

Shota Rustaveli Institute of Georgian Literature

**Intercultural Space:
Rustaveli and Nizami**

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Preface

Georgia has a long tradition of Rustvelological research; however, each new era presents the country's intellectual legacy with new problems. Rustvelology, like any other field of research, makes progress and requires new visions, broader horizons, and conceptual and structural innovations. Identifying relations between national literatures within the world literary arena is the most important aspect of modern international philological research. This is particularly true of the progressive countries in the post-Soviet camp, as they want to interpret their national literatures within the context of the international literary process and free from ideological clichés and frames.

This is precisely the task faced by the authors of monograph – **Intercultural Space. Rustaveli and Nizami** - to conduct research in the most important work in Georgian literature - *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* - within the context of medieval oriental literature or, more specifically, Rustaveli's contemporary great oriental poet Nizami Ganjavi. The objective of the research is to show the fundamental problems raised in the works by Nizami Ganjavi and Shota Rustaveli, the typological essence of similarities between them as well as the historic, cultural, literary, and aesthetic factors that make their works differ. This objective implies a theoretical re-interpretation of the process and social actualisation of the problems under research, which are known to be among the main trends in modern academic research.

During the long and fruitful research on Rustaveli's poem some complex questions have remained unanswered up to now: What place does the world literary process occupy within the Georgian and Azerbaijani literary model, and how did Georgian literature, placed on the crossroads of different cultural and literary processes, become an

organic and influential part of the world cultural and literary tradition (in this case, the oriental tradition)?

Rustaveli's philosophy reflects progressive medieval Christian problems and the religious and philosophical views in his work are based on trends characteristic of the European civilisation of the Late Middle Ages. However, no research on the work can be complete without taking into account its relations with oriental poetry.

The shared fate and peculiarities of the Transcaucasian, particularly of Georgian and Azerbaijani, literature, and the coincidence of literary interests and worldviews are not accidental. They develop in relation to one other, while simultaneously contacting different civilizations of the ancient world. Close relationships and a common geopolitical position determine the typological kinship of cultural characteristics.

The significance of the research is due to the scale and the multifaceted nature of the topic. The participation of Georgian, Azerbaijani, and British researchers makes it a completely new topic that is in need of innovative methodological and conceptual approaches. The research is intended to outline the role of the literature of the Caucasus region in the history of world medieval literature. The involvement of foreign researchers will facilitate the incorporation of Georgian literary criticism (Rustaveli studies in particular) into the global literary and philological dialogue.



**„ვეფხისტყაოსნის“ მამუკა თავაქარაშვილისეული
ხელნაწერი. 1646 წ. H 599-319
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ეროვნული ცენტრი)**



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ეროვნული ცენტრი)

**Rustaveli and Nizami – Studies in Historical
Context**

Lia Tsereteli
(Georgia)

On the History of Studying the Topic

The history of studying the works of Shota Rustaveli and Nizami Ganjavi has a splendid tradition, not only in Georgia but also outside its boundaries. The parallels between the artistic thinking, worldview, aesthetics and poetics of Nizami and Rustaveli are made evident in the works of N. Marr, I. Marr, N. Nikoladze, A. Khakhanashvili, P. Ingorokva, K. Kekelidze, A. Baramidze, S. Nutsubidze, I. Abuladze, D. Kobidze, K. Paghava, E. Metreveli, G. Imedashvili, M. Todua, E. Bertels, M. Gulizade, M. Rafili, M. Dadashzade, N. Conrad and others who confirm the creative relationship between these two humanists.

As early as 1890, a letter from Giorgi Tsereteli entitled “Nizami and Rustaveli” was published in three issues of *Novoe Obozrenie* (N2084, 3086, 2091), although Giorgi Tsereteli used *Leilmajnunian* by Teimuraz I for his comparative study, which misled him into thinking that Teimuraz had translated Nizami’s poem.

G. Kikodze's article, “On the brink of a new culture” (Journal *Sabchota Khelovneba (Soviet Art)* 1936, N3), which was dedicated to the topic of our analysis stated that “Even though Iran’s influence on Georgia was immense, yet, Georgian culture still did not submit to the style of Iranian-Arabic culture ... Shota Rustaveli and Nizami were probably contemporaries ... Undoubtedly, they understood each other’s poetic language very well, but it is enough to compare *The Knight in the Panther’s Skin* to *Layla and Majnun* in order to see clearly the great difference between their respective authors’ worldviews and beliefs. The Iranian poet remains a mystic in the expression of real feeling, such as the love between a young woman

and a man ... As is well known, Nizami's *Layla and Majnun* ends with the mystical vision of the Muslim otherworld, where lovers finally obtain the happiness previously denied them by worldly life. Rustaveli, on the contrary, tries to remain a romantic-realist in describing such mystical objects as the kingdom of Kadjis, while the love between a young woman and a man for him is a torment tempering both body and soul, which culminates in earthly happiness. The activity of a woman and a man, their indifference to fortune, the strength of their willpower, the subjugation of passions to reason, all these distinguish Rustaveli's heroes from the world of the Iranian poet and bring them closer to the poetic world of medieval Europe (Kikodze 1936: 28).

Korneli Kekelidze touched upon the issue of analysis in detail in the second volume of his *History of Old Georgian Literature*.¹ To demonstrate the range of Rustaveli's education and to substantiate the fact that the poet was "incomparably knowledgeable" of both his country's literature and "Eastern-Iranian literature", that "he reads this literature and, if necessary, even reflects his acquaintance with it in his poetry" (Kekelidze 1981: 127). Kekelidze cites several literary parallels, including Nizam Ganjavi. The scholar argues with relevant arguments that Rustaveli was undoubtedly familiar with Nizami's work "in Georgian, or at least in Persian":

1. The prologue to *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* preserves all the elements that we encounter in the introduction to *Layla and Majnun*: an appeal to God, making a reference to the king, mentioning his own name, and discussions about the skill of a poet and of love;

2. In terms of content, these two poems have many features in common:

A) Qays' father is "capable, virtuous, content, merciful, strong, gracious as a caliph; he is blessed with good fortune, like a nutshell

¹ See also: K. Kekelidze. Georgia and Nizami Ganjavi. *Etudes from the History of Old Georgian Literature*. Vol. 4. Tbilisi: 1967.

filled by its kernel; he was disturbed by the fact that he had no son. This is echoed by the description of King Rostevan, who was worried about “having no son”.

B) The beauty and grace, on the one hand, of Layla and Majnun, and on the other hand of Nestan and Tariel and Avtandil and Tinatin, are described by both poets with similar words, metaphors and expressions.

C) The feeling of love between Layla and Majnun as well as between the characters of *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* awakens in their childhood, during their shared upbringing.

D) Layla's parents keep her in a tent hidden from the eyes of strangers. Likewise, Nestan, from the age of seven, lived in a house especially built for her where “no one could see her”.

E) The spiritual suffering of Qays and Tariel is the same; they continue until they lose consciousness, so “Majnuni-Mijnuri” (maddened by love) is their common name. Love for them means unceasing suffering and shedding tears. Life is their torment; it shows them no mercy. They do not expect to be reunited with their loved ones in this world and they long for death, so that “the lovers separated in this world should be reunited there”.

F) Qays and Tariel, inflamed with the fire of love, flee into the desert and „wander around” there together with the wild beasts.

G) Majnun's father visits him in the desert and begs him to come back home. Similarly, Avtandil finds Tariel, who has fled from the cave to the desert and beseeches him to return to the cave; they both refuse. Both poets envisage almost identically the character and tone of their appeals, as well as their motives for rejection.

H) Both Majnun and Tariel are sympathetic to the beasts in whose society they have to live. The beasts remind them of their lovers. Tariel — the tiger, Majnun — the baby deer, and a deer, whom

he will redeem and set free, and whose eyes reminded him of the eyes of his lover.

I) The correspondences between Layla and Majnun and between Nestan and Tariel also resemble each other. Layla, estranged from her husband, feels trapped in her husband's house and suffers. Nestan is also imprisoned in the Kadji castle. They treat their love letters in the same way. Tariel put Nestan's letter "above his eyes", on the other occasion he put the "book" sent to him from the Kadji castle "above his mouth" and immediately lost consciousness. The same actions are performed by Layla and Majnun.

J) The two poets describe alike some of the negative feminine qualities; according to both, woman is ruthless, "whatever she knows she declares, she tells every secret"; she has a "treacherous and venomous tongue".

K) Nizami's Navfal - an incomparable knight, who completely sacrifices himself to the interests of his friend, Majnun; he is desperately looking for and trying to connect with the lost lover, for which he tries to overcome many obstacles. He reminds us of Avtandil's commitment to Tariel (Kekelidze 1981: 134-136).

Apart from the similarity of the general elements of the story, which undoubtedly proves that Rustaveli knew Nizami's *Layla and Majnun*, the following sententiae bring these two works even closer:

Nizami

"The field of words must be wide open / for the rider on top to gain great renown."

Rustaveli

"Like a horse running a great race on a long course, like a ball-player in the lists striking the ball / even so it is with the poet who composes and inscribes long poems".

“The Shah is the one who gives away his treasure in its entirety”.

“The moon was in the dragon’s throat”.

“Great generosity will soften the hearts of all men”.

“Love is a large mirror, illuminated by a ray, / There is a great distance between passion and love.”

“Even the beast obeys the rule of love”.

“What thou givest away is thine; what thou keepest is lost”.

“How pitiable is the full moon swallowed by the serpent!”

“The generous binds the free, and he who is already bound will willingly Obey”.

“True love is something apart from lust, and cannot be likened thereto”.

“Thou didst create love, Thou hast decreed its law”.

In the article “Rustaveli and Nizami Ganjavi”¹ the scholar focuses on an episode of *The Knight in the Panther’s Skin* in which Avtandil brings to Tariel a letter from Nestan wrapped in the edge of his veil. Rustaveli says about the fainting Tariel: “Neither Caen nor even Salaman could bear sorrows like his”. According to K. Kekelidze, the “Caen” mentioned here refers to Nizami’s Qays, while “Sala” refers to Layla’s husband Ibn-Salam, who died of his love for Layla (Kekelidze 1936: 158).

The closeness between the Nizami Ganjavi’s and Rustaveli’s poems, substantiated by K. Kekelidze, paved the way for further observation and research by scholars over the idea that Rustaveli was familiar with the works of Nizami Ganjavi.

¹ К. Кекелидзе. Руставели и Низами Гянджеви. Труды ТГУ, 1936. Стр. 157-178;

A. Baramidze has expressed his views regarding the topic of our research several times.¹ In his book *Shota Rustaveli* (1975) the scholar reviews in great detail the recent predecessors and contemporaries of Rustaveli in world literature (pp. 211-272) and contemplates especially on Nizami Ganjavi's poems *Layla and Majnun* and *Khosrov and Shirin*. According to the scholar, Nizami and Rustaveli pay great attention to "the description of the spiritual life and the psychological aspects of the characters; the metaphorical system of artistic thinking is significant for them, they possess similar sententiae and aphorisms" (Baramidze 1975: 233). The scholar compares Majnun with Tariel, he agrees with the Azerbaijani academic M. Rafili's² opinion and notes that Majnun was torn apart by love, he lost his willpower and was driven to true madness. In the case of Tariel, however, love gave him wings, elevated him, and enabled him commit heroic deeds (Baramidze 1975: 239).

The same has been said by A. Baramidze while drawing parallels between Nestan-Darejan and Layla. He discusses the letters of Layla and Nestan, the similarities between which have been pointed out by numerous scholars. Alexander Baramidze thinks that it is true that Layla's letter is full of great love, yet "Layla failed to rise above the level of feminine sensibility. Her letter lacks the halo of magnificence which is characteristic of the letter sent by Nestan from the Kadji castle" (Baramidze 1975: 242). In his opinion, neither the circumstances in which these letters are written, nor the characters of

¹ See A. Baramidze. Низами и грузинская литература. In *Works of Tbilisi State University*, Vol. XXXII, Tbilisi: 1947, pp. 139-144; Also by the same author, "Nizami and Rustaveli" in *Essays*, III, Tbilisi: 1952, pp. 209-229; A. Baramidze, the idea of fellowship and friendship between peoples according to the poems by Nizami Ganjavi and Shota Rustaveli. In *Literary Researches*, Vol. X. 1956, pp. 173-185.

² М. Рафили. Творчество Низами. Сборник «Низами». Баку, 1947. Стр. 48-52.

the protagonists, are similar: in Layla's words, Alexandre Baramidze sees "eloquent admonition, empty didactics, a doctrinal-sermonizing tone, an abstract moralistic philosophy". We can also read in her words "an awareness of hopelessness, preaching the need to submit to the misfortunes of life, a preference for the passive expectation of death in the hope of an otherworldly reward" while Nestan's letter shows the main female character as rebellious, unyielding, confident, and determined.

The scholar concludes that "Rustaveli is a poet-genius expressing an optimistic worldview, while Nestan is an immortal image based upon this worldview" (Baramidze 1975: 243-245).

According to Alexander Baramidze, another important element is contained in Nizami's work *Khosrow and Shirin*. While *Layla and Majnun* idealizes an abstract, mystical, Sufi style of spiritual adoration, the motives of carnal desire, intense passion, and bare eroticism prevail in *Khosrow and Shirin*. The scholar finds it impossible to compare the fraternal relationship between Khosrow and Shapur (and equally that between Navfal and Majnun) with that of Avtandil and Tariel. He discusses the brightest image in the poem – Shiirin, who is a native of the Caucasus.¹

A. Baramidze concludes that the essential difference that distinguishes Rustaveli's worldview from that of Nizami is that "mysticism is foreign to Rustaveli, its heroes live and fight for worldly ideals, for earthly love. By overcoming the legendary obstacles, the heroes of Rustaveli have achieved the realization of human ideals here

¹ There is a difference of opinion in the special literature regarding Shirin's nationality. Rafili considers her to be Azerbaijani (М. Рафили. Творчество Низами. Сборник «Низами». IV. Баку, 1947), some scholars believe that Shirin's image is inspired by Tamar (Yuri Marr, A. Boldirev, K. Kekelidze), especially since according to Nizam, the land of Shirin's aunt, Banu Shamira (whose prototype is considered by the same scholars to be Tamar's aunt, Rusudan) included part of Georgia (Abkhazia).

on earth. Rustaveli's love celebrates victory on earth, while Nizami's love awaits the otherworldly reward" (Baramidze 1975: 249).

D. Kobidze's paper "On the relationship between Rustaveli and Nizami" was published in the third volume of *The Literary Studies* (1947).¹ The scholar notes the similar elements (the upbringing of Tariel and Khosrov, Avtandil and Shapur, the roaming of Tariel and Farhad in the wilderness, and the similarities of some of the aphorisms), and differentiating elements, chiefly the distinctive ethical and religious views highlighted in both *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* and *Khosrow and Shirin*. At the end of the article, the scholar even suggests that Rustaveli and Nizami knew each other personally and that Nizami might have even taken part in a poetry competition held at Tamar's royal chambers (Kobidze 1946: 214). The publication of the article prompted a heated debate. G. Natroshvili's response was published in the March issue of the newspaper *Literature and Art* (March 21, 1948), in which the author called Kobidze's article a "meaningless, pointless speculation". He also strongly criticized K. Kekelidze's *History of Old Georgian Literature*,² which was published in 1941 in an updated and revised form. According to G. Natroshvili, "K. Kekelidze tries to prove that *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* is an original Georgian work, but in the process of substantiation and proof, he creates a self-contradictory picture. According to K. Kekelidze, *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* was influenced by *Visramiani*, *Layla and Majnun*, *Shahnameh*, *Vamegh* and *Azra*, *Amirandarejaniani*,

¹ D. Kobidze, From *Georgian-Persian Literary Relations*. 1. "For the relationship between Rustaveli and Nizami", *Literary Studies*, 3, 1946, pp. 203-215. The scholar further extended his discussion on this issue in his book *Georgian-Persian Literary Relations* published in 1969. The author notes that in terms of the use of poetic thinking, artistic images, comparisons-metaphors, Rustaveli reveals the greatest kinship with Nizami.

² G. Natroshvili, "About *The History of Old Georgian Literature* by Korneli Kekelidze", Newspaper *Literature and Art*, 21. 03. 1948. N 11. p. 3.

Tamariani, Abdulmesiani ...”. According to Natroshvili, these influences are so exaggerated by Kekelidze that *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* only seems to be a simple compilation of these works (Natroshvili 1948: 3). K. Kekelidze responded to this review and called it “premature and unfair”.¹ The scholar considers the reviewer's accusation groundless and writes: “D. Kobidze seems to be trying to place Rustaveli and Nizami in opposition to one another. In fact, there is no confrontation, but rather a comparative study of the works of these two poets, which is a legitimate and standard procedure in academic literature” (Kekelidze 1947: 3). Simon Chikovani also participated in the discussion.² He agrees with G. Natroshvili, who negatively assessed D. Kobidze's work. “Rustaveli and Nizami with their poetics and worldviews are representatives of different poetic worlds“ - writes Simon Chikovani, “the theme of both is love, the poetic images and metaphors are similar, but the content of Rustaveli's poem avoids any mysticism and is immensely optimistic. There is a good deal of mysticism in Nizami's creation; the end of this worldly life, as expressed in his works, is misfortune, while the heroes of Rustaveli obtain happiness in this world (Chikovani 1947: 2).

This topic of research has entered a new phase since the 1960s. The highlight, in this context, is the publication of Nizami Ganjavi's *Khosrow and Shirin* in 1964, translated by Ambako Chelidze (included in the collection *Iranian Classics*), with the introduction, commentaries and notes by Magali Todua.³ In his introductory letter, the scholar points out that some of the details of *The Knight in the*

¹ K. Kekelidze, “Letter to the editorial board”, newspaper *Communist*. 5.10. 1947. N 199. p.3.

² S. Chikovani, “The issues of literary criticism and literary studies”, newspaper *Literature and Art*, 28.09.1947. N36. p. 2.

³ The Georgian translation of Nizami Ganjavi's *Layla and Majnun* by Magali Todua. See Nizami Ganjavi, *Layla and Majnun*, Tbilisi, *Sabchota Sakartvelo (Soviet Georgia)* 1974).

Panther's Skin are similar to those of Nizami (artistic images, realities, sententiae). Yet he also notes that “we need to be more careful when referring to such details and motifs from Eastern culture and literature ... It is difficult to attribute oriental poetic figures to a specific author. They often re-emerge in the works of different writers” (Todua 1964: 23). For example, Todua criticizes Alexander Baramidze, who drew a sharp line between the characters of *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* and *Khosrov and Shirin* - Tariel / Avtandil and Khosrov / Shapur - and notes that in comparing them, the comparisons should not be based on their hierarchical position or moral stance, but “the function that these characters bear in those poems”. Without them, Tariel would not acquire Nestan, nor Khosrov Shirin. Doesn't Shirin resemble Nestan when she calls Khosrow: Go, get the throne and then shake it? Don't we hear the words of Tariel in the angry grumble of Khosrow: “a woman urges me to fight?” To say once again: by this we do not prove anything, we only point to their kinship and not to the nature of this kinship” (Todua 1964: 25).

In the 3rd issue of the periodical *Bulletin* in 1972, Maia Mamatsashvili published her research “Chanting to the seven stars in Nizami's *Layla and Majnun* and *The Knight in the Panther's Skin*”. The general stages of the development of astronomy and astrology from ancient times to the 12th-13th centuries in Europe and Asia were discussed. The author notes that astronomical knowledge about celestial orbs was shared by both Christianity and Islam. The model of the structure of the universe is equally represented in both religions. In describing the starry night in *Layla and Majnun* Nizami reveals his knowledge of astronomy and astrology and uses it as a poetic background to dispel his theological conception. He describes within the zodiac belt the picture of the medieval sky and the movement of the supreme light of the Muslim world - the deity of the moon. For the first time in Oriental poetry Nizami gives the poetic model of

supplication to celestial orbs. Majnun asks the lights and then God to assist him in his love. In Rustaveli's poem *Avtandil* also addresses the whole starry sky with petitions - the seven celestial orbs. This petition is of an astrological nature. Each light is characterized by its nature and sign (Mamatsashvili 1972: 41-81).

Guram Asatiani expressed an interesting opinion on the research topic in his book *From The Knight in the Panther's Skin to Bakhtrioni* (1974). The author believes that one of the motives of the *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* (the captivity of a woman and her release) may have been used in Nizami's *Iskandarnama*. One episode is discussed: Alexander defeats a man-monster, who then brings a woman-Nestan Darjikhhan. She had been captured by the master of the monster. "There was probably a mythological source that both Nizami and Rustaveli used" –writes the author (Asatiani 1974: 16-17).

The point of view of the Georgian emigre scholar Victor Nozadze is important regarding the topic of our research. In all the books of his *Judgments*, the scholar quotes the relevant passages from Nizami Ganjavi's poetry on one issue or the other, and analyzes them in great depth. For example, in his *Significance of Astronomy and Astrology in The Knight in the Panther's Skin* he mentions Majnun's prayer to the stars along with the prayer of Avtandil (Nozadze 2005: 213-215). Nozadze highlights the artistic functions of the celestial orbs, specifically the sun and the moon, in *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* (astronomical - for poetic comparison; aesthetic - a symbol of beauty used to depict the magnificence of the heroes) and concludes that in Nizami's poetry the moon often replaces the sun; "Most frequently it is referred to as an illustrator of beauty and brilliance... while in Georgian literature, the moon occupies a secondary place". The sun is resting on the throne of *The Knight in the Panther's Skin*" (Nozadze 2005: 152-153). In his *The Metaphorical System of Colours in The Knight in the Panther's Skin* Victor Nozadze reviews in detail all the

separate cases of the metaphorical use of precious stones by Rustaveli and Nizami and concludes that with Rustaveli, as well as with Nizami, “precious stones i.e. gemstones are used mainly for artistic purposes. The artistic purpose is to show colours and to depict beauty through the display of these colours” (Nozadze 2004: 358). In particular, the scholar speaks in great detail about the symbolic meaning of pearls (Nozadze 2004: 358-385) and in this respect draws a parallel between *The Knight in the Panther’s Skin* and Nizami’s writings. The scholar notes that like Rustaveli, Nizami also uses pearls in his poems as a symbol of beauty (of words, poetic eloquence, verses, tears, teeth, mouth, ears, etc.), but, in addition, pearls are also used by Nizami to describe sexual intercourse, while in *The Knight in the Panther’s Skin* the pearl is limited only to the symbol of marriage (Nozadze 2004: 372-381). Victor Nozadze’s *The Metaphorical System of Lovers in The Knight in the Panther’s Skin* (Paris, 1975) merits a special mention regarding our topic of research. He discusses the institution of lovers in Arabic-Persian-Turkish literature in detail (motifs, forms of expression, etc.) and especially dwells on the parallels between Nizami’s *Layla and Majnun* and *The Knight in the Panther’s Skin*: “Qays flees the village and lives in the desert, wanders around with the wild beasts and protects them (While Tariel leaves the village, but kills the beasts); Tariel and Qays are knights-errant, roving far away from populated areas, but the motives for their escape and their roaming are totally distinct modes of love. Qays’s lover is there, in his parents’ tent, while Tariel’s lover is lost, and no one knows her whereabouts. Qays prays for the defeat of Navfal, Tariel and his friends conquer the Kadji castle. Qays's love is defined by being a “majnun” (maddened-lover), while Tariel's love is limited to being a “mijnuri” (lover). There is a sharp distinction between *majnun* and *mijnuri*. Intimacy is condemned in the religion of love - it is to be a *majnun*. The love between Tariel and Nestan is a burning long for intimacy and union, whereas the path

of love of Qays and Layla, according to Iranian mysticism, follows the “religion of love”; they may embrace one another only in the transcendental realm; these lovers believe that death alone will open the door to that reality, for which their soul is longing throughout the whole of this life. According to mystics, the final union of lovers in this world is impossible. Suffering frees a loved one from their shackles ... This is a true Sufi concept. Majnun runs away from Layla, turns away from her, because his love for her is greater than just love ... i.e. Nizami’s form of madness is the fruit of mysticism, while for Rustaveli madness is down to earth, and real. *Majnun* comes from Arabic-Persian and Sufi culture, *mijnuri* is Georgian and Christian” (Nozadze 1975: 119-122).

