953 to 1965 (Šubin 143). This explains the "thawing" of Georgian officials towards Viktor Nozadze, who was officially invited to attend the jubilee celebrations in Tbilisi. The wish of Georgian officials to enable "Georgia to appear before the civilized world in a worthy manner" would to a certain extent be realized by an emigrant scholar attending the anniversary, one whose name had passed beyond the boundaries of the narrow circle of Georgian emigration by that time and attracted the attention of foreign Kartvelian scholars.⁸ However, Nozadze refused to go to Georgia. Apart from the more banal reasons, such as the telegram invitation being written in Russian, his categorical refusal to arrive in Georgia should be explained by his ideological and worldview conflict with the Soviet regime. In his article "Dante-Rustaveli" Nozadze distanced himself from the "official Soviet" viewpoint of the Rustaveli phenomenon, quoting an extensive passage from the anniversary address of Givi Javakhishvili, chairman of the Georgian SSR Council of Ministers:

⁷ Rustaveli's anniversary in Georgia was attended by more than one hundred foreign guests, including scholars, writers, and translators.

⁸ In this regard, the publication of the English-language scholarly journal *Georgica* (1935–1937) in London and the French-language journal *Revue de Kartvélogie* (1957–1984) in Paris was significant, in which works of Georgian authors (including Viktor Nozadze) were published alongside works of William Edward David Allen, Edward Denison Ross, John F. Baddeley, Carl Ferdinand Friedrich Lehmann-Haupt, David Marshall Lang, Robert Horne Stevenson, Gérard Garitte, and others, which facilitated internationalization of studies by Georgian scholars (Khintibidze 55).

The Georgian people note with profound gratitude that the anniversary of Rustaveli is one more clear demonstration of the untiring care of the Communist Party and the Soviet Government for the further development and flourishing of the culture of the peoples of our country. This significant nationwide event will enable us to present to the entire world not only the greatness of Rustaveli, but also the grandiose changes and success attained by the Georgian people in the sphere of national culture during the years of Soviet rule. (Javakhishvili 1)

Thus it is only after Nozadze's death, in the Perestroika years and in particular in post-Soviet Georgia, that one can speak of a significant change in the reception of Nozadze's work in Georgian literary criticism. In this regard, the opening of the "special collections" of the National Library of Georgia was significant, as a result of which access was provided for Georgian scholars to "prohibited literature," including Viktor Nozadze's works concerning *The Knight in the Panther's Skin*. As regards his writings, which mainly appeared in emigrant periodicals, these were preserved together with the private letters in Viktor Nozadze's archive in Paris, willed by the scholar to his brother Giorgi Nozadze.

As early as 1989, Guram Sharadze took an interest in the fate of this archive, and with the assistance of the Georgian emigrants Mamia Berishvili and Karlo Inasaridze he succeeded in fully transferring the archive to Georgia in December 1996. Sharadze also founded the Emigration Museum (Viktor Nozadze's archive is currently kept at this museum) and the Department of Georgian Emigrant Literature (Shota Rustaveli Institute of Georgian Literature), which laid the foundation for research and publication of Viktor Nozadze's scholarly legacy. In 2004, at the initiative of the Viktor Nozadze Society (established in 2004) and Sharadze, the publication of Viktor Nozadze's works in ten volumes began. The publication will include six books devoted to *The Knight in the Panther's Skin*, as well as hitherto unknown historical-philological and journalistic works on Rustaveli; essays, studies, and reviews, scattered throughout emigrant journals and newspapers; and epistolary heritage. At present, three volumes have been published. When commenting on this effort, Revaz Baramidze evaluated Nozadze's work as follows:

Reading the works of Viktor Nozadze, one is impressed not only by the scale of his knowledge and profoundness of thought, but also by the fact that he was able to write such extensive material in such a limited time and circumstances. However, this may be easy to understand if one bears in mind the fanatic love the emigrant torn from his homeland had for Rustaveli. This love endowed him with energy, on the basis of which this treasure of Rustaveli studies was created. (34)

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Viktor Nozadze, Rustavelijev *Vitez v tigrovi koži* in sovjetska ideologija

Ključne besede: gruzijska književnost / gruzijska literarna veda / Nozadze, Viktor / Rustaveli, Šota: *Vitez v tigrovi koži* / krščanstvo / sovjetski totalitarizem

Gruzijski izseljenski pisec in literarni zgodovinar Viktor Nozadze je svojo ustvarjalno zrelost dosegel v času, ko je gruzijska komunistična oblast preprečevala dostop do del avtorjev, ki se niso podredili novemu političnemu sistemu. Med svojo tridesetletno izseljensko potjo v Franciji, Nemčiji, Avstriji, Argentini, Čilu, Braziliji, Španiji in spet v Franciji je napisal šest obsežnih knjig, posvečenih pesnitvi Šote Rustavelija *Vepkhistqaosani* (*Vitez v tigrovi koži*), v katerih je analiziral idejni ter svetovnonazorski svet Rustavelija ter njegove etične in estetske ideale. Kot vse gruzijske izseljence je oblast Nozadzeja označila za »sovražnika ljudstva«, prav tako ga ni uvrščala ob bok sovjetskim raziskovalcem. Pred obdobjem perestrojke naj bi bilo sleherno, tudi literarno raziskovanje v Gruziji utemeljeno v marksistično-leninistični filozofiji. Nozadze se zlasti v času, ko je raziskoval Rustavelija, ni želel podrediti tovrstnemu ideološkemu kontekstu. Še več, po študiju virov, ki so mu bili na voljo, je razvil prepričanje, da je sovjetska literarna veda Rustavelijevo osebnost, svetovni nazor in umetniško mišljenje razumela površno in ideološko. To je še posebej razvidno ob vprašanju Rustavelijevega religioznega prepričanja in svetovnega nazora. Posledično so bile omembe ali celo citiranje Nozadzeja v Sovjetski zvezi prepovedane, Nozadze pa se ni nikoli vrnil v Gruzijo.

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