Petre Sharia does not share the theories according to which Nizami is a follower of Sufism. In his work *Some Issues of Shota Rustaveli's Worldview*. He notes that nowhere in Nizami’s poetry do we find an apology for apostasy from worldliness. In his opinion, there are great similarities between the general ethical views of Rustaveli and Nizami: both poets are humanists, both defend human dignity and consider a human being as the highest value. Nizami is very advanced in his treatment of women and thus comes close to Rustaveli, but he still cannot defeat entirely the Eastern tradition in the matter of men’s relationship with women. These two poets are related to each other in acknowledging the uplifting power of love; in understanding the essence and nature of poetry. There are great similarities between these poets also in terms of poetics. Both poets avoid the praising-panegyric style, but Nizami pays tribute to the naturalistic tradition of Oriental poetry, which is foreign to Rustaveli (Sharia 2019: 148-158).¹

Irina Kiladze’s dissertation (2001) is dedicated to the typological interrelationship between Nizami’s *Khosrow and Shirin* and

¹ P. Sharia, *Selected Writings*, Tbilisi, 2019.

Rustaveli's *The Knight in the Panther's Skin*. "The study presents the theoretical views of both authors about love and the artistic reflection of these theoretical views in the feelings and emotions of the characters. The motives of their love are analysed in detail: the motives of the emergence of love, roaming the wilderness, separation, sadness, the calling and duty of the lover, etc ... The issue of typological interrelationships of the topic of the romantic relationship is established in both poems, and similarities and differences are presented in this regard". The comparative analysis of the fictional language of the authors highlights the specific character of the poetic language of both authors. It is noted that the stories and worldviews of these two poems are characterized by common typological features, reflected in wise sayings and aphorisms (Kiladze 2001: 142-148).

Foreign scholars also devoted numerous papers to this topic of research.

The newspaper *Literaturuli Sakartvelo (Literary Georgia)* published an article by a Czech academic, Ivo Vatsulin, about *The Knight in the Panther's Skin*.¹ The author notes that the Rustavelian era was a very important period for the development of the Georgian state and its culture, which historians call the Golden Age. He talks about ancient Georgian culture and literature, and emphasizes the fact that in the Rustavelian era the country was embraced by the spirit of the so-called Eastern Renaissance. The high level of development of ancient philosophy and science in Georgia at the time provides the author the justification for his argument. I. Vatsulin calls *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* the most remarkable monument of medieval Transcaucasian literature, adding that this work can only be compared to the creations of Nizami (Vatsulin 1967).

¹ I. Vatsulin, "The cult of a legendary poet", in *Literaturuli Sakartvelo (Literary Georgia)*, N 15, 7.09.1967

Azerbaijani scientist Dilara Aliyeva has made a significant contribution to the study of Nizami and Rustaveli. In her book *From the History of Azerbaijani-Georgian Literary Relations*, published in Baku in 1958, the author mentions that Shota Rustaveli recalls the characters of Nizami Ganjavi's poem *Layla and Majnun* and *Salaman Ibn Salam* ("Neither Caen nor even Salaman could bear sorrows like his"). The scholar adds that Rustaveli was familiar with Nizami's works and had read *Layla and Majnun*, she also notes that similar motives are found in the works of these two great poets, their characters are imbued with high intentions of friendship and respect for people (Aliyeva 1958).

In a letter called "Woman - the main protagonist" (an expression of the aesthetic ideal in the works of Nizami and Rustaveli) published in 1983 in the journal *Mnatobi* (N 9), the author compares the philosophical beliefs and aesthetic views of Nizami and Rustaveli and notes that the works of both are manifestations of the cultures and worldviews of the epoch. They have in common the ideal of humanism and nobility. The wisdom and generosity of heroic women, devotion and love, and service to the homeland, are paramount in the work of both poets. The author also discusses the similarity of their aphorisms. The cult of woman and the humanism characteristic of the *Renaissance* with both poets are represented primarily in the images of women. Aliyeva notes that "Nizami and Rustaveli treat women with equal respect and reverence, and their views and opinions are based on a proper understanding of the role of women in society" (Aliyeva 1983: 151-155).

Another article by Dilara Aliyeva "On the role and significance of the artistic creativity of Nizami and Rustaveli" was published in the 9th issue of *Literaturnaya Gruzia* in 1984. Here she discusses the common literary motives of these two authors and the similarity of views about the purpose of the literary word in the edification of

human beings and in the formation of their ethical-moral qualities. In addition, the author reviews the prologue of Rustaveli's poem, and one of the chapters from Nizami's poem *Treasury of Mysteries*, in which the authors talk about the nature and purpose of poetry. The author of the article believes that Nizami and Rustaveli are like-minded in terms of their theoretical understanding of poetic creativity. They share the same philosophical and aesthetic views (Alieva 1984: 168-174).

Dilara Aliyeva dedicated the third chapter of her dissertation *Nizami and Georgian Literature* (1984 pp. 29-45) to the creative relationship between Nizami Ganjavi and Shota Rustaveli. The scholar discussed the following issues: the basis of the humanistic concept of Nizami and Rustaveli; Nizami and Rustaveli on the role and purpose of the artistic word; the concept of love in the works of both poets, the role of women, the aesthetic ideal of the poets, and the problem of the perfect human being.

The Soviet Scientific Conference "The Role of Nizami in the Development of Lyrics in World Literature and 800 Years Since the Creation of *Khosrow and Shirin*" was held in Baku on November 22-23, 1984. Inga Kaladze's article "On the epic and the lyrical in the works of Nizami and Rustaveli"¹ is published in the conference proceedings, in which the scholar describes Nizami Ganjavi as a poet and thinker of such a great stature that the main inclinations of the artistic thinking of the whole epoch were reflected in his work. In this sense, Nizami's work is related to the thought of Rustaveli, the second great thinker of the Middle Ages. The system of artistic representations of *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* as well as the images of tropes suggests that Rustaveli uses ready-made formulae and clichés in

¹Каладзе, И. Об эпическом и лирическом в творчестве Низами и Руставели. Всесоюзная научная конференция «Роль Низами в развитии лирики в мировой литературе и 800-летие создания поэмы «Хосров и Ширин». Баку: Издательство «Элм», 1984, стр. 18-21.

drawing his deeply individual and psychologically charged characters, which, in fact, derive from Persian poetry. It is also mentioned that the lyrical passages of Nizami's Divan and Rustaveli's poem speak not only of the high lyrical talent of these authors, but also of a completely new artistic phenomenon, found in the reflection of human physical and spiritual life within the romantic epic (Kaladze 1984: 19).

Z. Kuli-Zade In his work *Theoretical Problems of the History of Oriental Culture and 'Nizamiology'*¹, while analyzing Majnun's literary image, points out that in his personal unity, and his indefinite spiritual greatness, Qays can be compared only to Iskandar. Therefore, the scholar does not consider it advisable to draw parallels between Majnun and Tariel of the *Knight in the Panther's Skin*. According to him, Tariel's grief and despair are related to the real human being, Nestan-Darejan, and moreover, before marriage, while Majnun's mourning embraces the universal sorrow and it expresses the lover's protest against the evil that prevails in this world (Kulizade 1987: 160).

Donald Reyfield, professor of Russian and Georgian at Queen Mary University of London, thinks that: "Rustaveli may have known Nizam of Ganja's more tragic romance of obsessive love "Leila and Majnun" in Persian, for his prologue, with its invocation of the deity, the monarchy, poetry, and love, in that order, is identical in structure with Nizam's. The development of Leila and Majnun's love from childhood intimacy parallels that of Tinatin and Avtandil and Nestan and Tariel; likewise the cult of altruistic friendship between the infatuated Majnun and the knight *sans peur et sans reproche* Nofal sets the pattern for Rustaveli (Rayfield 2014: 81).

A conference entitled "Comparative Literature and Culture: The Starting Point of National Culture" was held at the Baku Slavic University In 2015 where Gaga Lomidze presented a paper on "Two

¹Кули-заде, З. Теоретические проблемы истории культуры востока и Низамиведение. Баку: ЭЛМ, 1987.

Perceptions of Love” (Nizami Ganjavi’s *Layla and Majnun* and Shota Rustaveli *The Knight in the Panther’s Skin*). It is mentioned in the work that Shota Rustaveli is familiar with Nizami Ganjavi’s poem *Layla and Majnun* as *The Knight in the Panther’s Skin* mentions Majnun’s real name, Qays. The focus is placed upon the different perceptions of love in the works of these authors. The Freudian concepts of the pursuit of death and the will to live are employed in this regard. The author notes that Rustaveli’s and Nizami’s perceptions of love reveal the difference between the medieval and *Renaissance* visions of this concept. Love is governed by basic human aspirations: will to death (*Layla and Majnun*), which is more medieval; And the will to live (*The Knight in the Panther’s Skin*), which marks the end of the medieval era and the beginning of the *Renaissance*. The first of these is closer to the asceticism of Sufi philosophy, the second to the Thomistic model of the enjoyment of earthly life, which implies the two natures of God - that He contains equally both earthly and divine aspects.¹

At the same conference Ivane Amir Khanashvili also presented his paper “Poetic Law as a Character (Nizami and Rustaveli)”², which was dedicated to the review of Nizami’s and Rustaveli’s poetic eloquence. The author notes that both poets share metaphorical thinking and a hyperbole of ideas. This is mainly manifested in lyrical episodes, insertions and descriptions. The principle of maximizing

¹ Lomidze, G. “Two Perceptions of Love” (*Layla and Majnun* by Nizami Ganjavi and *The Knight in the Panther’s Skin* by Shota Rustaveli). Paper presented at the conference “Comparative Literature and Culture: Starting points of national literature and culture”, Proceedings, Baku, 27-28 November, 2015, p.95.

² Амирханашвили Иванэ. Поэтический канон как характер (Низами и Руставели). “Comparative Literature and Culture: Starting points of national literature and culture”, Proceedings, Baku Slavic University, Azerbaijan Comparative Literature Association, Baku, 27-28 November, 2015, p. 98

artistic expression is implemented. Nizami and Rustaveli liberate the psychological and mental aspects of the poetic language as far as possible, and thus create the law of monumentality. They increase the distance between the real and the imaginary, the conscious and the unconscious. In the process of hyperbolization, objectivity is not lost, but becomes more convincing, because it does not even change the subject and the event, but transforms them. Ivane Amirkhanashvili considers this poetic law as a meta-language, which is used by Rustaveli and Nizami with a peculiar imagination and the principle of building an intellectual structure unique to them. Hyperbolization of the subject creates an artistic generalization of a higher aesthetic and mental level. If in aesthetics it is possible to have such a notion as character, then it must be possible to understand this poetic method as a manifestation of aesthetic temperament.

In 2020, an article by Irma Ratiani and Maka Elbakidze “Rustaveli – Nizami’s contemporary: revisiting some poetic and aesthetic principles” was published in the international anthology *Interpretation of Nizami’s Cultural Heritage in the Modern Period*.¹ The article discusses the application of the aesthetic and ethical concepts of Rustaveli to the relevant problems of Western European on the one hand, and to the medieval literature of the Middle Ages, on the other. Special attention is drawn to the concept of Rustaveli’s concept of love, in which the authors see the motifs characteristic of both courtly novels and Oriental poetry (namely, Nizami’s poems), that are mostly conventional. Therefore in *The Knight in the Panther’s Skin* they are found in the form of ready-made formulae and presented with different interpretations. The authors conclude that the attempt to reconcile Western and Eastern literary models sets the first

¹ Ratiani, I, Elbakidze, M. “Rustaveli, Nizami’s Contemporary: Revisiting Some Poetical and Aesthetical Principles” in: *The Interpretation of Nizami’s Cultural Heritage in the Contemporary Period*, Berlin: Peter Lang, 2020.

precedent for the encounter of two different cultural worlds in the Georgian literary environ, while granting *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* the status of a unique text. It is with this synthesis that Rustaveli's novel enriches and expands the world literary process of the late Middle Ages: if for the Western Christian world of that period Weltliteratur is a concept uniquely equated with European space and culture, in Georgia it also follows the principles of Eastern literary law.

The present book *Intercultural Space - Rustaveli and Nizami* continues the almost century-old tradition - the study of *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* in the context of medieval Oriental literature, in particular, the work of Nizami Ganjavi, the great Eastern poet of Rustaveli. The book presents the main problems of the work of these two poets and thinkers, the typological essence of their coexistence, as well as the historical-cultural or literary-aesthetic factors that lie behind the differences in their views. This task has been achieved by rethinking the theoretical aspect of the process and the social actualization of the research problems, which is one of the main trends in modern academic research.



The miniature painted for „The conversation of Anushiravan vizier and two owls“ from „Treasury of Mysteries“



„Muhammad Prophet’s Miraj“ miniature painted by Behzad to Nizami Ganjavi’s work „Khamasa“ in 1494

Zahra Allahverdieva
(Azerbaijan)

On history of study of Nizami Ganjavi and Shota Rustaveli in Azerbaijan

The great Azerbaijani poet Nizami Ganjavi, who reached the peak of the Eastern Renaissance of the XII century, is a great humanist of the world. He is worthy to be called "the king of kings in composition of words". His unique creativity reflects the high level of the urban culture of Azerbaijan and the culture of the Ancient East. Nizami's heritage is also the property of his native Caucasus.

Spiritual and cultural ties between Azerbaijani and Georgian peoples has been linked for centuries. The creativity of such great Azerbaijani poets as Abul-ula Ganjavi, Khagani Shirvani, Feleki Shirvani, Mekhseti Ganjavi, Nizami Ganjavi, also famous Georgian poets like Chakhrukhadze, Shavteli, Khoneli, Shota Rustaveli and others is a vivid example of the relationship between Azerbaijani and Georgian literature of the 12th century.

The famous scientist Dilara Aliyeva noted: "Azerbaijani-Georgian literary ties are a core part of a large sphere of literary science. The history of literary relation between the Azerbaijani and Georgian peoples is rich as theirs culture. The origins of these relations take us to the era of our ancient ancestors, their echoes come to us through fairytales, legends, bayats and songs, Ozano-Ashug's music".¹

As mentioned above, themes, subjects and philosophical thoughts of Nizami deeply influenced Georgian literature. Many orientalist have confirmed that "the Georgian public of the XII-XIII centuries was closely familiarized with Nizami's creativity either from

¹ Алиева Дилара. Низами и грузинская литература . - Автореф. дисс. на соиск. учен. степ. доктора филол. наук. - Баку, 1984, стр.9.

the original or from the translated version."¹ As it's known, such poems as "Khosrov and Shirin" and "Leyli and Majnun" were translated into Georgian during Nizami's lifetime.

During commemoration the 840th anniversary of the great Azerbaijani poet Nizami Ganjavion on October 6-9, 1981 in Baku, what comes to mind is the warm and sincere speech of the honored guest - Secretary of the Board of the Writers' Union R.S.Miminoshvili: "The overall interest in Nizami never weakened in Georgia since the XII century. We are proud that our literature is rich with the most ancient translations of his works. Shota Rustaveli also studied Nizami's creativity, and perfectly expressed his attitude towards his older contemporary in artistic images. For thousands of years their poetic roll call will continue."²

In Georgia, as well as in Azerbaijan, scientific work is being done in studying the creative heritage of Nizami Ganjavi. Periodically, such Georgian scientists as N.Ya.Marr, K.Kekelidze, A.Baramidze, A.Gvakharia, K.Pagava and others collaborated with Azerbaijani Nizami studiers such as Hamid Arasli, M. Rafili, Mir Jalal, M. Jafar, R. Aliyev, G. Aliyev, D. Aliyeva, A. Rustamova and others.

Since the 40s of the XX century, scientists have treated the issue of humanism in the works of Nizami and Rustaveli as a phenomenon of the Caucasian Renaissance. Prominent scientists such as Hamid Arasli, Mamed Amin Rasulzade, Mikael Rafili, Yevgeny Eduardovich Bertels, Nikolay Yakovlevich Marr, Shalva Isakievich Nutsbidze, Azada Rustamova, Rustam Aliyev, Dilara Alieva, Khalil Yusifli and others expressed their opinions.

Researches related to the humanistic concepts of Nizami and Rustaveli are concentrated around such problems as the idea of social justice, utopian society, human rights, the code of ethics, and the Renaissance worldview. Especially, the idea of social justice is

¹ Алиева Дилара. Азербайджанско-грузинские литературные связи в XII в. //Альманах Низами Гянджеви; АН Азерб.ССР Ин-т лит-ры им. Низами.- Баку, 1984.- Ч.1.- с.225.

² Альманах Низами Гянджеви. Книга первая, Издательство «ЭЛМ», Баку,1984, стр.40.

considered by researchers through the confrontation of heroes – toilers and despotic tyrants - at the level of psychology, lifestyle and moral criteria.

Investigating the problem of "Nizami and World Literature", special attention was paid to the issues of studying the influence of the works of Nizami and Rustaveli on the culture of the peoples of the world, as well as to the sources of spiritual development of poets.

In the Azerbaijani literary studies, the research of this problem began in two parallel directions:

1) Nizami and oriental literature (this includes the identification of the main sources of classical oriental poetics before Nizami, the study of literary ties with contemporaries and poets of subsequent eras, as well as the poet's influence on them);

2) Origins of relations of Nizami with Western European literature, artists of the word of the Renaissance.

Today, a series of significant researches have been carried out in both directions of the mentioned problem in the Nizami studying.

The study of the problem "Nizami and Eastern Literature" is determined by the research of the sources of Nizami's poetry; the sources of the poem "The Knight in the Panther's Skin" by Shota Rustaveli are also investigated.

The experience shows that the most researched field among the sources of Nizami is written and verbal origins of the poem "Leili and Majnun". This issue remains one of the most controversial issues. The analysis of these issue has made it possible to determine the achievements of Nizami studying of the 40s, as well as in the recent period.

Most literary specialists declare the real existence of Leili and Majnun, referring to the fact that in the second half of the 7th century B.C. in Central Arabia, in the family of the Emir of the northern Arab tribes, there had been living a poet named Majnun, who joined to the trend named as a Platonic love, which was dominating among the Bedouins at that time and he wrote poems dedicated to Leili.

Unlike to European orientalists and many Soviet orientalists, the viewpoint of Azerbaijani nizami studiers is completely different, since they are taking to account verbal folk poetry as the first source of

the poem "Leyli and Majnun". G. Arasli, one of the first Azerbaijani scientist, who opposed the statement of the historical reality of Leyli and Majnun, was inclined to believe that Majnun is a fictional person invented by storytellers. In his opinion, the theme of Leyli and Majnun is a product of verbal folk art, it was created by the people who preserved it in the Arabic verbal poetic tradition in various versions.

The article by Y. Z. Shirvani "The Origin of "Leili and Majnun"¹. is under the focus of interest, due to this matter. Noting several periods of development of origin of "Leili and Majnun" (pre-Christian, Christian and Muslim), the author opts the first from these periods and agrees with the above point of view of E. Dunaevsky for resolving of the issue.

Exploring the character of images such as Leyli, Shirin, Nushaba, Nestan-Darejan, Asmat, Tinatin in the works of the two great poets Nizami and Rustaveli, scientists came to the conclusion that the main idea of their poetry was the thought of sublime perfection of a human. The Azerbaijani scientist M. Rafili emphasized the mutual relation of humanistic ideas with local trends and wrote: "Apparently, the beginning of the Renaissance should be sought in Georgia and Azerbaijan of the XII century, where a humanistic culture was really developing, caused by general economic and political development of the Transcaucasian countries".²

Also, from the researches, implemented in the Azerbaijani nizamology, it is revealed that the themes, subjects and images, in general, found their original embodiment in the work of Nizami and Rustaveli, actually have folklore origins, based on verbal stories and legends, widespread in the Caucasus and also in the East.

The oeuvre of Nizami and Rustaveli is the source of humanism and peace, their classical heroes were the ideal of freedom.

¹ Shirvani Ю.З. Происхождение «Лейли и Меджнуна», «Низами»- кн. III.- Баку, 1941, с.62–73.

² Рафили М. Низами и Азербайджанская культура XII века. «Низами Гянджеви» (Сборник статей), Баку, 1947, стр.62.

During the World War II, when fascist troops brutally stormed the world's population, the prominent Azerbaijani scientist Hamid Arasli published articles such as "Feat and friendship in the works of Nizami and Rustaveli", "Friendship of peoples in the works of Nizami", "Nizami and the Motherland" (Baku, 1942-1946).

Having embarked on a large and difficult topic of studying the relation between the poetry of Nizami and Rustaveli, Azerbaijani scientists paved the first path for subsequent generations in determining the place of great poets in world poetry.

It should be noted in the middle of the 20th century the special merits of the famous Azerbaijani scientist Dilara Aliyeva. Her candidate and doctoral research work were devoted to the Azerbaijani-Georgian literary ties of the 11th-12th centuries and the mediocre work of Nizami and Rustaveli.

In her scientific articles and monographs, such as "From the history of Azerbaijani-Georgian literary ties" (Baku, 1958), "Nizami and Georgia" // "Azerbaijan-Georgian literary ties of the 11th-12th centuries" (Baku, 1980), "An Elder Contemporary of Rustaveli" (Baku, 1981) "Nizami and Georgian Literature" (Baku, 1984) besides the facts of the biography and creativity of the Georgian poet, the author investigated the main features of the social and literary environment of the XII century, in which Nizami and Rustaveli were formed.

Studying scientifically the features of the poetry of two poets D. Aliyev, she came to the following conclusion: "Azerbaijani and Georgian poets of the XII century. showed a keen interest in the country, people and spiritual values of each other, tried to perceive all the good that was in the culture and literature of the others, and thereby contributed to bring their peoples together".¹

In Nizami study, the uniting artistic images, the ideas of Nizami and Rustaveli are studied on the basis of the spiritual and humanistic traditions of the two peoples. It should be noted the special merits of scientists like Khalil Yusifli, Arif Hajiyev, Panakh Khalilov and others.

¹ Алиева Дилара. Азербайджанско-грузинские литературные связи в XII в. //Альманах Низами Гянджеви; АН Азерб.ССР Ин-т лит-ры им. Низами.- Баку, 1984.- Ч.1.- с.223.

Their work aimed at a complete understanding of the development of the Renaissance in Eastern literature, and in the Caucasus region.

The historiographic and theoretical aspects of the problem are carefully studied in the book, which was published twice in Azerbaijani and in Russian, Khalil Yusifli "Renaissance and Nizami Ganjavi" (Baku, 1982; Baku, 2016)

The author identifies the main defining ideological and characteristic features of humanism in the works of such prominent representatives of the Renaissance as Khayyam, Gurgani, Ferdowsi, Nizami, Rustaveli, Rabelais, Cervantes, Shakespeare and confirms that "the main idea reflected in the works of representatives of the Renaissance is aimed at denying views and laws of its time." Characterizing the Renaissance era, the scientist traces the medieval epic traditions of the East, which rose to a high level in the creativity of Nizami, and clearly defining the high place of the love-heroic epic of Rustaveli he writes: "Research shows that Rustaveli's creativity in its Renaissance content does not oppose the poetry of the Middle East, on the contrary, adjoins it and is in tune with it. According to its Renaissance idea, Rustaveli's poem stands somewhere between the works of Ferdowsi and Nizami, although it was created after the "Khamsa" - the pinnacle of Renaissance humanism in the Middle East."¹

Azerbaijani literary criticism has a lot of experience in researching the problem of "Creativity of Nizami and Rustaveli" and the scientists' services to the science of the present time should be highly appreciated.

The project dedicated to "Nizami Ganjavi and Shota Rustaveli" and carried out by Georgian and Azerbaijani scientists is a worthy continuation of historical scientific traditions.

By the department of Nizami studies of the Institute of Literature named after Nizami Ganjavi of National Academy of Sciences of Azerbaijan, under the leadership of academician Isa Habibbeyli, the main part of the "Nizami Ganjavi. Life and creation" project was carried out.

¹ Халил Юсифли. Ренессанс и Низами Гянджеви. - Баку: "Элм ве техсил".- 2016.- С.31.

Rustaveli – The Path to Renaissance



„The Knight in the Panther’s Skin“.
Tavakarashvili MS. 1646. H 599-507
(Korneli Kekelidze National Centre of Manuscripts)

Maka Elbakidze
(Georgia)

The Knight in the Panther's Skin - the path of Georgian literature to Renaissance

The time span between modern readers and Rustaveli's era is longer than 800 years. It was the time of unprecedented heights reached by the feudal Georgian state in politics, economy, and culture and another unprecedented fact took place in the medieval reality: A woman ascended to the throne as a full-fledged ruler of the country and state and the king of kings. To substantiate the correctness of autocracy as the only acceptable political system, Her Majesty was declared as equal to God and an unmistakable and perfect person. Queen Tamar's human wisdom, kindness, spiritual firmness, and beauty were regarded as divine. In accordance with the old Georgian tradition of women's cult, Georgian laudatory poetry attributed such virtues to Tamar and used such epithets to describe her that she was transformed from a historic personality into a generalised image and idea and became an ideal. "The lion's whelp is a lion, be it male or female" - the deep social meaning of this aphorism by Rustaveli, which conveys the idea of equality of princes and princesses "born by God", reinforces on the one hand, the legitimacy of Tamar's reign and on the other, the state system of the country that was regarded in those times as the support of all Christian countries and the hope of all Christians.

Many Muslim countries submitted to the authority of Georgia's power and admitted the invincibility of the Georgian army during Tamar's reign (1189-1210)¹. Georgia that was situated on the

¹ Queen Tamar (1160-1207/1210), Georgian monarch from 1184, the daughter of Giorgi III and a representative of the Bagrationi royal dynasty.

boundaries between Asia and Europe started pursuing active policies and occupied a major place in the life of Asia Minor of those times. Correspondingly, it was Georgia that was entrusted with replacing the Byzantine Empire that had weakened by that time and with a complicated and responsible mission of protecting Christianity in the Middle East.

Georgian educational and cultural centres flourished both in Georgia and abroad (the Iviron Monastery on Mount Athos, Black Mountain in Syria, and the Petritsoni Monastery in Bulgaria) due to the political strength of the country and its economic growth. The high and productive intellectual development that resulted in an unseen development of sciences and the emergence of secular poetry in Tamar's era called Gold Age are confirmed by excellent pieces of Georgian art (architecture, sculptures, goldsmith's works, and paintings). The Vardzia cave complex and the Bertubani, Betania, Kvatakhevi, Ertatsminda, and Timotesubani monasteries were built in Tamar's time. Renowned Georgian goldsmiths Beka and Beshken Opizari, who decorated the covers of Tbeti and Gelati Gospels and the Anchi icon, also worked in that period. The best traditions of painting, goldsmith's work, and vitreous enamel are merged in the Georgian icon-painting of the late Middle Ages and examples of monumental painting (frescos in Vardzia, Betania, Kintsvisi, Bertubani, and Akhtala) amaze viewers with their decorative elements and dynamism.

The Knight in the Panther's Skin by Rustaveli is regarded as the crown of this cultural boom. The work organically unites the cultural traditions of the Christian West and Muslim East. However, *unification* does not imply an artificial reconciliation of these different traditions or their rough imitation. This word implies the unification of all streams and trends in one entity and organic reconciliation of various elements taken from the cultural environment of the Middle Ages. As a result, *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* is perceived as a

Georgian work that looks in the direction of both the West and the East, but is nevertheless purely Georgian by nature (Maurice Bowra).

Georgian historic chronicles say nothing about the identity of *The Knight in the Panther's Skin*. Only the *Prologue* of the work contains the nickname of the versifier - **Rustveli**: "I, Rustveli, who she pierced to the core, sat down and versified it"; "I, Rustveli, whose trade is to do things like this: I rave about and die for the one, who the troops in the army obey".

Rustveli is believed to mean "resident, owner, or ruler of Rustavi". However, it is still unclear where the poet came from, as there were two towns with this name in Georgia at that time (in Meskheta and in Hereti). It is also unclear, who was behind this nickname. The traditional view is that Rustaveli was from one of the south Georgian regions - Meskheta, which was the most advanced region both politically and culturally in the 12th century. This opinion was supported by writers of the so-called renaissance era, specifically, poet King Archil. The theory is confirmed by all folk legends about the great poet. First interpreters and continuers of *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* were also from Meskheta, for example, Sargis Tmogveli, who is believed to have written a prosaic continuation of the poem. Nothing is known about the last days of the poet either. However, there is a legend that has reached our days that the vizier and poet, who was loyal to his Queen, was persecuted and evicted by time servers and found shelter in a remote holy monastery in Palestine, where he rests forever.

A fresco on the south-western column in the Georgian Monastery of the Cross in Jerusalem shows an elderly white-bearded man in the clothes of a Georgian nobleman at the feet of Maximus the Confessor and John of Damascus. The inscription above tells about the identity and contribution of the man. The anonymous icon painter beseeches God to pardon Shota, who had the columns of the main

cathedral of the monastery painted. The inscription also mentions Rustveli, which definitely implies the person shown on the fresco. A prayer of the turn of the 12th and 13th centuries, which can be found in the synaxarion of the monastery, further specifies the identity of the person - Shota the Royal Treasurer. Materials found in the Monastery of the Cross provide several pieces of information for our scant knowledge of Rustveli's biography. He proves to have been not only a poet, but also a top official promoted at the royal court.

Nickolas Marr, David Chubinashvili, Alexander Khakhanashvili, Ilia Abuladze and others supported the idea that Rustaveli originated from Meskheti. However, according to another view, the native town of the author of *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* was a fortress in Hereti situated near Tbilisi (Teimuraz Bagrationi, Marie Brosset, Pavle Ingorokva, Zaza Aleksidze, and others).

The *Prologue* of the poem provides most precise and reliable information about the date, when *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* was written. Together with Queen Tamar, it praises her "lion", her husband and the worthy match on the throne, David Soslan: "Who is suitable for using a spear, shield, and sword?/ The lion of ruby cheeked and jet-black-haired Sun Queen Tamar". Tamar and David married in 1189 and Soslan died in 1207. Correspondingly, it is natural to assume that the poem was written between 1189 and 1207 (A. Baramidze, N. Natadze, S. Tsaishvili). The opinion is supported by important evidence from the history of literature (for example, Rustaveli mentions the poem *Layla and Majnun* by Nizami Ganjavi written in 1188¹). It should definitely be taken into account that names of the

¹ "He recognized the letter and the fringe of the veil and unfolded them, he pressed them to his face; he fell, a rose pale in hue, his spirits fled, the watchman of jet bowed his head. Neither Caen nor even Salaman could bear sorrows like his" (1316). This Caen has nothing to do with the biblical Cain. It implies Majnun's real name Qays.

characters of *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* became very popular in Georgia after the 13th century, gradually occupying a significant place in the Georgian onomatology.

The popularity of *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* was unprecedented in Georgia. The heroes of the poem and their deeds were the best possible ideal for Georgian readers. Correspondingly, it was this poem that provided them with impressive examples of heroism, selfless friendship, and sublime love. The ethic conception of *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* that is based on selfless love of friends, "standing like a rock amidst all misfortunes", and belief in good vanquishing evil could not have failed to find support among Georgians, who had often faced trouble in history like the ideal heroes of Rustaveli. Georgians always read the poem. Even those, who were forced to flee their homeland, took it with them and treated it like a holy relic. Aphorisms by Rustaveli widespread among people became part of the conscience of every Georgian and were transformed into a kind of proverbs. No other work has ever been loved in such a manner in the country of its origin. However, together with the factors mentioned above, the popularity of this literary work is also due to the content of the theme as a basic component of an artistic text and the narration, structure, and contexture of the work. In this regard, the diversity, adventurous nature, and intrigues in the theme of the poem definitely attract readers.

Once, Rostevan, the king of Arabs, and his retinue were hunting as they encountered on the bank of a river an unusually handsome knight in clothes made of tiger's skin. The king sent his servant to find out, who the unknown man was, but the young man, who was weeping bitterly, did not say anything to the servant, killed the troops Rostevan dispatched to capture him, and disappeared in such a manner that no-one was able to find any traces. Kings daughter

Tinatin sent Avtandil, the commander of the army, to find the young knight clothed in the panther's skin. It took Avtandil three years to find the stranger, who finally told him his tragic story.

The knight in the panther's skin, Tariel, was the chief admiral of Indian King Parsadan and the beloved of the king's daughter Nestan-Darejan. The tragedy of this invincible and noble knight started after Parsadan decided to marry his only daughter to the son of the king of Khwarezm and cede the throne of India to his son-in-law. Nestan-Darejan and Tariel opposed the king's intention. Nestan-Darejan advised Tariel to kill the Khwarezmian prince, who had arrived to marry her, which Tariel did and found shelter in a fortress together with his friends. The admiral hoped that the king would no longer be able to resist and would agree to his and Nestan-Darejan's marriage, but events took a different turn. Parsadan's sister Davar, who was infuriated by Nestan's behaviour, ordered some of her magician servants to take her disobedient niece in an ark to a far-away place. Nestan's servant Asmat informed Tariel about what had happened and expressed readiness to accompany him in his search for Nestan-Darejan. Tariel travelled seas and lands in search of Nestan, but in vain. The only person, who had seen Nestan alive in the ark, was the king of Mulgazanzar, Pridon, who failed to help Tariel although he was bound by an oath with him. Sailors Pridon sent to find Nestan returned with nothing. Tariel, who lost hope and no longer wanted to live, found shelter in a cave of demons together with Asmat, who remained loyal to him. The only thing Tariel did was to aspire to die in order to meet his beloved at least in the other world.

Avtandil empathised with Tariel, who became his sworn brother, and went to search for his beloved. In the Kingdom of Seas, he heard the sequel of the story of Nestan-Darejan from Patman, the wife of the chief merchant, and learned that she was kept in the inaccessible Kajeti fortress. Avtandil immediately went back to his

sworn brother to communicate the good news. The "secret" - "evil" - was defeated by "good" and "light", as the secret became known. It was not difficult for "three heroes" - "three luminaries" - to defeat thousands of fighters, even if they were invincible. Tariel, Avtandil, and Pridon went to the Kajeti fortress to free Nestan-Darejan.

Even the adapted theme of *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* makes it clear that loss/quest/find is the main motive of the work (the so-called quest for adventures, which is called *ghariboba* in Georgian), which ends in the formation of a perfect personality of a hero and the victory of good over evil. At the same time, as well-known British researcher Maurice Bowra noted back in the 1950s, this text has a lot of characteristics of the medieval French romantic poetry. Although the poem is amazingly dynamic and despite exciting battles described in it on numerous occasions and peculiar amusing humour, *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* is not a heroic poem, for its heroic doings are related less from a direct delight in human prowess than from the tribute which they pay to the inspiring influence of love. The parallel with French Romance is indeed so close that we might almost conclude that the transition from heroic poetry to romance is a natural change, which comes when feudal society has ceased to believe in its old standards and turns for inspiration to something more courtly and more complicated" (Bowra 1976: 350-351).¹

This "change" implies first and foremost the rejection of historicism and its replacement with a concept of the reflection of artistic reality that implies a narrative that is as far removed from reality as possible and creates "new (ideal) reality". This was a world created according to the new layer - aristocracy - that emerged within

¹ Z. Avalishvili, H. Huppert, R. Stevenson, Y. Meletinsky, and K. Beynen viewed *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* in the context of European romance.

the master-and-serf system. The new reality organically combined heroic and romantic ideals.

Parallel to changes in the ideological, thematic, artistic, and aesthetic fabric, changes took place also in the structure of romance. The structure was completely new and circular, which implied a coincidence of the original and final points of action (in *The Knight in the Panther's Skin*, it is the Kingdom of Arabia and the court of King Arthur in European romances). However, unlike European romances, *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* does not imply collisions between feelings and obligations and enamoured people and fighters. Correspondingly, the conflict is not so deeply interiorised here as in romances. In the meantime, it is this interior conflict that makes the action in a romance "bifurcated" and shapes a two-staged syntagmatic structure, which is overcome in *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* despite the fact that it has two main heroes. The structure of Rustaveli's work is unified and undivided and the rhythm of narration is dynamic and uninterrupted. The descriptive side of battles, tournaments, and voyages is reduced to the minimum, while the informational function of such passages is increased. It is also noteworthy that, like in polyphonic music, various characters and episodes are involved in the narrative (for example, Avtandil's visit to Cathayan brothers; Pridon's conflict with his cousins, Avtandil's adventures in the Kingdom of Seas, and others). Although the episodes are independent, they are, at the same time, intertwined with each other in order to shape a congruent whole.¹ The chronotope of romances is also specific. Temporary and spatial dimensions depend on the nature of characters and their lifestyle. Correspondingly, protagonists are placed within the limits of their "own" space, which is at times closed and at times open. As regards their actions, unlike

¹ For a definition of the new structure of romances, Clive Staples Lewis introduced the term *polyphonic narrative*.

reality, they are determined by the "adventurous time" (Bakhtin 2000: 101). The space of "vagrant" characters is limited and "bounded" and time is dynamic, as they are guided by clearly defined objectives. On the contrary, the space of static Tariel or Yvain is "unfurled" and the course of time is effectively halted, because after they fly into a rage and "start roaming the wilderness" they lose the sense of life and interest in it. Correspondingly, their existence and actions are not guided by any concrete objective.

Individual details of Rustaveli's concept of love are quite similar to the doctrine of courtly love, which is the foundation of the ethic system of troubadour poetry and romance. This is first and foremost the idea that love is part of the life of a certain class. The love idealised in *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* belongs only to knights and is limited by a clearly formulated code of obligatory features. In addition, love is the destiny of perfect and adorned people. Man's attitude towards woman is based on *service*, which is almost analogous to the principles of vassalage. Like a vassal, an enamoured man must be humble, silent, patient, loyal, and self-sacrificing. Services rendered to the beloved woman are very close to the obligations a vassal assumes to the sovereign. Correspondingly, the beloved woman is not only a mistress of the enamoured man, but also his sovereign and master. Service implies not only having military virtues and obedience to the beloved woman, but also praising and glorifying her poetically. In this process, an enamoured man goes through personal and spiritual catharsis, because praising the woman, everything positive characteristic of a personality comes to the foreground. If the praised woman is benevolent to the man, who praises her, the latter's life becomes a celebration, his heart fills with boundless happiness, and soul is transformed to such an extent that it can even draw close to the ideal. "It is impossible to be a poet and not to love, but it is unimaginable to love in all sincerity without the feeling giving birth to

a song of love in your heart" (Cf. Rustaveli: "A poet must not badly conceal his long suffering, / he must have one beloved woman, he must flirt only with one, - / awaiting nothing from her, but using his tongue as music for her"). This opinion formulated in the poetry of early troubadours - a merger of love and poetry, their mutual influence and dependence on each other - became an indispensable principle of society that gave birth to a new model of love and where love acquired a function of ennobling man and giving him aspiration, which is a precondition for the transformation of an enamoured person into a perfect personality.

The similarity of the problems of world view raised in *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* and its artistic, aesthetic, moral, and ethic world to the advanced philosophic and artistic thinking of mediaeval Europe may have two main explanations: First, common religion - Christianity, which definitely determined the main directions and trends of the development of both Georgian and European cultures. On the other hand, it is the political system - the ideological background that took shape in the feudal world, which proved to be a very rich soil for the new social relations. These relations as well as the moral, ethic, artistic, and aesthetic values characteristic of society of that time were determined in accordance with the interests and demands of the advanced layer - knights.

The social relations in late mediaeval Georgia described in *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* that are called serf-and-master relations are similar to vassalage in mediaeval feudal Europe. According to Rustaveli's poem, the supreme master of the country is the king, who is regarded as equal to God, who all subordinates are obliged to respect, obey, and serve faithfully: "The souls of those, who die for the king, are in the heaven". The king has numerous serfs or vassals - noble feudal lords, who, for their part, own large estates and numerous serfs. However, unlike vassalage, relations between master and serfs

(sovereign and vassals) in *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* are broader than just obligations and represent genuine human love: "Love between masters and serfs is better than any kind of love". Such a trend is completely unknown to the mediaeval reality. Its essence is rather similar to the era, where humans are the top value. They are individuals, who can accomplish much more than just honest fulfilment of obligations, which is first and foremost lavishly sharing love given by God to others, be they friends, beloved women, relatives or master.

The era that became part of history under the name of Renaissance started in Europe almost two centuries after Rustaveli's poem was written, but its theoretical prerequisites were due to the processes that started in the highly-developed Christian world and unfolded essentially in the same manner both in Georgia and Europe. This was introducing reason and intellect in the sphere of religion, viewing the surrounding reality from the angle of human logic, and aspiring for renewal, which ultimately led man to the discovery of the "new world". The philosophy of the author of *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* is a result of the Georgian philosophic and theological thinking in the classical period. Correspondingly, it is based on all the sources used by progressive intellectual forces of the late Middle Ages in Europe - Christian literature (the Bible and spiritual literature), classical Greek philosophy (both Plato and Aristotle), and Areopagite Neo-Platonism). Correspondingly, philosophic problems raised by Rustaveli are linked to the late Middle Ages and his approach to the resolution of these problems raises him to the thinking of the renaissance era (Khintibidze 2009: 760).

The ideal of renaissance that, as said above, started to take shape in the late Middle Ages was manifested first and foremost in Rustaveli's manner of describing his characters, which implied adopting a new vision of man, going deep into his inner world, and

aspiring to cognise it (all this will be called "discovering man" in the Renaissance era).

It is natural that the human ideal described in the work written on the turn of the 12th and 13th centuries is the ideal of a knight. Correspondingly, the most essential element of the personal perfection of a personality is moral perfection. The sense of dignity that is most important among knightly virtues (it was regarded as the main social virtue in feudal society) was absorbed by the ideal characters of *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* first and foremost due to their social standing. They are of aristocratic origin and enjoy privileged positions in society (Avtandil is an army commander and son of a commander-in-chief, and Tariel is the prince of the seventh Kingdom of India and the admiral of the country), which makes the characters socially responsible. The responsibility is manifested in their ethic perfection and uncompromising morality, which first and foremost implies that they should realise their human obligations ("I cannot lie to him and I cannot behave in a shameful way regarding him"), treat friends with love and serve them selflessly ("How can I abandon my friend, who is closer to me than my brother"), and be just. It is these moral qualities that make ideal characters of *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* different from minor characters.

The sense of dignity, courage, fearlessness, helping people in trouble, and charity were also part of standards of morality and ethics of the knightly culture in Western Europe. These were linked to other knightly virtues: Refraining from killing a defeated enemy, refusal to become involved in an uneven battle, and so forth. However, unlike the European knightly ethics, the demonstration of moral principles

(and, correspondingly, behaviour) was not at all ritualised and was due to characters' sincere emotions.*

In addition to the obligations according to the knightly code, the *moqmes* in *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* (the word *moqme* means *knight*) are linked to each other due to selfless love and the feeling is so strong that it is even equal to their love of the beloved women. However, this behaviour of the knights has a concrete philosophic and theological basis - the Christian ethic ("You have read how apostles describe love. ... Love elevates us, they say, sounding like bells") and classical Greek philosophy ("I will dare tell you what Plato said and taught us: 'Lies and deceit harm first flesh and then soul'"). The substantiation is also philosophic: Man's morality is derived from his intellectual potential. Wisdom that rules out any depravity motivates man to be moral ("If I do this, what do I need the wisdom of philosophers for?"). Correspondingly, the behaviour and morality substantiated in such a manner is characteristic of only the chosen, who are obliged to observe them (N. Natadze 1974: 206-208). The most serious obstacle a person can encounter in meeting his obligations is fear, which is a base feeling albeit quite natural for a human being. *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* says that fear is useless, an assumption that has a philosophic substantiation: Fate directs man's future with its inevitable will and a mortal can never escape death that makes equal knights and elderly people and weak and courageous people.

* This is probably the most striking example of the reception of mediaeval problems by Rustaveli: Relations between male characters that should be determined by the code of knightly virtues given the canons of the genre are determined by human love based on mutual liking. Correspondingly, the major factors that facilitate friendly relations between the characters of the poem are aesthetic (admiration for each other's handsomeness) and emotional (a knight's love of his friend is as strong and sincere as his love of his beloved woman), which is characteristic of the Renaissance ethic and aesthetic.

Therefore, man should overcome fear and follow his chosen path as "glorious death is better" than life in dishonour.

Rustaveli's characters, who have all features necessary for an ideal man (faultless beauty, generosity, modesty, military virtues, and so forth), of which wisdom and intellect are of major importance, do all they can to help their friends in trouble, eradicate injustice, cognise "secrets", and achieve their top ideal - love - in this world, which is ultimately equal to the victory of good over evil ("Evil is vanquished by good for the essence of good enduring"). It is noteworthy that unlike characters in European romances, magic forces do not help Rustaveli's heroes in achieving their goals (in general, the role of magic and fantastic elements is reduced to a minimum in *The Knight in the Panther's Skin*). Characters of *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* achieve their goals relying on their own mental and physical potential and untameable aspiration towards victory. All this is motivated by love and guided by faith in God and fate ("Fate is an attempt and if God wants you to be victorious, you will be victorious"). This vision of human potential goes beyond the mediaeval method for resolving this problem and rises to the level of Renaissance thinking.

The Renaissance vision of man's inner world by Rustaveli becomes most obvious in his description of love. The *Prologue* and theme of *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* make it clear that the concept of love shaped by Rustaveli is specific and, at the same time, completely new, not known by Georgian writers, who preceded him. Individual details of this concept of love obviously bear the influence of Oriental culture on the one hand (the geography of the work; artistic and expressive devices; the use of the word *mijnuri*, an Arabic word that means *maddened by love*, to denote enamoured man; the motive of torments of love expressed through shedding of bloody tears; a heart wounded by a spear; looking forward to death; roaming the wilderness; and so forth). On the other hand, they are nourished by

motives of European courtly love (for example, service, silence and patience, love as an impetus for heroic deeds, and so forth). However, conventional motives typical for both concepts can be seen in Rustaveli's work as ready-made formulas represented with a different interpretation*.

The love described in *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* is a natural human feeling. It is a gift bestowed by God and it can even cross the boundary between life and death. Correspondingly, torments of love and the joy it brings are tightly intertwined and are not described separately. The emphasis is laid here not on the strength of torments and death (Cf. *Tristan and Iseult*, Visramiani, *Layla and Majnun*, and so forth), but on overcoming the painful emotions and on the ability to cope with them, overcome problems, transform them into joy, and make life victorious. This variety of love that Rustaveli describes as "brute ravings" "imitates" heavenly love through inspiration and the sincerity and elevated nature of feelings. Correspondingly, it is described by means of the categories of divine love. This confirms again that all kinds of love in *The Knight in the Panther's Skin*, be it of a beloved woman, friend, or master, are a variety of divine love.

According to Rustaveli, poetry (*shairoba*) is also "divine", because it descends as inspiration "from heaven". Correspondingly, a poem is "good" if it combines eloquence and poetic art with the Creator's emotional and intellectual principles ("Now I need language, heart, and art to express myself"). God as a co-author also participates in writing a poem ("I have from You the mind to give away"). It is such poetry that can have a strong emotional impact on readers. Together with the aesthetic function, genuine poetry also has a cognitive function. It is "divine to hear" and "very useful for listeners".

* Cf. Elbakidze 2007

Therefore, like everything God has laid hands on, this genial text is not doomed to oblivion or to be influenced by literary tastes or trends of various eras. Genuine poetry is marked with immortality. It does not obey time and is part of eternity.

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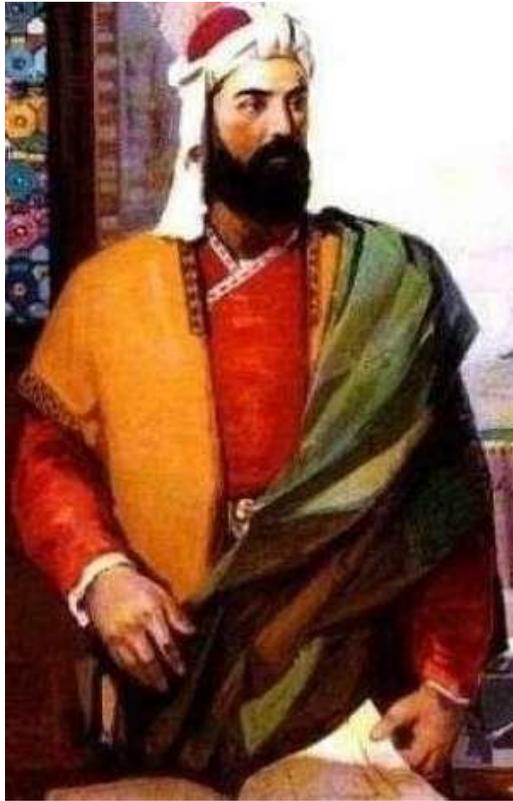
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Nizami – Poet and Thinker



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Great Azerbaijani Poet Nizami Ganjavi

The Great Azerbaijani Poet Nizami Ganjavi

The outstanding poet and thinker Nizami Ganjavi, one of the great literary personalities bestowed by the Azerbaijani people on the treasure of the world culture, has earned world fame with his immortal works.

Nizami Ganjavi's name is mentioned among the most prominent classics of world literature. Nizami Ganjavi (1141-1209), who is the Sun of literature arisen in the East, is the powerful literary personality belonging to the entire mankind with his great and eternal art. Like Dante, Servantes, Shakespeare, Abdurrahman Jami, Alishir Navai, Muhammad Fizuli, Balzac, Victor Hugo, the great Azerbaijani poet Nizami Ganjavi is the supreme exponent of the world literature, along with being the national pride of the people he belongs to as an artist.

Nizami Ganjavi shines as the Sun in the sky of poetry-art no matter what angle of the world he is viewed from: East or West. As a whole, the cultural world recognizes Nizami Ganjavi as the great poet, powerful artist, and great thinker with universal mind. In this sense, Nizami Ganjavi is the mighty hero of the word art. He has exemplary plots and bright, insightful characters in his works borrowed from the lives of many countries and nations. The immortal poet's famous long poems known as "Khamsa" are considered the encyclopedia of literature of the West and East. Very artistically Nizami Ganjavi inscribed in literature the events and personalities of a vast space from Greece to India, from Arabia to Russia and from Iran to the Balkans. No other author in the world has managed to elucidate the Conqueror Alexander the Great's campaigns covering almost half of the world on

highly artistic level as Nizami Ganjavi did. As an artist Nizami Ganjavi's fame can rather be compared with Alexander the Great. With his pen Nizami Ganjavi subdued the countries conquered by Alexander with sword. In this sense, Nizami Ganjavi is the Alexander the Great of the world literature. He earned Alexander the Great's fame to Azerbaijani literature. Introduction of the notion of West to the Eastern nations was one of Alexander the Great's merits; likewise, the translations of Nizami Ganjavi's works into different languages of the world enabled the European nations to know the East extensively. In this respect, Nizami Ganjavi is the greatest guide of the Eastern world as well as Azerbaijan in Western countries and in the world as a whole.

Nizami Ganjavi was born in the ancient Azerbaijani city of Ganja in 1141. Historically the city of Ganja always belonged to Azerbaijan, the Azerbaijanians' forefathers, the Oghuz tribes used to live in this city. Ilyas, the son of Yusif who took the penname Nizami Ganjavi, got his education in madrasa and spent most of his life in this very city. It is supposed that he travelled beyond Ganja very rarely. The village of Hamdunyan is claimed to be one of the few places the poet ever left Ganja for. As it was written in the poem "Khosrov and Shirin", Nizami went to that village bestowed on him by Atabey Gizil Arslan in 1187, but was not pleased with the gift of this village, all in all, some 4000 metres in size and "with its more expenses than incomes".

Most of the researchers are of the opinion that Gizil Arslan bestowed the village of Hamdunyan on Nizami during his meeting with the poet round the city of Ganja. Nevertheless, there are also considerations that the historical meeting took place not near Ganja but at the common point between the cities of Ganja and Tabriz. According to the consideration by Professor Rustam Aliyev, the outstanding scholar on Nizami studies, Nizami Ganjavi met with Gizil

Arslan on an area close to Batabat, the famous summer pasture on the mountains in the territory of Nakhchivan – around the village of Shaki belonging to the region of Zangazur. Meanwhile, the researcher Ajdar Farzali even defined the itinerary of this meeting: Ganja – Istisu – Nakhchivan¹. In any case, Nizami Ganjavi's historical rendezvous with Gizil Arslan was not beyond the territory belonging to Azerbaijani geography.

By the way, it should be noted that there are also considerations about Nizami Ganjavi's meeting with the outstanding artist of his period, his great contemporary, the founder and one of the greatest representatives of the school of Eastern architecture Ajami Nakhchivani, the son of Abubakr. We think, for many reasons the considerations about the meeting of these two great men of art are logical. The meeting of the great Azerbaijani architect Ajami Nakhchivani, who created the rupestrian "Khamisa" of architecture, with his contemporary Nizami Ganjavi, who created the "Khamisa" of the word art, means the manifestation of these two great giants' respect to and appreciation of each other's creativity and merits. It is impossible that such gigantic artists living within the same country in the same century should not feel an urge to meet and know each other. Both of these outstanding figures' close relations with the Azerbaijani state of the Atabeyts also precondition their meeting. The transfer of the capital of the Atabeyts' state from Ganja to Nakhchivan makes the supposition possible that these two great personalities' meeting took place in the territory of Nakhchivan. The well-known Russian artist A. Bondarenko also illustrated the sight of the Nakhchivan Shrine in the background in his famous painting on the meeting between Nizami Ganjavi and Ajami Nakhchivani the son of Abubakr. In his historical play "The Atabeyts" Nariman Hasanzadeh, the People's Poet of

¹Ajdar Farzali. The Peak of Nizami.. Baku, "Ganjlik", 1994, p.41

Azerbaijan, also described the meeting between Nizami Ganjavi and the architect Ajami in Nakhchivan.

Nizami Ganjavi's personal background was associated with the settlements belonging to Azerbaijani geography, like the cities of Barda, Nakhchivan, Darband, the villages of Hamdunyan and Shaki along with the ancient Azerbaijani land Ganja.

Afag, "the Gypchag beauty", whom Nizami Ganjavi married, was from the city of Darband, one of the historical Azerbaijani areas, which also proves the fact that he had an Azerbaijani marriage. The great poet praised passionately the Fortress of Darband as well in his poem "Isgandarnameh":

*There is a fortress where the southern wind
Fails to extend its hand, even if it blows hard.
It is a stone of glaze radiating the scent of musk,
Like Paradise, it is both joyful, and splendid¹.*

The Gypchag beauty, Afag *Khanum* was sent to Nizami Ganjavi by the ruler of Darband Muzaffar ibn Muhammad Arslan ibn Khalaf as-Sultan. Out of this marriage Nizami had a son by the name of Muhammad. Speaking of his son Muhammad in his different works, Nizami Ganjavi praised him as "the light of my eyes", "the recitation of my tongue", "the first flower of my life", "the taste in my mouth", "my dearest soul", "my first cup of joy". It is narrated that Muhammad also wanted to become a poet like his father, even wrote some poems. However, Nizami Ganjavi advised his son to become a doctor:

*Don't expect eminence from poetry on the earth,
Since, it also ended with Nizami.
Though art has many ranks,
Seek a useful science in life.*

¹Nizami Ganjavi. Isgandarnameh (Sharafnameh). Baku, "Lider", 2004, p.p. 237-238

*... the Prophet called religion and medicine
the science of sciences, in brief.
Be a doctor with ethics of Jesus, but
Don't be a doctor killing a man.
... both life and death will obey you then
Your destiny will be happiness and fame.¹*

Nizami Ganjavi's moral admonitions to his son Muhammad as reflected in his different works are valuable poetic pieces written in the genre of edification in Azerbaijani literature in general. For many centuries these moral admonitions with deep insights have made their contributions to the development of new generations in both Azerbaijan and the world.

Nizami Ganjavi has earned the great world fame for his famous poems known as "Khamisa". First of all, it should be noted that Nizami Ganjavi laid the foundations for the series of poems called "Khamisa" (Quinary) in the Eastern literature, in the Turkic-Moslem world. Following the great master, it became a tradition to create "Khamisa" in the Eastern literature, poets of many nations created the set of quinary poems. Following Nizami's suit, Abdurrahman Jami in Persian-Tajik literature, Alishir Navai in Jighatay poetry, Amir Khosrov Dahlavi in India and others wrote "Khamisa"s, and thus, transferred this great course from century to century.

The great artist's first work in the series of poems "Khamisa" is the poem "The Treasury of Mysteries" written in 1174. Though he wrote it in his youth and this was his first major work, the poem "The Treasury of Mysteries" indicates that Nizami was, in fact, the treasurer of mysteries in the sense of his knowledge of life and literature. In 20 stories given in the poem, Nizami Ganjavi described the most vital issues of his age and focused the attention to the highest ideals of

¹Nizami Ganjavi. *Leili and Majnun*. Baku, "Lider", 2004, p.51

literary art. The key social essences like humanism and equality, a fair ruler and people, an industrious man and moral perfection, assets and personality about which Nizami Ganjavi thought all through his works, were first reflected in his work “The Treasury of Mysteries”. In this work the character of an old man molding bricks is new not only in Azerbaijani poetry, but in the broadest sense, in the Eastern literature. In this regard, the poem “The Treasury of Mysteries” is the literary program of Nizami Ganjavi’s works. The great majority of the themes and ideas in the great poet’s subsequent immortal works fare from “The Treasury of Mysteries”.

Nizami Ganjavi’s poem “Khosrov and Shirin” (1180) is the perfect novel written in verse in the Eastern literature. Though the great poet borrowed the theme from the rulers’ lives, he created a major epic of love, unlike his forerunners and contemporaries. The epic of “Khosrov and Shirin” holds an important place in Azerbaijani literature as the splendid love monument. In this work Nizami Ganjavi praised the power of love as the meaning of the world and the splendor of human personality:

*Any word but love is alien to my soul,
Love is a wing to my feathered friend of life.
Love is the altar of high skies,
Oh world, what is your worth without love?!
Be a slave to love, this is the right way,
See, in the presence of the wise, love is the greatest.¹*

The poem “Khosrov and Shirin” deals with many social essences against the background of divine love; and the relations of the state, society and people are enlivened through exemplary events and easily-remembered imagery. On the basis of Farhad’s love of Shirin, Nizami

¹Nizami Ganjavi. Khosrov and Shirin. Baku, “Lider”, 2004, p.50

Ganjavi demonstrated the power of love to exalt the human beings. And in the light of the adventures between Parviz and Shirin the great poet proved the potentials of love to change and improve even a ruler. Moreover, in the work Nizami created the great character of an industrious man in the example of a skilful stonemason Farhad. Owing to all this, as it is actually recognized in literature, “in this epic (in “Khosrov and Shirin” – I.H.) which holds an exceptional place among the works written on love in the world literature the poet proved the power of pure love which inculcates noble feelings in man, purifies him internally and exalts him morally.”¹

The poem “Leili and Majnun” written by Nizami Ganjavi in 1188 enlivens the prosperity of the man’s moral world through bright and impressive imagery. In this work Nizami Ganjavi praised the power of love through the divine love of two young people. The poem “Leili and Majnun” is Leili’s elegy and Majnun’s epic. This theme brought to Azerbaijani literature by the great artist became famous in the entire Eastern world and caused the appearance of many new works in the subsequent periods.

Through his poem “The Seven Beauties” (1196) the great poet demonstrates his deep knowledge of the lives of many nations and universal culture. Bahram Shah’s conversations with the princesses brought from seven countries as described in the poem enable the reader to imagine the wide scope of Nizami Ganjavi’s knowledge and world outlook. The work “The Seven Beauties” is a perfect novel written in verse on the ideal man and perfect lifestyle².

We think, the famous poem “Isgandarnameh” written in 1197-1200 is the generalized splendid outcome of Nizami Ganjavi’s art.

¹Hamid Arasli. Azerbaijani Literature: History and Problems. Baku. “Ganjlik”, 1998, p.205

²The History of Azerbaijani Literature, in 7 volumes. Volume II. Baku, “Elm”, 2007, p.542

“Isgandarnameh” is the peak of Nizami Ganjavi’s literary works. Resurrecting the antique Greek scientific and cultural traditions through this work, Nizami Ganjavi adjusted the theme to Azerbaijani thinking and realities and brought it to literary scene, literary work. As it is rightly said, “Here (in “Isgandarnameh” – I.H.) Nizami Ganjavi acts as a scholar and thinker before us. In this work he assembled all the problems that had disturbed him and made him think all through his life. That is why, this poem gives more abundant and irreplaceable material to understand Nizami’s real views with all the extra-ordinary vastness of his wits and his ardent love of man which always burns his great heart.”¹

“Isgandarnameh” is the first dilyog from the point of view of its genre in Azerbaijani literature. “Sharafnameh”, the first part of the work, reflects Nizami Ganjavi’s views about the search for a fair ruler and ideal society against the background of the military campaigns of Alexander the Great. And in the second part, “Isgandarnameh” the poet deals with Isgandar who is the state figure with outstanding views. In “Igbalnameh” Nizami Ganjavi prioritizes the role of the Hellenic factor in the management of the state. The description of Alexander the Great’s conversations and consultations with the prominent scholars of his time like Plato, Aristotle, Socrates and others in the work allow proving the importance of wisdom and perfection in the formation of an ideal society.

Among Nizami Ganjavi’s works his lyrics hold a special place. In the poet’s lyrical poems small epic lines attract the attention. He praises the tenderest and deep manifestations of the lyrical mood against the narrative background which generates a strange, adventurous impression. Nizami Ganjavi’s lyrical poems are the easily-remembered and impressive artistic pieces, the artistic translator of

¹E.Bertels. The Great Azerbaijani Poet Nizami Ganjavi. Baku, “AzFAN” Publishing House, 1940, p.122

deep and noble human thoughts. Deep lyricism, figurative poetic view of life and human beings are the characteristics of his poems. Nizami Ganjavi's famous ghazal "Without You" sincerely defines the insightful, anxious and complex mood of being without you. The poet's ghazal which starts with the line "The beloved one happened to come to us secretly at night" has an impact of a novelette written in verse:

*"The beloved one happened to come to us secretly at night,
The genteel beauty with the face more lovely than the Moon.
Her delicate cheek perspired as if the cloud covered the Moon,
She came as if driven out by the enemy, her soul in grief.
I eyed her, and secretly watched and watched her.
She was like a young prey on the hunter's pasture.
Falling asleep both of us relaxed together.
As if the fancy spring had come to the garden of my fate.
She said, "it is time to go, what would you like, my love?"
I asked her for a kiss ... taking the chance.
She cried and went away, her tears burnt me,
My tongue took fire, as if disaster had come.
Oh Nizami, said, suddenly I woke up not to find her,
The beauty with tender looks turned out to have come
to us in the dreams.¹*

Nizami Ganjavi died in the city of Ganja in 1209 and was buried there. At present there is a splendid mausoleum erected in the great poet and thinker's memory over his tomb.

There are no debates, dissensions about Nizami Ganjavi's belonging to the world, to the entire mankind. In this respect, both the East and West speak of Nizami with all their hearts and souls as the great creator of the works reflecting the universal ideals. However, there are, unfortunately, some considerations suggesting that Nizami

¹Nizami Ganjavi. The Lyrics. Baku, "Azernashr", 1947, p.54

represents Persian-Tajik or Persian literature or is a poet belonging to the Moslem nations as a whole. Language is the factor most frequently referred to by the individuals who think similarly. Whereas, in the XII-XIII centuries when Nizami Ganjavi lived, writing in Persian was one of the rules accepted not only in Azerbaijan, but in Anatolia, the Caucasus, Central Asia, India, in the literatures of Eastern nations as a whole. In the East, for many centuries, even in Nizami's period, "Persian was accepted as the language of poetry, the Arabic as the language of science, and the Turkish as the martial language".¹ Tens of poets and scholars who were great thinkers of the Old East wrote in Arabic and Persian, not in the language of the peoples they belonged to. Even in its time this had some advantages. First of all, by writing scientific and literary works in Arabic and Persian, the eminent artists gained a chance to be read and recognized in the entire Eastern space in the broadest sense. Secondly, as the Europeans recognized the nations speaking these languages, writing in Arabic and Persian generated favourable conditions for the artists' access to the West. Thirdly, by knowing Arabic and Persian the Nizamis were enabled to study the history, literatures and cultures of the Eastern nations, get the themes, plots and heroes of their works from the very vast social-historical environment. Thus, the geography covered by Azerbaijani literature in Persian encompasses naturally vaster area. In this sense, when saying that Nizami Ganjavi is the powerful artist of the East, at least the following is taken into account: Nizami is the great poet who adheres to Islam; He, first of all, became well-known and eminent in the Eastern world; In his works the lives of the Eastern nations have found their great artistic reflections; Nizami Ganjavi wrote in the language accepted in the Eastern countries. The poet's works are more

¹Teymur Karimli. Humanism of Nizami and Turkism. The Central Scientific Library of the National Academy of Sciences of Azerbaijan, "Elmi Eserler" (Scientific Works), #4, Baku, 2003, p.104

read in the East... In the Turkic Moslem world almost every nation sees its own fate in Nizami Ganjavi's works and can find the remedy to it.

Besides all this, Nizami Ganjavi's being an artist of the Azerbaijani people is indisputable. Along with being the eminent artist of the world literature and of the East, he is definitely the great son of Azerbaijan with an ancient history, powerful poet and outstanding thinker.

The theme of Azerbaijan enjoys a special place in Nizami Ganjavi's works. At the moments when he praises the ancient city of Barda, the poet's love of Motherland clearly attracts the attention. It is obvious from the poetry that the poet visited Barda, and having seen its wonderful scenery in July praised it passionately,

*How beautiful and handsome Barda is,
Both its spring and winter are flourishing.
The poppies are spread on the mountains in July.
The spring wind will kiss the winter.
Its green forest reminds the Paradise,
Its joyful feet are bound with the spring.
Willows adorn its fields,
Its white garden looks like a real paradise.
Each cypress is the nest for pheasants,
Partridges are singing, and francolins are grating.
In silence is relaxing the flower garden,
Its soil is devoid of care and sadness.
Its basilica is green all the years long,
All kinds of luxury have engulfed it.
The birds flow to this beautiful land for food,
You can even find "the bird's milk here".
Its soil is molded with the water of gold, as if
Saffron grows everywhere.
If you wander those green sites
You will see joyfulness, nothing else.¹*

¹Nizami Ganjavi. Isgandarnameh (Sharafnameh). Baku, "Lider", 2004, p.p.201-202

Nizami Ganjavi's deep love of dear Azerbaijan is expressed very artistically in the description of the Kapaz Mountain in the poem "Khosrov and Shirin" and the Fortress of Darband in his "Isgandarnameh".

The similar sympathy is felt in Nizami Ganjavi's attitude to the Barda ruler Nushaba as well. The poet enriched his conception of a fair ruler with new shades through the character of the Azerbaijani ruler Nushaba. Most probably the Barda ruler Nushaba is the outcome of an ideal character of the ideal ruler that Nizami Ganjavi thought of. The poet described with respect the Azerbaijani female ruler Nushaba who managed to amaze the conqueror of the world Alexander the Great with her witty statements, and thus created her clear artistic image,

*This female gazelle who lived without male
Is more beautiful, prettier than a peacock.
Sociable, with pure heart, persevering,
has a fairy-like body and is good-natured.
No male would visit her even when he is by the palace.
She would work with women,
And no men would get instructions from her.
...Her slaves were settled in one place,
Making the nearest place the Motherland.
Fearing her anger and resentment,
No man paced her land,
If she decreed to go there,
The men would sacrifice themselves for her sake.¹*

Her puzzling the world-known Alexander the Great with her wit and farsightedness, wisdom makes one think that in Azerbaijani ruler Nushaba's example Nizami Ganjavi created the character of a genuine fair ruler.

¹Nizami Ganjavi. Leili and Majnun. Baku, "Lider", 2004, p.p.34-35

The fact of Nizami Ganjavi's meeting with resentment Shirvanshah Akhsitan's proposal to write a work in Persian on the theme "Leili and Majnun" is among the factors proving the poet's being Azerbaijani. Nizami Ganjavi's displeasure with the lines from Shirvanshah Akhsitan's letters that "The Turkish language does not suit our dynasty of shahs, the Turkish language would belittle us" vividly brings to the forefront the fact that the poet was Azerbaijani. The following lines written in the poem "Leili and Majnun" in this very connection can only be expressed by an Azerbaijani poet:

*My ear fell into the hook of slavery,
Blood rushed to my head and my lips trembled.
I dared neither to run away from home, nor I had an eye to open
a treasure,
My life was devastated, I turned pale,
I remained speechless against this order.¹*

As it is known, Nizami Ganjavi fulfilled Shirvanshah Akhsitan's instructions only after his son Muhammad had kindly requested it.

The researchers draw attention to the information given by the poet about his parents' Turkic origins in his works written in Persian. The poet's father Yusif Zaki and his mother Raisa *Khanum* had the Turkic national identity. In Nizami's works the word "Raiseye-gord" written in Persian means the brave, solemn and proud Raisa. His father Yusif Zaki was a craftsman in the city of Ganja. The character of a repairman, bricklayer created by the poet with great love in his work "The Epic of a Stone Mason" must be his dear father's prototype.

It is known that Nizami Ganjavi properly used the Turkish words in his works several times. The use of the words "torke-delsetan", "torke tannaz", "törke siyah çeşm" etc. in his different poems

¹Nizami Ganjavi. Leili and Majnun. Baku, "Lider", 2004, p.p.202-203

is the proof of it. In these expressions the poet's sympathetic attitude to the Turkish notion attracts the attention. Besides this, the researchers identified the appropriate usage of the proverbs, sayings and aphorisms inherent to the Azerbaijani people in Nizami Ganjavi's works¹. Nizami Ganjavi's relations with his contemporaries are among the evidence to substantiate the specification of his living in Azerbaijan. From this point of view, the relations between Nizami Ganjavi and Khagani Shirvani are of special importance. The observations indicate that Nizami cherished respect to his great Azerbaijani contemporary Khagani's (1120-1199) literary activities and accepted him as a poet close to his heart. Even one narrative reflects Nizami Ganjavi's elegizing his contemporary Afzaladdin Khagani's death. This fact also facilitates the elucidation of Nizami's living in Azerbaijan. According to the narrative, Nizami was deeply impressed by Khagani's death and recited a touchy *marsiya* dedicated to his contemporary's death,

*I used to say that Khagani would be my mourner,
Alas, now I became Khagani's mourner.*²

In his *tazkirah* "Tazkiratush-shuara" Nizami's contemporary, famous *tazkirah*-writer Dovlat Shah Samargandi gave some information about the existence of Nizami Ganjavi's "Diwan" written in Azerbaijani. Unfortunately, that "Diwan" was lost and did not survive.

The location of Nizami's tomb in the city of Ganja is among the facts proving Nizami Ganjavi's being an Azerbaijani poet. The tomb, on which at present there is a great mausoleum, was known to belong

¹ Jahan Aghamirov. The Turkic Words and Azerbaijani Sayings Used in Nizami Ganjavi's Works. Ganja, 2015, p.p.10-13

²The Moments from the Lives of Azerbaijani Writers (compiled by prof.Kamran Mammadli), Baku, "Ganjlik", 1979, p.14

to Nizami Ganjavi back in the XIX century. The visits of the Russian writer Aleksandr Griboyedov and the Azerbaijani poet Seyid Azim Shirvani two centuries ago and expressing their impressions in written form also testify to the reliable public views about the outstanding artist's being Azerbaijani. It is also known that Aleksandr Griboyedov found it necessary to allocate resources for the restoration of Nizami's tomb. On his way from Shamakhi to Tiflis, Seyid Azim Shirvani visited Nizami Ganjavi's tomb in the city of Ganja, and felt sorry on seeing the collapsed mausoleum of the great poet,

*Oh Sheikh Nizami, oh whose order has broken,
Whose luxury in Ganja has been devastated.
Has there been anyone in the world like you and me
Whose verse, home, school and word have been devastated¹.*

The works of the great Azerbaijani poet Nizami Ganjavi extensively dealt with different countries of the world and lives of different peoples. As it is rightly noted, "There are no national and geographical boundaries to Nizami... His "Khamisa" written about the entire universe is for mankind as a whole."²

Nizami Ganjavi's rich and insightful literary activity is a significant phenomenon of Eastern Renaissance culture. The poet's immortal works are the valuable assets of the world literary treasury. Nizami Ganjavi is a great thinker and powerful artist the Azerbaijani people has bestowed on the world culture.

Nizami Ganjavi's immortal "Khamisa" was widely disseminated as manuscripts in the Middle Ages and in the XIX century. The poet had sent a copy of the manuscript of each of the works included in his

¹Firudinbey Kocharli. Azerbaijani Literature, Volume II, "Avrasiyapress", Baku, 2005, p.36

²Arif Hajiyev. The World of Renaissance of Nizami Ganjavi's "Khamisa". Baku, "Mutarjim", 2000, p.82

“Khamasa” to the rulers of the Eastern countries, and these works turned into the topic of discussion in the palaces and official circles in different countries. Thus, Nizami Ganjavi was not only known in his time in broad circles on the Eastern scale, but was also recognized as a powerful artist. At present Nizami Ganjavi’s works are kept in the most famous museums and libraries of the world. The great poet’s works were also disseminated as manuscripts in Azerbaijan. Seyid Azim Shirvani gave one of those rare manuscripts called “Khamseyi-Nizami” as a present to Mirza Alakbar Sabir when the latter was a student at Shamakhi school in the early 1980s. Seyid Azim Shirvani’s autograph read,

“The light of my eyes Sabir!

I liked very much your salty and sweet answer to one of my ghazals. As I have no other considerations at present, I am sending that book (the manuscript of “Khamseyi-Nizami” – I.H.) to you as a present. Please accept it as a keepsake from your *ustad* (teacher), and I wish you progress in poetry”.¹

Thus, Nizami Ganjavi’s works were and have been considered an irreplaceable gift for all Azerbaijanis.

As it is obvious, the world-known Nizami Ganjavi, is, above all, a great Azerbaijani poet and thinker. This powerful artist has been bestowed on the world by the Azerbaijani people. Nizami Ganjavi’s works have been translated into the languages of most of the cultured nations of the world. Nizami Ganjavi must be one of the unique most-read artists in foreign languages in the world literature. Almost the entire world has been involved in Nizami’s legacy. The study of Nizami has turned into one of the specific areas of the world Oriental studies. A huge library can be created out of the books written in different languages about Nizami Ganjavi and of the great artist’s

¹Seyid Huseyn, Mirza Alakbar Sabir Tahirzadeh. See M.A.Sabir. All His Works (Introduction). Baku, “Azernashr”, 1934, p.18

works translated into different languages. Most of the scientific works dedicated to the great artist for many centuries have been created in the poet's Motherland – Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan is the core centre of the international Nizami studies. Nevertheless, no matter in which language Nizami Ganjavi's works were written and in what country they are read and studied, his works constitute the highly artistic manifestation of the Azerbaijani's spirit. Nizami Ganjavi is the powerful representative and great messenger of Azerbaijan in the world literature.

The Azerbaijani people is rightly proud of its immortal artist Nizami Ganjavi.

With all his might the great poet advocated science, talent and industriousness, moral perfection, humanism in his works. Nizami Ganjavi was of the opinion that

*Too many witty minds fell asleep,
In the end they came to sell pottery.*

In Nizami's opinion, rational labour, responsibility, efforts are the main vital source exalting a human being. He wrote,

*Though the thorn of labour might make you bleed,
Don't be exhausted of trying, get used to work.
Let you be considered an honest man in your work,
Don't be belittled before all, don't extend your
hand as a beggar!*

In brief, Nizami Ganjavi's rich works are the most useful lessons of life and literature, fruitful and didactic precepts for the present and future generations.

Who is Nizami Ganjavi?

The best answer to this question is: Sheikh Nizami!

According to the ancient and medieval philosophical doctrine, Sheikh is either a landowner, or chieftain of a tribe or a spiritual father. However, in Nizami's example, the word "Sheikh" means rather the owner of wisdom and intelligence who has conquered the moral eminence, in his own words "the Sultan of the Soul".

Sheikh Nizami Ganjavi is a great thinker. Dovlatshah Samargandi appraised him as a very witty, educated and well-informed person who led a simple and modest life. When speaking of the poet's works, he called Nizami "the nightingale of Kharabat". Kharabat was "the place where gallant people assembled". It is hard to find any other artist like Nizami Ganjavi who firmly believed in the power of wisdom and intelligence among the ancient and medieval poets:

*A human being can rely on his intelligence,
Wisdom is an asset to everyone.
Those not matured in wisdom,
Will resemble humanlike dragons.*

Or

*All power is in science,
No one can prevail, otherwise!*

Nizami Ganjavi's predecessor Sheikh Abulgasim Firdowsi was somewhat the poet of war and peace. His follower Fizuli is known as a poet of soul in the entire world. Nizami Ganjavi is the summit of wisdom between the martial literature, deeds and soul.

There have been some people referring to Nizami Ganjavi as the poet of "Panj Ganj" (Five Youth). These words are ascribed to him and his "Khamsa". That is, the five splendid works – "Khamsa" – are always young, fresh, will never get older. Or Nizami Ganjavi himself is also eternally young like his works – "Khamsa". Nizami Ganjavi is the poet of wisdom and cognition.

In the scientific and literary view of the world, Homer was called “the blind bard”, Shakespeare – “the master of tragedy”, Pushkin – “the Sun of Russian poetry”. There are also some other artists compared with stars and the Moon. However, if expressed figuratively, Nizami Ganjavi, the owner of an unimaginably great eminence, is the teacher of teachers:

Whoever thinks learning is not a shame,
Will draw forth pearls from water, and make ruby out of rocks.

Almost every verse in Nizami Ganjavi’s works sounds like an aphorism. “Khamasa” is the complete collection of aphorisms:

*... The pen needs to get words,
So that it is not away from mind and wisdom.
The lie which resembles the truth a bit,
Is better than the truth resembling a lie.*

Nizami Ganjavi, who earned eternity, is also our contemporary. The great ideas he enlivened in the XII century are vital and significant today as well. This is an undeniable truth of immortality of the great art. The following statements once declared with great farsightedness by the great poet about his eternal fame are the manifestation of the objective reality accepted for the present and far future:

*I said: if anyone wants to see me,
My image will be visible to him in my verse.
When this Nizami’s poem is recited,
He himself might be seen in every word.
If you ask in hundred years: Where is he?
His every verse will sound: Here he is, here!¹*

¹NizamiGanjavi. Sharafnameh. Baku, 1947, p.362

Nizami Ganjavi is an eminent artist who earned eternity.

The great artist's name has been eternalized in his Motherland – Azerbaijan. A monument has been erected to Nizami Ganjavi in Baku. There are schools, museums, streets named after Nizami Ganjavi in our country. At the initiative and by the support of the independent state of Azerbaijan, monuments have been erected to Nizami Ganjavi in Moscow, Beijing, Rome, too. Nizami Ganjavi's 800th, 840th and 850th Jubilees were celebrated very solemnly at the state level in Azerbaijan.

The immortal works of the great artist Nizami Ganjavi are always young, vital, universal and modern. Nizami is the great herald of humanism, justice, equality for all the periods.

Mankind will always need Nizami Ganjavi's great ideals.

The eminent Azerbaijani poet Nizami Ganjavi has earned eternity as the mighty poet and great thinker of all the periods and the future.

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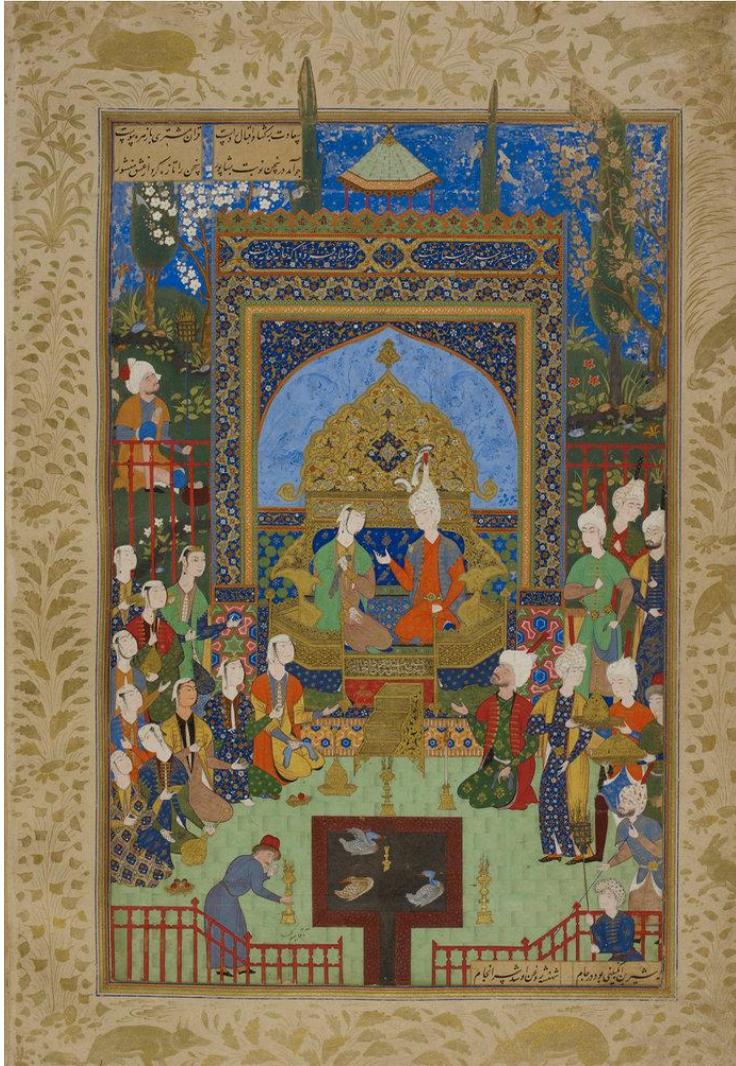
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Miniature painted for the „Khosrov and Shirin“
by Nizami Ganjavi



Miniature painted for the „Khosrow and Shirin“
 by Nizami Ganjavi. Khosrow Seeing Shirin Bathing. 1550

Zahra Allahverdiyeva
(Azerbaijan)

Philosophy of Love of Nizami Ganjavi

Introduction

The system of humanist ideas peculiar to the works of the genius Azerbaijani poet and thinker Nizami Ganjavi rests upon the philosophy of love and this philosophical standpoint has deep roots and sources in the world cultural history.

Beginning from the 1st magalat (conversation) of the poem “The Treasury of Mysteries” (Makhzan-al-Asrar), Nizami Ganjavi has spread out his doctrine of love and shed light on secrets and reasons of existence, mainly the bases of the philosophy of love to the human being, called by him “precious stone in the crown of being”. According to Nizami, the first reason of existence is love! According to this doctrine, the primary reason of being is a love! The matter is that the Almighty God has firstly created the law of love before the creature. Creating the love He opened the door of being and created the human being.

The poet explains that the human, the most beautiful amongst the beings – نورى ازان ديده كه بيناترست – “is a light of the God” and has signs from the God’s beauty and perfection. The most beautiful writing of the love came true namely for him.

We have to note that the philosophical views of Nizami Ganjavi about the love have until present attracted the attention of numerous scholars, such as Y.Dunayevski, V.Gelpke, A.Y.Krimsky, Y.E.Bertels, H.Arasli, Mir Jalal, M.Alizade, M.Arif, Y.Z.Shirvani, A.O.Makovelski, M.Guluzade, M.Jafar, G.Aliyev, R.aliyev, D.Aliyeva, J.Mustafayev,

انظامى گنجوى، مخزن الاسرار، متن علمى و انتقادى بسعى و اهتمام عبدالكريم على زاده، باكو، 1960.81س.

Sh.Nutsubidze, Z.Guluzade, R.Azada, Kh.Yusifli, A.Hajiyev, K.Pagava, Ch.Sadiogoglu, N.Arasli, T.Karimli and so on, where the poet's viewing platform concerning the love have been studied as integral parts of his humanist ideas.

The divine love philosophy praised by Nizami Ganjavi, relating directly to the Islamic Tasawwuf ideas reflects at the same time the specific points of many philosophical systems existing in the world history.

Traces of ancient ideas about the love in Nizami's works

Nizami was, by far, familiar with the principles of the love philosophy in the world cultural heritage and used in masterly fashion the symbol and signs of the Sun, Moon, source of light and 4 elements (fire, water, soil and air).

It is known that beginning from ancient periods the aesthetic expression of the philosophy of love in the world culture was developed in connection with mythical-religious outlook and the first revealed symbol of love was the Sun. In initial periods of the ancient Sumerian culture the love was represented by Inanna, the goddess of Aratta. Being a goddess of fertility and love, Inanna was a daughter of Nanna, the Moon God and the goddess Ningal. The sun rays were described around the circle of head of this goddess.

Worshipping the Sun God resting upon the qam-shaman views in the later period was initial sources of the philosophy of love. As it obvious from information provided by Chinese sources, the bases of

the ancient Asian shamanism included cults “Goy Tengri”, Sun, Moon, soil, water, father (Jedd-I ala) and fire”¹.

The matter is that many scholars have already proved scientifically that Babylonian augurs were heirs of Turkish shamans’ character and views, the Keldanians and the Mesopotamia people have profited by Sumerian culture, as well as the Turkic Tengriism was a basis for Greek and Indian Goddesses. According to the idea advanced by Turkish scholar Murat Uraz, “the Turkic people have given various names to the Sun God praising it with great love. In Sumerian people – Nin-Urash, son of the God Enlil was brought up and became the Goddess of the Sun that represented the warm weather of the early spring... The Turkic people were sons of Sun...Namely the Sun God indicated the ways to the justice.”²

The essence of the love – the two sources of the world, i.e. the father and the mother beginning, as well as the dark and light symbols is also found in the Zoroastrian philosophical system, as well as in Turkish Tengriism. The symbolic system herein – combining of three lines and 8 three lines means the world’s 3 material attractive power (love) that are symbols of the Sky, the Land and the human being; as to the eight three lines, they are specified as related to 10 heaven columns.

According to the eminent scientist Karl Gustav Jung, these symbols consist of the universal symbols and any aspects of events taken place around us through these symbols, that is, certain period of time, natural calamities, figures, colors, body parts, natural philosophy and social views, religious ideas expressing the initial divine power

¹ Abdulkadir Inan. Shamanism in history and today. Materials and researches, publication III, TTKB, Ankara, 2986, p.2

² Murat Uraz. Turkic mythology. Istanbul, 1967, p.27.

creating and administrating this world may be reflected. The Sky God possessed such a divine power and named as “Tan”¹.

The role of the Islamic philosophy occupying the third place in the love’s symbolic definition system has been widely reflected in many researches. It is known that the expanding of symbols in the literature in the period of progress of Islamic thoughts was closely related to the Sufi mysticism. The extension of Tengriism in the Islamic Sufism is connected to the idea of divine unity. The unity of the cosmic and phenomenal worlds is servicing as a basis for the philosophy of vahdati-vujud.

So, the love’s symbols in the religious systems circulating and changed within a long historical period are related to the first beginning, i.e., the idea of God. Touching upon the essence of the love in the part “about the composition of a book and some thinness of the love” of his famous work “Khosrow and Shirin”, Nizami Ganjavi wrote:

مراکز عشق به ناپد شعاری
میادا تا زیم جز عشق کاری
فلک جز عشق محرابی ندارد
جهان بی خاک عشق آبی ندارد²

I have no catchword better than the love,
I don’t desire to be separated from the love by no means.
The God has no alter other than the love
And the world has no water (vitality) other than the land of love

In this fragment the great poet has noted the stages passed by the human love, as well as the dependence of human being on the Sun and the later historical evolution period of the love philosophy:

¹ Jung K.G. Archetype and symbol. Moscow: Renaissance. 1991, p.151.

² 1960, s.63. نظامی گنجوی ، خسرو و شیرین ، ترتیب دهنده متن علمی و انتقادی: ل.آ. خه تاقوروف ، باکو ،

شنیدم عاشقی را بود مستی
و از آنجا خاست اول بتپرستی
همان گبران که بر آتش نشستند
ز عشق آفتاب آتش پرستند
مبین در دل که او سلطان جانست
قدم در عشق نه گو جان جانست
هم از قبله سخن گوید هم از لات
همش کعبه خزینه هم خرابات¹

I heard when love was in drunkenness (sleeping),
Firstly, the idolatry was appeared in the scene.
Those magicians who were sitting around the fire
were fire-worshippers they fallen in love.
Despite the heart is the sultan of soul,
Make a step toward love, as it is a soul of yours.
It will tell you both about qible and lat²,
Its treasury is both the Kaaba and Kharabat.

In this poem Nizami Ganjavi has proved the initial reason of the existence, i.e. the love's natural philosophy definition, here he is also explained both his materialist and idealist views, the creation of the world from the two beginnings, its divine and physical essence, the "interrelation between the form and the matter" according to the laws set and determined in the "Metaphysics" by the Greek philosopher Aristotle³, he has also paid special attention to the matters, body and spirit as it was defined in the philosophy of Plato, and the matters implying the interaction of 4 elements. Nizami, praising the full unity of human and divine love in "Khosrow and Shirin" in the person of Shirin's lofty love endeavors to explain the matters related to the

نظامی گنجوی ، خسرو و شیرین ، ترتیب دهنده متن علمی و انتقادی: ل.آ. خه تاغوروف ، باکو، 1960,s.63.

² Lat-but (Al-Lat)

³ Aristotle Metaphysics. Translation from ancient Greek. A.V. Kubitsky. Moscow: "E" Publishing House, 2017, p.354.

initial beginning, i.e. the light and 4 elements based on expressions revealed by his personages:

تو آن نوری که پیش از صحبت خاک
ولایت داشتی بر بام افلاک¹

You are a Light, before coming to love to the Earth
Had your own place in the firmament.

چو زمین ره بستگان یابی رهائی
بدانی خود که چونی وز کجائی²

If you find a way out amongst these four elements,
You will know how you are and where you are.

نفس در آتش آری دم بگیرد
وگر آتش در آب آری بمیرد³

If you breathe into the fire, it will take fire at once,
If you put it in the water, it will die (extinguished)

The initial natural philosophy views suggesting the creation of human being as a result of 4 elements as a substance were explained by Nizami Ganjavi in the epic “Leyli and Majnun” as follows:

خونی که دران گل خرابست باد و آتش و خاک و آبست⁴
A blood that is coagulated in the clay
Became air, fire, soil and water.

نظامی گنجوی ، خسرو و شیرین ، ترتیب دهنده متن علمی و انتقادی: ل.آ. خه تاغوروف ، باکو ، 1960، s. 711.

² Ibid. p. 692.

³ Ibid. 693

⁴ Shirvani Y.Z. Origin of “Leyli and Majnun” // Nizami, Book III, Baku: Azerneshr, 1941.- p.71.

The Islamic humanism and the philosophy of love

In the epics included to the “Quinary” (“Khamasa”), Nizami Ganjavi could transform masterly the themes related to the human being and his destiny, the eternal love of humanity into the Oriental literature’s important problem.

The matters determined by Nizami in his first epic “The Treasury of Mysteries” (Makhzan-al-Asrar)” related to the love and Tasawwuf are explained as a love of human being to his Creator through which the poet’s philosophical views in connection with the love and attraction are revealed in duly manner. The essence of the love felt by Nizami to the God is really related to the Islamic outlook, which was explained in this epic as follows:

عقد پرستش ز تو گیرد نظام
جز بتو بر هست پرستش حرام¹

The worshipping law came right with you.
And except you worshipping is forbidden.

These hemistiches have the same tone with the 49th Quranic verse of the title “Nahl” (The Bee) (16) of the Koran: “To God bows down everything in the heavens and everything on earth – every living creature, and the angels, and without being proud.”²

As well as, according to the Islamic philosophy, the God created the human as His caliph in the world (The Heifer – Al-Baqarah) and loved him and honored him to bow.

The philosophy of love determined in the works of Nizami is a basis for Islamic humanism. The novelty and the purposeful ideological direction of Nizami’s works are regularly expressed in the individual

¹ نظامی گنجوی، مخزن الاسرار، متن علمی و انتقادی بسعی و اهتمام عبدالکریم علی زاده، باکو، 1960 س.6

² The Holy Quran. Translated into Azerbaijani: Mirza Rasul Ismayilzadeh Duzal, Baku, International Al-Huda Publishing House, 2005, p.272.

author's explanations. In his epic "The Treasury of Mysteries" (Makhzan-al-Asrar), the poet acknowledging his works new style and new method wrote:

منکه در این شیوه مصیب آمدم
دیدنی ارزم که غریب آمدم
شعر یمن صومعه بنیاد شد
شاعری از مصطبه آزاد شد
زاهد و راهب سوی من تاختند
هر دو یمن خرقة در انداختند¹

haven't

I passed that way and got lost,

I am eyes of the world and I am a stranger (new).

The poem turned into a high temple with me.

Poetry escaped from the drinking-house.

The originality of Nizami art was in his humanism and in the perfection of his ideal of divine love. According to the idea advanced by the Azerbaijani scholar Rustam Aliyev implying that using the definitions "Mardomi" and "Adami" in the sense of "humanism" was pertaining to Nizami Ganjavi rather than his contemporaries, "These words in Persian language were already used until Nizami. But they were used in new philosophical and terminological sense, i.e. equivalent of "humanism" by Nizami. The theory of "humanism" has been extended after Nizami by other poets and thinkers.²

In witness hereof we may refer to ideas of Abdurrahman Jami, one of Nizami's followers contained in his epic "Leyli and Majnun" in terms of Nizami's idea implying "humanity of any man is determined only based on the love":

¹ نظامی گنجوی، مخزن الاسرار، متن علمی و انتقادی بسعی و اهتمام عبدالکریم علی زاده، باکو، 1960 س. 47-48

² Aliyev R. Nizami. Short bibliographic information, Baku, 1983, p.118.

زین عشق کسی که بی نصیب است
در انجمن جهان غریب است
غافل ز حریم محرمیت
نشئیده نسیم آدمیت¹

Whoever is deprived of love
He is strange in society.
Being incompetent in communication and sincerity,
Doesn't hear the wind (breath) of humanity.

“According to this theory, the love is a reason and a source of the existence. The love is the most valuable trait of mankind which, due to the God's goodwill, rears the heart of man to the highest moments together with the intellect. The hearth of this divine feeling is a heart, without which the life may lose touch with its base”.²

The dependence between the human and divine love is one of the matters paid special attention by Nizami. The exalted love concentrating the main aspects and qualities of the perfection and completeness of the mankind's spiritual world, cleaning his internal sphere and finally joining him to the eternal love is the highest quality praised by Nizami.

In his first romantic epic “Khosrow and Shirin”, Nizami has glorified the highest love between the Sassanid sovereign Khosrow Parviz and the princess of Arran sovereign of Azerbaijan the beautiful Shirin with an endless enthusiasm. While writing this epic the poet has studied the existent literary and historical sources about these heroes – Khosrow Parviz, Shirin and Farhad attentively, as well as the legends and possible versions spread out in the Orient, as a result of

¹ عبدالرحمن بن احمد جامی. لیلی و مجنون متن علمی و انتقادی و مقدمه از 36، س، 1974: اعلایان افصح زاد مسکو

² Aliyev R. Nizami. Short bibliographic information, Baku, 1983, p.119.

which he created a perfect love epic from the standpoint of content, idea and mastery.

The personage Shirin described in this epic is an unprecedented female image in the history of world literature. She is a beautiful, clever, selfless, chaste and devoted Azerbaijani girl nursed with a highest love. As the academician Hamid Arasli wrote: “The love assists Shirin to suffer the irreversible difficulties with stability. The beautiful Shirin being a symbol of fidelity and charity endures all difficulties and deprivations for the sake of her love and does not breach of trust of her first love. By the power of her great love, Shirin rescues her beloved of the painful void, raises Khosrow to the level of a just king and the noble man”.¹

Nizami Ganjavi, considering the love as a guide of a mankind's intellect raises the process of perfection and improvement of Khosrow who by the time became a fair and wise personality described by the poet through gentle wisdoms and poetic details.

The epic “Leyli and Majnun” written on the theme of love by Nizami Ganjavi is of improved philosophical essence from the content and ideological standpoint. The idea of love in this epic has been set based on a synthesis of the open and closed expressing systems. In addition to the analysis of content, idea and poetics' matters visible open we have to research the Sufi system of this work seen sometimes open and sometimes closed.

The subject of the epic “Leyli and Majnun” is taken from the love epic known very well all over the Orient and its basic ideological source consists of the love and annihilation (Fanaa) of Sufism. Fana means a breaking down of the individual ego and a recognition of the fundamental unity of God; it means that the mankind is worthy of as

¹ Hamid Arasli. Foreword. Nizami Ganjavi “Khosrow and Shirin”. Philological translation, explanations and notes by professor Hamid Mammadzadeh, Baku: “Science”, 1981, p.8.

God the elevation, love, care and mercy. The poet in this epic is faithful to the first source of Sufism of the specified subject, through which he “obliges” the personages to pass the Sufi stages inside a secret and closed system and finally joins them to the divine love.

Alongside the story you can follow the below indicated stages of Sufism certainly inside the closed poetic system: understanding of the world based on the philosophy of oneness (vahdati-vujud); love’s essence; philosophy of courtesy and tracing of its stages alongside the epic; the stage of truth – the moment of oneness.

Nizami ganjavi has expressed the relation of the idea of love to the gentle moment, described as a secret moment in the epic “Leyli and Majnun”, i.e. to the divine beginning as follows:

پندار زبان درین دهان نیست
گو یکسر موی کان زبان نیست
زان روی که بس گشاده رو نیست
مویم به زبان زبان به مو نیست
چون موی زبان شود درین کوی
به باشد اگر زبان شود موی
دانی ز چه موی شد زبانم
تا با تو سخن چو می رانم¹

You have to understand that there is no language in this mouth,
It is not a language; it is a tip of a hair.
Namely for this reason my hair
recognized my language and my language my hair.
In this moment the tongue is like a hair,
And it will be better we see the tongue as a hair.
Do you know why my tongue is as hair,
To speak with you about delicate matters.

¹ نظامی گنجوی، لیلی و مجنون، متن علمی و انتقادی بسعی و اهتمام علی عصغرزاده و ف. بابایف مسکو، 1965 س. . 495-494

The unity of God and mankind in Nizami's views rests upon the Sufism's important principles. The below specified words said to Leyli by Majnun coincides with the explanations made by the Sufi theorists:

تو یافتمه منی درین راه
من گم شده توام درین چاه¹
You are my guide on this road,
I am you lost in this well.

Explaining the unity of lover and beloved and relation of the love by its essence to the divine unity, the famous Sufi philosopher Ibn-al Arabi wrote: "If he sees himself in this woman, his love and aspiration for her will increase: after all, she is his form. And you already know that his form is the form of the True One, by which He created it. So he sees the True One, but thanks to the passion of love and the pleasure of intercourse. That's when he truly dies in her thanks to the truth of love."²

کی دور شوم درین ره از تو
دوری و نعوذ بالله از تو
اینجا منی و توئی نباشد
در مذهب ما دوئی نباشد
درع دو قواره ایم هر دو
جانمی بدو پاره ایم هر دو³

How can I walk away from you on this road?
Away from you? May God not show.
Here it cannot be self-esteem and affection,

¹ Ibid. p.495.

² Ibn Arabi. Selected works, v.2. Translated from Arabic, introductory article and comments by A.V. Smirnov. Moscow: Languages of Slavic Culture: Sadra LLC, 2014, p. 353.

³ مجنون و لیلی گنجوی، نظامی . 496 س .، 3

Our sect cannot be dual.
We are one fragment of unique armor,
We are one piece of two souls.¹

Nizami saw the origin and being in unity with the world and expressed in this epic as in all other works his original idea that the world was created from the order of the eternal God, it was embellished of its light and beauty, the mankind's intellect and being are related to it and the eternity of the divine love.

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¹ Nizami Ganjavi. "Leyli and Majnun". Philological translation, explanations and notes by Mubariz Alizade. Baku: Ganun, 2017, p.315.

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Miniature painted for the „Khosrow and Shirin“
Shapur shows the image of Khosrow to Shirin

Zahra Allahverdiyeva
(Azerbaijan)

Nizami Ganjavi's "Iskandar-nameh"

Introduction

The last poem of the great Azerbaijani poet Nizami Ganjavi in the series of "Khamsa" is the poem "Iskandar-nameh". This work, which is the last poem of the great master's many-branched creativity, has occupied an exceptional place in the history of world literature. Although the theme and the plot of the poem were taken from existing historical chronicles, legends and narratives about life of Alexander of Macedon (Alexander the Great), Nizami Ganjavi created a new work from the perspective of content and idea and created the perfect example of the epic genre in Eastern literature.

The first information about Nizami Ganjavi's "Iskandar-nameh" is found in the tazkires (memoirs/narratives) which are considered to be reliable sources of the East. In the studies on the poet's personality and creativity in the world and Azerbaijani oriental studies, the works "Lubabul-albab" by Mahammad Oufi, "Tazkiratush-shuara" by Doulet-shah Samarqandi, "Baharestan" and "Nafahat-ul-uns" by Jami, "Majolis un-Nafois" by Alisher Nava'i, "Atashkadeh" (Fire Temple) by Lotf-Ali Bey Azer, "The Daneshmandane-Azerbaijan" by Mahammadali Tarbiyet and others had become the main sources.

The acquaintance of European Oriental Studies with Nizami Ganjavi's "Iskandarnameh" begins in the late 17th century, from the work "Bibliothèque Orientale" (Paris, 1697) collected and compiled by French scholar d'Herbello. Later this monumental work attracted the attention of U.Johns, S.Russo, John Malcolm, Josef von Hammer,

F.Erdmann, F.Charmou, Fr.Rückert, G.Ouseley, G.Flügel, W.Bacher, Ch.Rieu, H.Ethe, E.G.Browne and other scholars.

There are research in Russia and Azerbaijan, as well as in the Caucasus region, related to the problem by B.A.Dorn, A.Krymsky, M.F.Akhundov, A.Bakikhanov, M.M.Akhundov, A.O.Makovelki, Y.Marr, Y.E.Bertels, H.Arasli, Mir Jalal, Ali Sultanli, I.A.Orbeli, M.Alizadeh, A.Agayev, M.Rafili, M.A.Rasulzadeh, M.Guluzadeh, M.Jafar, J.Khandan, A.Abbasov, G.Aliyev, R.Aliyev, J.Mustafayev, Z. Guluzadeh, R.Azade, Kh.Yusifli, K.Pagava, Ch.Sadigoglu, N.Arasli, T. Kerimli and others.

A number of orientalists around the world have regarded Nizami Ganjavi as the greatest lyric and epic poet of the East. The prominent orientalist Y.E.Bertels carefully examined the creativity of the two great poets of Eastern poetry-Ferdowsi and Nizami, concluded that “in the struggle of two styles won the victory not Ferdowsi but Nizami because Ferdowsi was defeated when ended his creative work. All the subsequent development of epic poetry in the Middle East was determined not by Ferdowsi but by Nizami”¹

Date of writing of the work

“Iskandar-nameh” is the biggest work of the poet. It contains of 10 thousand 460 distichs. The first part of the work is called “Sharaf-nameh” and the second part - “Iqbal-nameh”. The poem was written in *mutaqarib* rhythm of *Aruz* metre. The date of writing of the “Iskandar-nameh” is not known since Nizami noted nothing about it in this work. Only at the beginning of the work, in the section “About his own health and life” with these distichs the poet stated that he was no more young and had already ecome old:

¹ Bertels Y.E. Nizami və Firdovsi. “Nizami” almanax, II kitab, Bakı: 1940, p.134.

جوانی شد و زندگانی نماند
جهان گو ممان چون جوانی نماند
جوانی بود خوبی آدمی
چو خوبی رود کی بود خرمی
چو پی سست و پوسیده گشت استخوان
دگر قصه سخت روئی مخوان
غرور جوانی چو از سر نشست
ز گستاخ کاری فرو شوی دست¹

*The youth has left me and I am no longer young.
Say: "Be ready to leave, because you are no longer young".
What's good of a man is youth,
Who will be glad if the youth leaves him?
If your legs are listless and cannot carry you,
Do not talk about another difficult story.
If the pride of youth has come to an end,
Give up doing hard works!*

However, some orientalists consider the work to be written between the 1200-1203 years.

Nizami Ganjavi dedicated his "Iskandar-nameh" to one of the sons of the founder of the Azerbaijani state of Atabeyhs Mahammad Jahan Pahlavan, who at the time ruled over Azerbaijan and Arran, Sultan Nusrataddin Abubakr bin Mahammad Bishkin. At the beginning of "Sharaf-nameh" the poet writes about Abubakr:

سکندر شکوهی که در جمله ساز
شکوه سکندر بدو گشت باز
زمین زنده‌دار آسمان زنده کن
جهان گیر دشمن پراکنده کن
طرفدار مغرب به مردانگی
قدر خان مشرق به فرزانیگی
جهان پهلوان نصره‌الدین که هست
بر اعدای خود چون فلک چیره‌دست¹

نظامی گنجوی، شرف‌نامه، ترتیب‌دهنده متن علمی و انتقادی: ع.ع. علی‌زاده، باکو، س. 26، 1947

He has the grandeur of Alexander, with all his appearance,
 Iskandar's majesty has personified in him.
 He is the conqueror of the world
 Who created the earth, resuscitated the heavens,
 And he has driven the enemies away.
 For braveness he is the ruler of the West
 And for wisdom he is Gadir Khan of the East.
 Jahan Pahlavan Nusretaddin,
 Always overcomes his enemies.

In "Iqbal-nameh" he also devoted special sections to the praise of Nusrataddin Abu Bakr Bishkin, and glorified the greatness of Sultan Nusrataddin:

شهی کانچه در دور ایام اوست
 برو خطبه و سکه نام اوست
 سر سرفرازان و گردنکشان
 ملک نصره‌الدین سلطان نشان
 طرف دار موصل بفرز انگی
 قدرخان شاهان بمردانگی²

He is the shah of his epoch,
 The khutbah (sermon) is for him and the coin is mint on
 behalf of him.
 He is the head and pride of the leaders.
 Lofty Sultan Melik Nusrateddin-
 He is the connoisseur and the wise man of Mosul,
 And Gadir khan of shahs for his manhood.

As the prominent orientalist Y.E. Bertels noted, saying according to the section at the end of "Iqbal-nameh" "praising of Melik Izzeddin" that the work was dedicated to the Atabey of Mosul

1 نظامی گنجوی، شرف نامه، ترتیب دهنده متن علمی و انتقادی: ع.ع. علی زاده، باکو، 1947، س.46

2 نظامی گنجوی، اقبال نامه، ترتیب دهنده متن علمی و تدقیقی: ف. بابایف، باکو، 1947، س.20

Izzeddin Masud ¹ is actually a wrong version. Apparently, this praise was added to the end of the work after the death of the poet. From the distichs we have mentioned above, is evident that Atabey Melik Nusrataddin is talked about. Nizami also regretted the death of his uncle, Atabey Gyzyt Arslan, at the beginning of the “Iqbal-nameh”. In the section of the article “About the adoration of word and giving admonitions to meliks”, Nizami reprimands the young Atabey meliks and in the section “The compliment address” says to Nusrataddin Abu Bakr Bishkin:

دلت تازه بادا و دولت جوان
تو بادی جهانرا جهان پهلوان ²

Let your heart to be refreshed and your fate young,
Let you be Jahan Pahlavan of the world!

The “Iskandar-nameh” is different from Nizami Ganjavi's previous Islamic philosophical-didactic and love poems. The heroism and perfection is embodied in this poem, and human ideas have been set in a wider aspect. This story about Iskandar, which occupies an important place in the creativity of Nizami Ganjavi, is a peak work dedicated to the triumph of manhood and human perfection. The poet chose Alexander of Macedon (or Alexander the Great) as a key hero for his work, known as the conqueror of the world and hero to promote world-wide human ideas, rich in written and oral sources in the West and East. The aim of the poet was to propagate not only the history of Alexander but also his Islamic - human ideas, public - philosophical views about the perfect personality and the ruler, and

¹ Bertels Y.E.Müqəddimə. Nizami Gəncəvi. İskəndərnamə. Şərəfnamə // Filoloji tərcümə, izahlar və qeydlər: professor Qəzənfər Əliyevindir; İqbalnamə // Filoloji tərcümə: filologiya elmləri doktoru Vaqif Aslanovundur. Bakı: “Elm”, 1983, s.14.

² نظامی گنجوی ، اقبال نامه ، ترتیب دهنده متن علمی و تدقیقی: ف. بابایف ، باکو ، 1947 ، س.23

the society building. In this work, the poet's mission was aimed on the solution of more complex problems of human society and, in this respect, the "Iskandar-nameh" was the wise result of great Nizami's creativity. As the poet put it, "to have a rattling time" was already over. In the section "Talk about the moral admonition and the seduction", the following draw attention:

چهله چهل گشت و خلوت هزار
ببزم آمدن دور باشد ز کار¹

After forty days and thousand seclusion,
It does not work to live a full life.

Historical and oral sources

Most ancient Greek and Roman historians provided us with information on the life and activities of Alexander the Great, who lived for a total of 33 years in history (336-323 BC), and the greatness of his life, deeds, marches to the Eastern countries. Ancient historians highly appreciated Iskandar's military-political activity, and they praised him as a wise statesman who was "divinely protected". The prominent researcher of the history of the Hellenism O.Kruger wrote: "Alexander's campaign to the East is one of the manifestations of Hellenism. He made such a great impression on ancient historians that they considered him the key to the beginning of a new era. This campaign made it possible for the Macedonians and the Greeks to get

نظامی گنجوی، شرف نامه، ترتیب دهنده متن علمی و انتقادی: ع.ع. علی زاده، باکو، 1947، س.34¹

acquainted with unknown or little known tribes and ethnic groups, their way of life, culture”.¹

The Greek historian Flavius Arrian in his “Alexander’s campaign” described in detail the geographical contours of Alexander’s march to the East, the lives and way of life of the peoples living in the occupied countries, based on historic information provided by Ptolemy and Aristobulus, chroniclers of the world conqueror, who accompanied him in this march. At the beginning of his work, composed of seven books dedicated to the magnificent march of Alexander the Great, Flavius Arrian wrote: “Other writers also have information that seemed worthy of mention and was not at all incredible; I recorded them as stories that go about Alexander. If anyone is amazed why it occurred to me to write about Alexander, when so many people wrote about him, then let him first read all their writings, get acquainted with mine - and then let him be surprised”.²

In the historical chronicles of the West, the name of pseudo-Callisthenes is mentioned first. Callisthenes is a Greek historian living in 370-327 BC. He was a relative (Aristotle was Callisthenes’ great uncle) and student of Aristotle, thanks to which he entered Alexander’s Palace. Ancient sources state that, “The admirer of Alexander the Great, participated in his campaign to the East; in 327, he fell into disgrace, because he resisted the implementation of some eastern customs at court, later he was executed for actual or alleged participation in the plot”.³ Callisthenes wrote the 357-345 years history of Alexander’s march toward the East in the book “The History of the Holy War”. This work is the original source used by historians such as Ptolemy and Arrian. Later, the original version of Callisthenes’ novel

¹ Крюгер О.О. Арриан и его труд «Поход Александра» // Предисловие в книге: Арриан. Поход Александра. - Москва: МИФ, 1993, стр.7.

² Арриан. Поход Александра. - Москва: МИФ, 1993, стр.3.

³ Античные писатели. Словарь. – СПб.: Издательство «Лань», 1999.

about Alexander was lost. The modified version of the work is famous under the name of “Pseudo-Callisthenes”.

The “Pseudo-Callisthenes” has been translated into Syrian, Ethiopian, Arabic and Turkish, and many scholars have regarded this work as the main source of the plots about Alexander created in the East. Azerbaijani scientist Ali Abbasov, one of the first researchers of Nizami Ganjavi's “Iskandar-nameh”, wrote: “We do not know whether Nizami was acquainted with the “Pseudo-Callisthenes” or not, and the poet himself did not note about it ... Even if Nizami does not know the essence of this work, he was informed of the narrations that had come to him from the translation of the book into different languages.”¹

In the East, Iskandar was highly esteemed as a fair ruler in the written and oral sources of the Islamic people. He was renowned as “Iskandar Zul-Qarnain (Alexander the Accursed)”, “Iskandar Rumi”, “Iskandari-Kebir”. In Islamic sources, Iskandar Zul-Qarnain was represented as an embodiment of justice, heroism and perfection on the earth. It was shown that this commander was divinely powered and reached a prophetic position. In 83-98 ayats of Surah Al-Kahf (8) of the Holy Quran says about the ruler, the conqueror, and the Prophet Iskandar Zul-Qarnain: “83. (Oh, Muhammad!). Say: “I will tell you something about him.” 84. We established him on earth. And gave him all kinds of means. 85. He pursued a certain course. 86. Until, when he reached the setting of the sun, he found it setting in a murky spring. And found a people in its vicinity. We said, “O, Zul-Qarnain! You may either inflict a penalty, or else treat them kindly”. 87. He said, “As for him who does wrong, we will penalize him, then he will be returned to his Lord, and He will punish him with an unheard of torment”. 88. But as for him who believes and acts righteously, he will have the finest reward. And we will speak to him of Our command with ease”.

¹ Abbasov Ə.M. Nizami Gəncəvinin “İskəndərnamə” poeması.- Bakı:1966, s.26.

89. Then he pursued a course. 90. Until, when he reached the rising of the sun, he found it rising on a people for whom We had provided no shelter from it. 91. And so it was. We had full knowledge of what he had. 92. Then he pursued a course. 93. Until, when he reached the point separating the two barriers, he found beside them a people who could barely understand what is said. 94. They said: O Zul-Qarnain! Gog and Magog are spreading chaos in the land. Can we pay you, to build between us and them a wall?" 95. He said, "What my Lord has empowered me with is better. But assist me with strength, and I will build between you and them a dam." 96. "Bring me blocks of irons!" So that, when we have leveled up between the two cliffs, he said, "Blow!" And having turned it into a fire, he said: "Bring me tar to pour over it." 97. So they (Gog and Magog) were unable to climb it, and they could not penetrate it." ¹

In addition, information about Iskandar can be found in the works of the Arabian historians such as al-Tabari (9th century), Dinawari (9th century), Bal`ami (10th century), as- Saalibi (10th century) and other Arabic historians.

One of the reliable sources in the East providing us with information about Iskandar is Abu Jafar Muhammed ibn al-Jarir al - Tabari's "*Tarix əl-ümmam vəl-müluk*" - The History of al-Tabari, written in the 9th century. Nizami Ganjavi himself also had mentioned the author in his "Iskandar-nameh". According to the Azerbaijani scientist R.Azadeh, who carried out investigations on the original sources of Nizami Ganjavi's works, "Tabari describes how Iskandar married Rovshanak and possessed over the entire Iran, that he had one million troops, translated books of different sciences in Iran first into Syrian, then into Greek and sent to Rum, burning all the Zoroastrian

¹ Qurani-Kərim, Azərbaycan dilinə tərcüməsi və transkripsiyası, tərcüməsi: Mirzə Rəsul İsmayilzadə Duzal, Bakı, Beynəlxalq əl-Huda nəşriyyatı, 2005, s.302-303.

monuments, dealt with the Zoroastrian priests, ... his march to India and China, bringing of Tibet into subjugation, his march to the North Pole with four thousand troops and reach the land of eternal darkness, how he stayed there for 18 days seeking for water of life, and his return having not found it.”¹

One of the sources of the “Iskandar-nameh” is considered Ferdowsi's “Shah-nameh”, and enough research has been done in the oriental studies on the relation of these two works. However, many researchers have noted that Nizami's poem radically differs from the “Shah-nameh” of Ferdowsi, who tried to revive the ancient Iranian traditions. Y.E.Bertels noted that Nizami Ganjavi's plots differed from those in terms of sources as well. He pointed out that in Nizami's work in regard to the main hero's origin there was no connection to the Iranian traditions, the different approaches to events, and in terms of universal ideas and mastership radically differed from Ferdowsi's work.²

After a long study around the problem, Y.E.Bertels had come to such conclusion that, “If in Ferdowsi all attention is directed to the throne, the dynasty for which everything can be sacrificed, then at Nizami there is a person in the center, the individual with his characteristic unique qualities. Hence the desire to deepen the psychological analysis³, so characteristic of Nizami and especially sharply coming out when comparing his manner of writing with the style of his predecessor.”⁴

¹ Azadə R. Nizaminin poeziya sələfləri. Bakı: “Elm”, 1999, s.38.

² Бертельс Е.Э. Низами и Физули. Москва: Издательство Восточной литературы.-1962,стр.372.

³It is this »townsman» character of Nizami's views, who hates all oppression, whether it the tyranny of a cruel despot or violence against convictions, carried out by numbed dogmas of the clergy, which defines the poet's fair humanism, which has been repeatedly noted by Soviet science.

⁴ Бертельс Е.Э. Низами и Физули. Москва, ...стр.384.

One of the main sources of the poet was, of course, the tales, stories and epics spread about Iskandar in Azerbaijan. "... there are more than forty Azerbaijani fairy tales dedicated to Iskandar. In these tales, preserving the main core of Iskandar was created Alexander the Great in his new adventures and new qualities ... Here are enchanted castles, sorceresses, sending out for inaccessible and impossible work, breaking up the spell on the advice of the elderly, events related with the bald and so on, in which has been given the qualities characteristic for Azerbaijani folklore."¹

All this also confirms the information in ancient sources about Iskandar's coming to Azerbaijan. F.Arrian wrote:

Alexander "subjugated the Uksi, the Araxhot and the Drang, and having conquered Parthia, Chorea and Hyrkania up to the Caspian Sea, crossed the Caucasus beyond the Caspian Gates" ²

One of the prominent scholars, Mikail Rafili, who had investigated on the subject, wrote: "There are still legends going in Azerbaijan about the marches of Iskandar, the burial of his treasure in the territory of Azerbaijan and others. There are some tales and folk poetry materials created on the basis of legends and narratives about Iskandar. One of these legends was published in the magazine "Moskovskiy telegraf" in 1833."³

It should be noted that in the book "Popular (folk) version of Nizami works" collected by H.Alizadeh and M.Tahmasib and published in Baku in 1941, contain stories about Iskandar in Azerbaijani folklore.⁴

¹ Əli Sultanlı. İskəndərnamə və Qərbi Avropa ədəbiyyatı // Nizami (Məqalələr məcmuəsi) Bakı: Azərbaycan EA nəşriyyatı, 1947, s.80.

² Арриан. Поход Александра // Перевод с латинского М.Е. Сергеевко, предисловие О.О. Крюгера. - Москва: МИФ.- 1993, книга 7, стр.11.

³ Рафили М. Низами. - Москва: Гослитиздат.-1941,s.94.

⁴ Nizami əsərlərinin el variantları .- Bakı: 1941.

Thus, Nizami Ganjavi while wrote about Alexander (Iskandar) of Macedon, had used historical and religious sources created in Europe and in the East, as well as various popular folklore versions in Azerbaijan and Ferdowsi's "Shah-nameh" as main original sources. The encyclopaedic knowledge of the great poet, the highly tolerant outlook has brought the perfect originality to the fabulous and content of this work. As academician T.Karimli says rightly, "the appearance of great epic poems of Nizami" should be explained to certain extent with "openness to alien elements (other religions and cultures)". This is evidenced by the peculiarities of the historical era and region in which poet lived." ¹

Thus, Nizami Ganjavi has created a magnificent art sample with high ideological-philosophical value, for the first time, describing Iskandar's life, marches and artistic image as a perfect personality.

The poet himself writes in the beginning of his work, in the section "The short content of the poem and the history of conquerors of Alexander the Great" that he got lots of sources and notes that he chose the ones that fit the truth:

چو میکردم این داستان را بسیج
سخن راست رو بود و ره پیچ پیچ
اثرهای آن شاه آفاق گرد
ندیدم نگاریده در یک نورد
سخنها که چون گنج آکنده بود
به هر نسخه‌ای در پراکنده بود
ز هر نسخه برداشتم مایه‌ها
برو بستم از نظم پیرایه‌ها
زیادت ز تاریخهای نوی
پهلوی و نصرانی و پهلوی
گزیدم ز هر نامه‌ای نغز او
ز هر پوست پرداختم مغز او ²

¹ Kərimli T. Nizami və tarix. Bakı: Elm, 2002, s.19.

² نظامی گنجوی، شرف‌نامه، ترتیب‌دهنده متن علمی و انتقادی: ع.ع. علی‌زاده، باکو، 1947، س. 55

When I wrote this story,
The words were going straight, but the road was tangled,
I did not find the traces of the shah
going in the horizons in a single copy.
Words collected as a treasure
Were disconnected in separate copies.
I took a drop from each copy,
And put them in my poem, decorated it.
Except the new histories
I studied Jewish, Nasrani and Pahlavi history.
I chose the valuable from each of the books,
I took the essence from each of them.

Some of the scholars noted that Nizami Ganjavi did not write this work on somebody's order. However, the address to the Padishah, whom the work was dedicated to, it appears that Atabey Melik Nusretaddin ordered Nizami to dedicate this poem to him:

چو فرمان چنین آمد از شهریار
که بر نام ما نقش بند این نگار
بگفتار شه مغز را تر کنم
بگفت کان مغز در سر کنم
فرستم عروسی بدان بزمگاه
کز چشم روشن شود بزم شاه¹

When order came from the Padishah
Dedicate this beautiful poem to him!
I should join the words with main point of the Padishah.

I should not mind other people's advice.
I should send such a pearl(work) to him
From which the eyes of all to brighten.

نظامی گنجوی، شرف نامه، ترتیب دهنده متن علمی و انتقادی: ع.ع. علی زاده، باکو، 1947، س. 52¹

The theme and idea of the work

“Sharaf-nameh”, the first part of the “Iskandar-nameh”, begins with the traditional Minacat (Praying to God), Nath (laudation), Miraj (the Ascension of the Prophet), about the history of the book's writing, about his own state and the life, “The talk about the moral admonition and the seduction”, Hatip's teachings to Nizami, the praising of the fortunate Padishah Nusrateddin Abubakr, the appeal to the Padishah, the short content of the story and the history of conquerors of Alexander the Great and the foreword to Nizami's tendency towards this epoch. Starting from the section titled “Beginning of Iskandar's story of glory”, the rich content of the epic is continued on multi-sided plots.

Describing Iskandar's birth, education, and going to school, Nizami Ganjavi eliminates historical incorrectnesses about Iskandar's life, puts aside the fabrications about his lineage that he is the son of Darius, and clearly shows that Iskandar is the son of the Greek king Philip II of Macedon:

دگر گونه دهقان آذر پرست
بدارا کند نسل او باز بست
ز تاریخها چون گرفتم قیاس
هم از نامهٔ مرد ایزد شناس
در آن هر دو گفتار چستی نبود
گزاره سخن را درستی نبود
درست آن شد از گفتهٔ هر دیار
که از فیلقوس آمد آن شهریار¹

The Azerophile peasant says another thing
He relates his lineage to Darius.
I made comparisons from history,
And from the work of a theologian.

نظامی گنجوی، شرف نامه، ترتیب دهنده متن علمی و انتقادی: ع.ع. علی زاده، باکو، 1947، س. 66¹

None of them had the right word.
There was no truth in false stories.
This narration was true saying
He was the son of king Philip.

The training of Iskandar, the main hero, occupies an important place in the work. In the section titled "Iskandar's going to school and training there" describes that the wise Philip, who sees his son's wisdom sends him to school to gain knowledge, if to say in Nizami's words, "because a stone after being polished becomes a gem – a precious stone."

Alexander was taught by a wise teacher named Nicomachus. Nicomachus' son Aristotle was also the prince's schoolmate and served him heartily. He taught the knowledge and abilities he had learned from his father willingly to Iskandar. The wise teacher worked hard on the teachings of the prince, and knowing that he had a great treasure protected him. When he died, he entrusted his son to the prince. He said: "When you reign over the whole world, you will remember this lesson, this teaching, and you will not adore the wealth. You will compensate for payment to my son. You will make him your vizier. The clever advizer is better than the sword and wealth". The prince follows the teacher's will, he does not part with the clever Aristotle.

Nizami starting from the ascension of Alexander to the throne, his marches, wars waged by him, receiving news about the withdrawal of Zangi troops, Iskandar's message to the Zangibar king, his victory over the Zangibar king, the return of Iskandar from Egypt to Rum, the wisdom of Iskandar and making a mirror, the march of Darius' troops on Iskandar, the war of Darius with Iskandar, killing of Darius by his own warriors, the destruction of fire temple in Iran by Iskandar, Iskandar's marriage with Darius' daughter Rovshanak in Isfahan, Iskandar's ascension the throne in Istakhr, sending of Darius' daughter

Rovshanak to Rum, the travel of Iskandar to Arabia and visiting the Kaaba, Iskandar's arrival in Barda and meeting with Nushaba, Iskandar's feast with Nushaba, Iskandar's visit to the Alborz Fortress, his battle near the Derbent Fortress, his marches to Sarir Castle, Rey, Khorasan, India, China, the war with the Russians, the liberation of Nushaba, the search for water of life, going to the darkness, and in other stories the content is developed on line of perfect, rich philosophical ideas.

The poet sang Iskandar's arrival in Azerbaijan - the native land of Nizami with great love. The description of Iskandar's arrival in Barda and the meeting with the ruler of Azerbaijan Nushaba was developed with a high sense of mastery. The plot of this meeting reflects high national-moral values, real Azerbaijan morality. It is no coincidence that the prominent Azerbaijani scientist Hamid Arasli wrote: "The great master raises the image of Nushaba, which is taken from the history of the country, to the summit of fame. Iskandar, the winner of the world is helpless in front of this resourceful ruler. Nushaba and Iskandar give each other a solemn promise not to damage their countries ... Iskandar is amazed at the cleverness, sagacity and sense of this brave woman." ¹

In this work the poet created a series of rich, full-featured characters. His heroes are individuals differing for their personal features. "Nizami described the psychology of the Azerbaijani, the Russian, Rumian or Chinese as is." ²

Nizami Ganjavi was able to express his humanist ideas more fully and perfectly through Iskandar's image. As Ali Sultanli wrote, Alexander of Macedonia in Nizami's "Iskandar-nameh" is a hero, a generous, courageous man, a wise scientist, philosopher, prudent

¹ Araslı H. Azərbaycan ədəbiyyatı: tarixi və problemləri. Bakı: Gənclik, 1998, s.229.

² Маковельский А.О. О поэме Низами «Искендернаме»//«Низами». сб.IV, Баку:1947.- стр.55.

judge, the one who sacrifices himself for freedom, an enlightener - monarch, a fair ruler, at the same time an oriental lover. In this work, Alexander personified with such a complex character, suited the poet's own public-political ideologies more than the historical reality".¹

In this work, Nizami Ganjavi was able to propagate the idea of fair state building on a large scale. The well-known Azerbaijani scientist Mammad Jafar wrote: "Nizami sought not for ideal shah, but ideal society, the ideal state system, a state system "governed together with people".²

The search of social justice brings the poet to the country of happiness, to a free society, in the "Iqbal-nameh" section of the work. This society was the ultimate ideal of Nizami's search for social justice, perfect and free human being. The prominent Azerbaijani philosopher Heydar Huseynov compares Nizami's ideas about the utopian society with Greek, including Plato's Utopia, Zenon Stoics School, Euthemius' views, Yambul's philosophy, and concluded that "Nizami's utopia is original and deeper compared to ancient utopic outlooks... Nizami's with his ideal society is much higher than the historical condition of his era. His society does not have a shah's government. In this ideal society, there is no church or religious figures".³

In Nizami Ganjavi's "Iqbal-nameh", Iskandar is always in the circle of philosophers, their views and advice. The sense of heroism and honor is combined with intelligence and perfection. The seclusion of Iskandar with seven philosophers, the wisdom and advice of philosophers such as Aristotle, Bolinas, Socrates, Forfurius, Hermes, Plato are regarded as one of the main factors in his perfection.

¹ Əli Sultanlı. İskəndərnamə və Qərbi Avropa ədəbiyyatı // Nizami (Məqalələr məcmuəsi) Bakı: Azərbaycan EA nəşriyyatı, 1947, s.82.

² Cəfərov M.C. Nizami yaradıcılığında humanizm // "Vətən uğrunda", Bakı, 1942, №3,s.49.

³ Гусейнов Г. О социальных воззрениях Низами. Баку,1946, s.14; s.31.

Interestingly, Nizami includes himself in the row of these philosophers. The seventh philosopher is Nizami himself. As Nushaba Arasli, the Azerbaijani scholar states, "...we can see also the features characterizing the poet's personality in the images of wisemen such as Aristotle, Plato, Hermes, Socrates and others, who in the palace majlises (gatherings) with their scientific-philosophical views, wise sayings trained the shah as a learned man.... High qualities such as wisdom, self-restraint, intelligence, diligence, respect for labor, science, education, pure morals, spotless morality, humanism, faith in youth, admiration for human ability and power can also be regarded as expressions of the poet's inner world".¹

In the section "The Prophecy of Alexander the Great", Nizami describes how Iskandar learned the basics of all sciences and grew so clever that he did not speak of Creation, but only sought for the Creator of the world. He thought day and nights to understand this. An angel came with revelation from the God: "He honored you with prophecy, besides giving you authority over the world".²

"Iskandar-nameh" is an original work from the view point of plot and composition. The plots are branch out, but all the events happen around the hero. Some scholars compared the plot of the work with the structure of European tales of chivalry, and emphasized that Nizami was a completely different master.

The artistic language of Nizami Ganjavi's "Iskandar-nameh" is rich and unique. The great poet brought the original content and a new style to the work through the saqi-names.

¹ Araslı N. Nizaminin poetikası. Bakı: Elm, 2004, s.236.

² Nizami Gəncəvi. İskəndərnamə. Şərəfnamə // Filoloji tərcümə, izahlar və qeydlər: professor Qəzənfər Əliyevindir; İqbalnamə //Filoloji tərcümə: filologiya elmləri doktoru Vaqif Aslanovundur. Bakı: "Elm", 1983, s.517.

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Miniature painted for the „Leyli and Majnun“
by Nizami Ganjavi. Majnun in the desert among wild animals



Miniature painted for „Leyli and Majnun“
by Nizami Ganjavi

Hurnisa Bashirova
(Azerbaijan)

The epic poem "Leyli and Majnun" of Nizami Ganjavi

The prominent thinker of all times, the genius Azerbaijani poet Nizami Ganjavi (1141-1209) is our contemporary. The poet's creative activity has always obliged human kinds who were not indifferent to the Oriental culture, science and philosophy to think about the significance of life and have supported them in the road of life.

Alongside with the fact that Nizami Ganjavi was one of the poets interpreting the truth in his works he was one of the rare artists who sang the ancient love philosophy with great enthusiasm. That is, explaining the process of emerging the "human thinking" in the epic poem "Leyli and Majnun" that all the great personalities were trying to perceive, he joins the human being with his existence in divine moment of love. The individual who chooses the path of perfection in Nizami's philosophy is characterized primarily by the fact that he appreciates highly the love. As Nizami Ganjavi wrote, a person who catches fire from the heat of the true love in his heart, by the end, understanding anything in this world is frail, gains wisdom transforming from absence into the existence. This path passing through the unfortunate love is the poet's road of life and his own philosophy.

Nizami Ganjavi wrote the great epic of love "Leyli and Majnun" in 1189 AD:

آراسته شد به بهترین حال در سلخ رجب به ثی و فی دال
تاریخ عیان که داشت با خود هشتاد و چهار بعد پانصد¹

As it revealed from the handwriting copy, this work was at least ready in the last day of the month of Rajab 584.

As the observations prove, like other medieval masters of pen, the great poet Nizami Ganjavi had also written poems to order. Perhaps, the existence of an extended family and people dear for him forced the poet to work hard and write to order. As, in the part of the epic “Leyli and Majnun” (The reason for writing of this book) the poet tries to prove himself in the right to fulfil this type of order.

The poet notes that the stars help him. He thinks that the happy people should work hard (i.e. he has to fulfill the order received with a great zeal). Then, the poet describes the course of events as follows:

در حال رسید قاسد از راه	آورد مثال حضرت شاه
بنوشته به خط خوب خویشم	ده پانزده سطر نغز بیشم
هر حرفی از ان شکفته باغی	افروخته ترز شب چراغی
کای محرم حلقه غلامی	جادو سخن جهان نظامی
از چاشنی دم سحر خیز	سحری دگر از سخن بر انگیز
در لاف گه شگفت کاری	بنمای بفساعتی که داری
خواهم که بیاد عشق مجنون	رانی سخنی چو در مکنون ²

The poet says: Many people tell a poem, but they have no freshness. No poet's heart can create such a particular poem in Deri language. Every couplet of the poem is without defects and a string of pearls, full of talent. When I wrote such a epic, my foot did not take

¹ “Khamasa” of Nizami Ganjavi. Turkey. Istanbul city. Museym of Topgapi. H-750. Date of writing: 1377. P. 125a.

² “Khamasa” of Nizami Ganjavi. Turkey. Istanbul city. Museym of Topgapi. H-750. Date of writing: 1377. P. 124a.

any false step. I said something and my heart answered at once, and I heard a spring murmur.

Nizami Ganjavi, in the fragment of poem quoted above wants to express that the epic was written with the thirist of heart and in tears. The reason for this is undoubtedly the humiliation of the poet's native Azerbaijani language. Therefore, it is possible to think that Nizami Ganjavi's Divan was in the Azerbaijani language. Because, in the decree of Shah Akhistan, it is said that this epic does not fit Turkish characters. Taking into account that Nizami Ganjavi was a man close to the shah Akhsitan and was a teacher of his son, it is possible to suppose that the poet hoped to write this order in the Azerbaijani language. But according to the request of that time, Akhsitan demanded the poet to write it in Persian and Arabic, and Nizami, in his turn, called this language "the Deri".

"The history of the Deri language is explained in the Bürhan Ğate dictionary as follows: this word refers to the vocabulary of the tribes living in such cities as Balkh, Bukhara, Badakhshan and Marv, and it was spoken in Kian's palace. Another group claims that in the period of Bahman Isfendiyar, the people came to his palace from outside did not understand the language of each other, therefore the shah commanded the scholars to introduce the Persian language and call it «the language of Deri.» That is, the shahs have to speak this language in the palace and command that they speak that language also in the country.»¹ This language was called by the poets of that period both "Deri" and "Farsi"².

The poems of Nizami Ganjavi, prove once again the fact we have underlined above: despite the shah demanded Nizami to write the epic "Leyli and Majnun" in Persian and Arabic, the poet called it "Deri", i.e. the language of Palace. This proves once again that Nizami

سبک شناسی بهار. به کوشش دکتر سید ابوطالب نیر عابدینی. تهران: توس، 1380 ص. 38¹

تاریخ ادبیات ایران. جلد اول. تألیف ذبیح الله صفا. تهران: ققنوس، 1373 - ج ص. 51²

Ganjavi wrote the works ordered to him by the shah in Persian and other works, for example the Divan, which was the mirror of his creativity has been written in Azerbaijani. Therefore, the shah gives him a piece of advice to think a bit. Contrary to his will, Nizami Ganjavi, writing the epic “Leyli and Majnun” in Persian, he once again demonstrated to his contemporaries and opponents that he is a great master both in Azerbaijani and Persian languages.

The poem «Leyli and Majnun», epic of love of all times, which reflects the brilliant outlook of Nizami Ganjavi, is a detailed philosophical and didactic work. As in the classical Oriental philosophy, the poet used the images Leyli and Majnun as symbols:

هر کودکی از امید و از بیم مشغول شده به درس و تعلیم
با آن پسران خرد پیوند هم لوح نشسته دختری چند¹

In this verse Nizami wanted to say that every student aiming to learn Sufi teaching begins to study in fear and hope. Because, by taking an unreliable step, the adherent’s long-term efforts may be marred . As to the expression “Boys like Moon”, here the poet mentions the place and location of the human passion. “According to Nasser Hosrov, one of the founders of classical philosophy, the human being is the» Small World «and the heart is formed from the effects of the sun... the life of the world is the Sun, as the human life is heart. By the effect of another sultan – the Moon, human brain is created. The brain is tough and cold as the nature of the moon.”².

The great poet Nizami Ganjavi described Majnun’s image as symbol of «the Moon,» and Leyli’s image as «The Sun». In general, the

¹ “Khamsa” of Nizami Ganjavi. Turkey. Istanbul city. Museym of Topgapi. H-750. Date of writing: 1377. P. 141a.

² Ch.S.Sasani. The naturalist literary thought in the Medieval Azerbaijani poetry. Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences, Institute of Literature. Baku – “Elm” – 2007, p.71.

«Leyli and Majnun» is considered to be the greatest love epic of the Orient. Nizami Ganjavi's epic poem «Leyli and Majnun» is rich in symbols:

آهو چشمی که هر زمانی کشتی به کرشمه ای جهانی
ماه عربی به رخ نمودن ترک عجمی بدل ربودن
زلفش چو شبی رخسار چو باغی یا مشغله ای به چنگ زاغی
کوچک دهنی بزرگ سایه چون تنگ شکر فراخ مایه¹

- My darling looking as a gazelle turns as usual around the world blinking. The expression “*ahu gozler*” (i.e. gazelle, eyes of gazelle) in this verse, the poet suggests the Sun. When the clouds pass through the sky during a day, the Sun rises or sets. For this reason, the poet suggests that his gazelle opens his face like an Arab moon, and gratifies as a Turk obliging him to be charmed wholly. In these verses the poet refers to the philosophy of “Leyli and Majnun”. That is, the “Small World” means the particle and the Great World means attaining spiritual perfection. According to Nizami Ganjavi, the name of this philosophy is the Love.

-Her hairs are dark as night, and her face bears resemblance to a garden. Or is like as a torch in the hand of the crow.

The words “garden” and “torch” in Nizami Ganjavi's poem are used as synonyms of the Absolute Being. Likening the Leyli's hair to the dark night and her face to the garden, the poet means the living and intelligent matter. In this poem the expression “night” (black hair) is a symbolic embodiment of the matter and four elements - of a thing created in the nature.

Describing Leyli in this poem, the great Nizami has also stressed this sensible moment too:

گلگونه زردی خویش پرورد سرمه ز سواد مادر آورد¹

¹ “Khamisa” of Nizami Ganjavi. Turkey. Istanbul city. Museym of Topgapi. H-750. Date of writing: 1377. P. 141a.

- The yellow color has been created by the girl with a pink cheek herself. She obtained the antimony from her mother: it means that the light of the sun is boiling like a spring, and her mother-universe surrounding her is black. Despite the sun is made up of dark spaces of the universe, it is a light and light waves.

Therefore, I think that the epic poem of Nizami Ganjavi "Leyli and Majnun" is both the perfect fictional work and a scientific text of philosophical content reflecting the creation of a mankind. This magnificent poem is a formula of the philosophy of the Perfection.

In order to show that Majnun was a true lover, who had suffered a painful love in the epic poem "Leyli and Majnun", the genius poet used many secondary images for the contrast. The most retentive of these images is the image of the father of Majnun. In this poem, Nizami, creating the Majnun's father as a true image of a parent who in the Azerbaijani society, does not spare his life for the happiness and prosperity of his child and considered the father of Majnun an example to all the good people.

Another memorable image of the work is Nofal. He is a rich and generous man supporting the Sufi teaching in the society. He enjoys the poems devoted to him by the Sufi poets, and protects them.

It is obvious that Nizami Ganjavi describes Nofal in the epic as a rich, well-known knight and brave warrior that obliges the reader kept in suspense, pointing to the fact that some secrets of the literary intention are related to this personage. In fact, the poet's idea at this very interesting moment is to show that the essence of the philosophy of Divanelik (being in love) is related only to every human being's will. That is, only those who have strong will will be able to reach the

¹ "Khamsa" of Nizami Ganjavi. Turkey. Istanbul city. Museym of Topgapi. H-750. Date of writing: 1377. P. 141a.

end of the road. This science of wisdom can not be achieved with no riches, power and necessity.

For this reason, the poem of the great Azerbaijani poet Nizami Ganjavi “Leyli and Majnun” is a masterpiece of all times devoted to the love philosophy. In this literary text, the poet interprets the viewpoints of those who have reached moral perfection in human society as a result of genius thoughts. According to Azerbaijani scholar Chingiz Sassani, the plotline of the epic “Leyli and Majnun” is similar to the plotline of Sumerians’ epic “Gilgamish”. After capturing the country of Sumer the Akkadians became heirs of the “Gilmagish” as well. With the time, both the Akkadians and the Babylonians, working out the epic “Gilgamish” once again, change the names of some of the gods, replace old events with new ones in line with the arisen historical conditions, but they prefer to preserve the main plotline.¹ This is an undeniable fact that the Sumerians were ancient Turkic tribes and their language was ancient Turkish language.

As a result, we can say that the work “Leyli and Majnun”, the immortal, everlasting and wisdom epic is the wealth of all humanity. Many poets inspired by the prominent Azerbaijani philosopher poet Nizami Ganjavi's poetry have written imitative poems to his works for centuries, decorating the poet's life with legends. But it is an undeniable fact that the heart of the great poet was broken to pieces, scattered throughout the world, like his Homeland. Today, the legacy of the poet is not only the national and spiritual wealth of the Azerbaijani people, but also its source of pride. At the same time Nizami Ganjavi's poem “Leyli and Majnun” is also a great work of art in the world literature.

¹ Ch.S.Sasani. The epic poem of Nizami “Leyli and Majnun”. Publishing House “Elm”. Baku-1985, p.24.

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„Seven Beauties“. Bahram slays an onager and a lion
by Fakhraddine Ali



„Seven Beauties“. Bahram dreams of seven beauties
by Fakhraddine Ali

The Fourth Poem of the „Five Treasures“

"Seven Beauties" is the fourth poem of "Khamsa" (Five poems) by Nizami Ganjavi," which has gained fame in the Near and the Middle East under the name "Panj khazine (Five Treasures). This poem, written by the great poet in 1197, when he was about fifty, devoted to the description of the life, power and love adventures of the fourteenth ruler of this dynasty, Bahram V (421-438), son of Yazdgurd I.

The poet, who has carefully examined the oral and written sources on the subject, using the Arabic and Persian texts, and the works of Tabari and Bukhari. The poet says:

که پراکنده بود گرد جهان	باز جستم ز نامه های نهان
در سواد بخاری و طبری	ز آن سخنهای که تازه است دری
هر دری در دلفینی افکنده	وز دگر نسخه ها پراکنده
همه را در خریطه ای بستم	هر ورق کاوفتاد در دستم

[1.691]

(I searched the secret books that were spreading in the world. From the words of Arabic and the Dari (ancient Persian), from the writings of Bukhari and Tabari, from other retail copies, from every pearl of treasure, I made every paper in my hands ...)

In his poem, Nizami first of all remembers the poem "Shahnameh" of the great Iranian poet Firdovsi in the sources of his work:

همه را نظم داده بود درست	چایک اندیشه رسیده نخست
هر یکی زان قراضه چیزی کرد	مانده زان لعل ریزه لختی گرد
بر تراشیدم این چنین گنجی	من از آن خرده چو گهر سنجی

[1.691]

(A quick-minded person first came and composed all in a poem. From that ruby remained only dust and fragments. And from that fragments everybody made something. And I made such a treasure from that fragments as a jeweler).

The poet, who appreciates the great importance to the study of historical sources of the work, examined the information given before him, and selected the motifs more appropriated for Firdovsi's corresponding epos "Shahnameh", and then "Siyasetnameh", "Gabusnameh", "One thousand a night" and other works, at the same time he took the stories of princess girls from seven countries, the miserable complaints of seven prisoners, the tragic story of stonemason Simnar, the adventure of lovely female slavery Fitnah of the king, the edifying talk of the wise shepherd and other unsubstantiated stories, and had skillfully connected them with Bahram's life and adventures.

Nizami did not aim to describe the main historical events, but he created a magnificent art monument which reflected the social and justice, a just head of the State, "ruler and nation", as well as meaningful life, high morality, moral excellence, and other such vital social thoughts followed in the poems till "Seven Beauties".

The poet begins his work dedicated to the ruler of Maragha Alaaddin Arslan (1174-1208), or rather, by his order, referring to God, the Prophet of Islam, the Ascension of the Prophet, the praise of the king of time, the praise of the art word, the reason of the writing book, admonition to his son Muhammad and other similar traditional chapters as in the previous poems in Khamsa.

He invites the thoughtful reader who gives a broad range of moral philosophical views on life and society to recognize the glory of human created as the most honest and to understand this name, while offering the opportunity to read, study, and be useful to the

community. The poet speaks of the labor, and appreciates the role of the mind and science in human life:

هر کسی را نهفته یاری هست
خرد است آن کز او رسد یاری
هر که داد خرد نداند داد
دوستی هست و دوستداری هست
همه داری اگر خرد داری
آدمی صورت است و دیونهاد

[1.701]

(Everyone has a secret friend, has love, has beloved, It is a mind that always help comes from it. If you have a mind you will be everything. Who does not value the mind, he is human-faced, but properly a giant nature).

The poet primarily focuses on self-awareness:

خویشتن را چو خضر باز شناس
آب حیوان نه آن حیوان است
تا خوری آب زندگانی به قیاس
جان با عقل و عقل با جان است

[1.708]

(Recognize yourself as Prophet Khizir so that you can drink the water of vitality, the water of life is not that vitality. Soul with mind, and the mind with soul).

Nizami advises those who see the meaning of life to engage in business, to show kindness and to be useful to society. According to the poet, the human should be happy as he is able to do so and bring happiness to his surroundings by his work:

کار کن زان که به بود به سرشت
آدمی نر پی علف خواری است
سگ بر آن آدمی شرف دارد
کوش تا خلق را به کار آبی
کار و دوزخ ز کاهلی و بهشت
از پی زیرکی و هشیاراست
که چو خریدیده بر علف دارد
تا به خدمت جهان بیارایی

[1.702]

(It is better to work in hell than to be lazy in paradise. Mankind is created not to eat grass, he is for the sake of greed and dignity, and the dog is hono-

nable than the people who are always in the grass like ass. Try work for the people, decorate the world with your service).

Nizami gives to the readers some advices in the early chapters of his work. He calls them to avoid themselves from the enthusiasm, from greedy of money, fame, gold and the wealth of the world:

زین پراکنده چند لافی چند	زر دو حرف است هر دو بی پیوند
تا نگردی چو زر پراکنده	دل مکن چون زمین زر آکنده
لاجوردی کنند پیراهنش	هر نگاری که زر بود بدنش
سنگسار هزار در گردد...	هر ترازو که گرد زر گردد

[1.703]

(The world gold (زر) are two letters unconnected with one another). How much will you talk about this sparse? Do not fill up your heart (like earth) with gold that you will not become scattered like a gold. That is, the body in golden color of every beauty's shirt may be in blue, (so the shirt of the beauty is taken ill with icterus mourning, might be in blue color so in mourning color. Every scales revolve around the gold should be thrown stones by a thousand gates).

Nizami continues his moral and ethical views in the poem by his son Mohammed and goes on to look at Muhammad in his face and gives interesting ideas about the training and upbringing of the younger generation. By the way, it should be noted that the theme of youth always envisaged by Nizami, the poet loved youth not just the parents' joy, but the continuation of life, the existence of the people, the protector of the material and moral values.

The poet, who is still beginning to learn from the lyrical heritage of the youth, to be able to use knowledge, science, and other useful work, has given a wide coverage to the generations:

که تو بیدار شو که من خفتم	ای پسر هان و هان تو را گفتم
مهر نام محمدی داری	چون گل باغ سرمدی داری

... سکه بر نقش نیکنامی بند
تا من آنجا که شهر بند شوم
کز بلندی رسی به چرخ بلند
از بلندیت سر بلند شوم

[1.716]

(O son, I say to you, be watchful that I am in the gardens of eternal bondage, and the seal of the name of Muhammad, and strike a coin over a good name. And where I am as a prisoner (in the world) I would like to be a proud man from your honesty).

The poet recommends his son to be friends with good-name friends and to walk away from people who are not popular by the community. Nizami appreciates the talent. However, he does not advise to be inactive, but especially emphasizes the talent with labour, with toil:

در گشایی کنی نه در بندی	هنر آموز کز هنرمندی
در بر آرد ز آب و لعل از سنگ	هر که ز آموختن ندارد ننگ
وانکه دانش نباشدش روزی	ننگ دارد ز دانش آموزی
که شد از کاهلی سفال فروش	ای بسا تیز طبع کاهل کوش
گشت قاضی القضاات هفت اقلیم	وای بسا کور دل که از تعلیم

(1.707)

(Be careful learn bravery, and open the doors with bravery, do not shut the door. If the man is not shamed to gain knowledge, he is able to gain pearl from water and jewel from the stone. And who is ashamed to learn the knowledge, he will be without the provisions. There are so many untalented, and lazy men, and they became faience seller. The slow-witted man was a confessor of seven countries in training).

"Seven Beauties" begins with the birth of Bahram, the only hero of the work. Bahram is a son of the brutal Yazdgurd I, who is well-known for his injustice in history. In describing the birth of Bahram in the beginning of the work, the poet says about the descendant of the kings:

کاسمان را ترازوی دو سر است	در یکی سنگ و در یکی گوهر است
از ترازوی او جهان دو رنگ	گه گهر بر سر آورد گه سنگ
صلب شاهان همین اثر دارد	بچه یا سنگ یا گوهر دارد
... گوهر و سنگ شد به نسبت و نام	نسبت یزدگرد با بهرام

(1.710)

(There are two eyes on the scales of the destiny. In one of which is a stone, the other is jewel. And two-colored world now makes a jewel or a stone. And in the nature of the shahs they are also like this. Their children also either stone or jewel. The stone and the jewel are the comparison of Yazdgurd and Bahram).

In Nizami's book, as well as historical sources, Bahram is sent to Yemen, which is under the Sassanid, to be educated. Yemen's King Neman and his son Munzir loves Bahram heartily, and they seriously were busy with the education of the prince. As the climate of Arabic country was dry and warm, Neman ordered Simnar, son of Sam, a master of his time, to build a wonderful Palace for Bahram. Simnar works day and night and successfully fulfills this order.

Nizami deeply express sympathy with art and craftsman, speaks with love of Simnar, who is the follower of his masters such as Farhad and Shapur whom we have seen in his work "Khosrov and Shirin":

چابکی چربدست و شیرینکار	سام دستی و نام او سمنار
دستبردش همه جهان دیده	به همه دیده ای پسندیده
کرده چندین بنا بر مصر به شام	هر یکی در نهاد خویش تمام
رومیان هندوان پیشه او	چینیان ریزه چین تیشه او
گر چه بناست وین سخن فاش است	اوستاد هزار نقاش است

(1.714)

(Adroit, well toiler, from Sham and his name is Simnar). The whole world has seen Ali's work and has been well-pleasing in all eyes. He built several buildings in Egypt and Damascus. Each one with its own appearance is perfect. The people of Greek are his slaves. And the Chinese are gathering the

crumbs of his pick. Though he is a stone-master, and this word is very popular that he is the master of a thousand artists).

Neman called for the master and invited him to build a palace for Bahram. Simnar starts work immediately and builds a magnificent Palace with three colors a day, which surprises everyone. Neman, who is pleased with the master's work, rewards him generously. Seeing the generosity of the king, Simnar told him, "If I had known beforehand that the king would reward me, I would have made the most beautiful Palace." To the question asks: "Can you build a Palace better than if I give you a lot of money?" "Yes," the simple-hearted master answered. "I will build a building that will never be there". The Prince, who was angry at these words, fearing that Simnar might be build a Palace for someone else and the glory of Khaverneg might diminish, commands to throw the master out of the Palace tower. Nizami describes with heart pain the destruction of the unfortunate master by throwing him out of the Palace.

In "Seven Beauties" Nizami's highly regarded works on art and craftsmanship. He also highlighted and described the role of artistic works during the events in the poem. The appearance of the pictures of the seven princess girls in Khaverneg, built by Simnar made a new stage in the life of Bahram. Bakhram's bravery: His killing of a roe deer and a lion with one arrow, killing a dragon taking revenge of the roe deer, and finding a treasure with the guidance of the roe deer and all these paintings were engraved to the walls of Khaverneg by the order of Munzir forever. Let's also note that all these do not shatter the problem of justice, which is the artistic purpose of the work. Nizami always achieved to show the activities of a fear head of the state, relationships of king and society and other social-life problems.

The people who came from the tyranny of Yazdگرد, who made an injustice with his name, did not want to leave his successor close to

the government. The Palace officials made excuses that the prince of the Palace grew up in the firefighter mobs, in the Arab world, and he would show a tendency toward Arabian traditions and would be indifferent to the Iranian, and they select a wise old man close to the descendants of the shahs.

Bahram, who sees power over to the strangers, says he is ready to do his best to preserve the dignity he is the legitimate successor. The prince is preparing to attack the Iranian land. Neman Shah and Münzir also help him in this case. The Iranians, who came in contact with it, consulted and decided to write a letter to Bahram. Bahram, as one of the most interesting parts of the work, is shown as an honorable and dignity courage man who knows his dad's heritage holy, loves the country and the people:

عیب باشد که هست با دگران	لیک ملکی که ماندم از پدران
من خدا دوستم خرد پرورد	گر پدر دعوی خدایی کرد
از خدا دوست تا خدایی دوست	هست بسیار فرق در رگ و پوست
کان اگر سنگ بود و من گوهرم	پدرم دیگر است و من دیگرم

(But it will be shameful if my father's heritage will be in the hand of others. If my father claims to be a God, I love God and a mind. There is a difference between the vein and skin, and if he is a stone, I am a jewel).

Bahram says in his letter that he will not go along with his father, and that he will be just. He apologizes to the Iranians instead of asking his father and not to speak badly about him. In the letter of Bahram, the sacredness of the heritage, his determination to take it back, and his dedication to his sacrifice have not lost their significance today. The prince tells the opposite that he will fight to save the land of alien remnants or return his legal heritage or be killed in this way:

نیغ دارم به تیغ بستانم	من که بر تاج و تخت ره دانم
عنکبوتی تنید بر غاری	جای من گر گرفت غداری

وآنکه از عنکبوت خواهد بار
خانه من به دست خانه بران
خورد من یا دل است و یا جگر است
دشنه بر ناف و تیغ برگردن

ازدهایی رسید بر در غار
..من به سختی به خانه دگران
خورش خصم شهر یا شکر است
تیغ و دشنه به از جگر خوردن

[1.733]

(I know the way to gain the throne. I have sword, I gain with my sword. If he hold my place in a cave, he is a spider that has a narrow cave. The dragon coming to the door of the cave should get permission from the spider? ... I'm in trouble in the house of others. My house is in the hands of the thieves. The honey is eaten by enemies is my sugar that I eat. My food is my heart or my lung. The sword and dagger are better than eating the lung).

Bahram shows his great courage, an unprecedented brave by fulfilling the hardest of conditions his father had on his crown. The crown, which is the symbol of power among the two terrible lions, proves to be worthy of the kingship. After passing into power, the country is governed by justice, and the people are happy and prosperous. During the years of his rule, when he was in power, Bahram opened the country's warehouses and supplied the people with food, leaving the country out of this catastrophe. Even the birds do not let go of hunger.

Nizami, in seven years of severe conditions, shows that only one person died of hunger, which shows that the king who is aware of this is in a state of deep sorrow and black dress.

Bahram, who restored peace in the country during the abundance of years after the drought, began to breathe more and more into the entertainment, slowly stepping away from state affairs and instructing the fate of the country and people, his righteous governor Nasri and his sons. Nizami expresses his attitude to the weaknesses of his hero. In the work is more clear to see the adventure of Bahram with his Turkish-born Fitnah.

Bahram, going for hunting with his favorite girl, demonstrates a unique hunting experience. Fitnah does not praise the king's deed as if she did not see them all.

Bahram does not like this treatment. He shows a far coming the roe deer and asks her: "Where did I hit him?". Fitnah offers him to sew his hoof head on the roe deer. The king succeeds in overcoming this difficult desire of the girl. However, Fitnah does not welcome this skill. (It turns out that it became clear that she did not welcome his skill deliberately and ignored his skill to save him from bad eyesight). Moreover, she says that it does not mean that it is from prowess, but from the custom of the king. These words made Bahram a furious rage, and commands Sarhang to kill Fitnah. Fitnah is saved from death by means of her mind and action.

By the way, it should be noted that the fair ruler, Mahin Banu, Nushaba, faithful, lovely Leyli, selfless wife Shirin, a scientist who mastered the secrets of science, reflecting on the poems of the great poet in "Khamasa" (Quintuple). Fitnah is particularly remarkable in terms of expressing the poet's high attitude to the femininity and respect for women's dignity as Nistandarjahan. The poet in his poem "Seven Beauties" " also teach that the ordinary maid with her own intelligence taught the king and he is forced to apologize as in "The Treasures of Secrets" Sultan Senjer by the old women, Khosrow by Shirin in "Khosrow and the Shirin", and by the language of Nushaba is taught Alexander the life lesson in the poem named Iskandar-Nameh (" Book of Alexander the Great").

Over time, Bahram's news about his state of affairs and his time spent in hunting, fun and caring for his life has spread. Having heard this, the Chinese khan is preparing to attack Iran by gathering powerful troops. As Bahram is known for this event he came to the secret place with his 300 strong army. Everyone thinks he has left the country and escaped. The Chinese khan was assured and began to

celebrate with the army. Bahram suddenly attacked at night and crushed the 300,000 troops of khagan with 300 soldiers. Then he summoned the army chiefs and reprimanded them because they did not fulfill their duties and could not protect the country.

The poem is distinguished by its in-depth content and its public-human content, with high poetic value, original artistic composition and complex composition. Since the birth of Bahram, the main plot of life and the years of power is developed in a multi-faceted way, enriched with extra events and colorful stories and is presented in a more attractive and original way with the help of non-content stories.

Nizami often expresses his attitude to the events described, giving a wide coverage of his philosophical and didactic thoughts on the stories he writes, utilizing artistic riches. Many of the chapters of the work are summed up by the poet's life, the universe, the human life, the human and society relations, the harmony between society and nature, and other considerations. In such languid rituals, the poet often returns to his own time, talks about the problems of the day he thinks of his contemporaries and teaches ideas. For example, while hunting Bahram did not kill the little roe deer and branded the roe deer and set them free, and during the hunting, when the hunters noticed that they did not kill them. The poet describes all these and complains of tyranny of the time:

آن چنان گورخان به کوه و به راغ
در چنین گورخانه موری نیست
گور که داغ دید رست ز داغ
که بر او داغ دست زوری نیست

[1.719]

(The roe deer was free of cruelty in the mountain, in Gurkhan time. But there is no an ant in such Gurkhana that oppressive hand does not stamp it).

In the poem the great poet who creates examples of public-political criticism, and in the chapter of Bahram's adventures, he describes his cruel treatment of the slave as a moral deficit in his lyric episode:

پادشاهان که کینه کش باشد	خون کنند آن زمان که خوش باشد
با چه آهو که اسب زین نکنند	که سگی را که پوستین نکنند

(When the kings are angry, they pour blood and reloice. For which gazelle they do not saddle a horse, and which dog they do not strip its skin?)

Let's look at the lyrical rhetoric of Nizami on the part of the talented artist Simnar's tragedy:

پادشاه آتشی است کز نورش	ایمن آن شد که دید از دورش
و آتش او گلی است گوهربار	در برابر گل است و در برخار
پادشه همچو تاک انگور است	در نیبچد در آن کزو دور است

[1.714]

(The king is a fire, he can only be sure of seeing it from a distance. Its fire is the flower like jewel. In front of him is the flower, but on the arms are thorns. The king is like a grapevine, who is far away from him, only he will be is in safe).

In the lyric editions and artistic rituals of Nizami reflected the philosophical and ethical views about human morality, life, existence and universe.

For example, note the peculiar ideas of the poet about the tragic death of an architect, Simnar, who, with great respect and affection for art and craftsmanship:

کارگر بین که خاک خونخوارش	چون فکند از نشانه کارش
کرد قصری به چند سال بلند	به زمانیش از او زمانه فکند
آتش انگیخت خود به دود افتاد	دیر بر بام رفت و زود افتاد

کان بنابر کشید صد گز بیش
یک بدست از سه گز نیفزودی

بی خیر بود از اوقاتدن خویش
گرزگور خودش خیر بودی
[1.714]

(Look at the fate of the art master that he was thrown from the result of his work to the ground. He built a castle during some years. But the time threw him from that castle in a moment. The fire burnt him, and he covered with smoke. He ascended the roof and fell to the ground. He was uninformed from his falling down that is why he built it more high. If he knew that it would be his fire, he would not build it more than three span).

Nizami says to his reader:

که چو افقی از او نگرودی خرد

تخت پایه چنان توان بر برد
[1.714]

(You do not make your throne so high that you are not hurt when you fall from the throne).

The poet also mentions the art of mastery of Simnar's pupil Shidan, comparing the different destinies and contradictions between the two masterpieces of architecture, thus associating it with the unexpected events of the world and the injustice of the circle:

زو یک را زیان یکی را سود
بار دیگر غریق آب شود

کار عالم چنین تواند بود
باری از تشنگی کباب شود
[1.764-765]

(The work of the world is that. From it comes harm for one, but profit for others. One of the friend became thirsty and the other is drowned in water. And everyone is in his own business is amazed. But they cannot do anything else except silence).

The typical feature of Nizami's artistic use of symbolic- shades of art is more attractive in his "Seven Beauties" and draws attention with its more comprehensive, multifaceted. In the literary criticism, the daughters of seven climate kings in the poem "Seven Beauties" are

rightly regarded as symbols of the world's pleasure, admiration, enjoyment and fun. The poet himself in several parts of his work, considers vitality as wisdom and science:

خویشتن را چو خضر باز شناس
تا خوری آب زندگی به قیاس
آب حیوان نه آب حیوان است
جان با عقل و عقل با جان است

[1.708]

(Know yourself as Khizr that drink the water of life. The water of life is not that water you know, but it is with the soul of mind and with the mind of soul).

The symbolic meaning is clearer in the artistic language of the poet, in the fairy tale of the princess girls, in the philosophical moral talks of the author. The great poet often presents his public-artistic ideals in his own way, giving the reader a poetic notion of a single one, but with symbolic expressions. The poet suggests the peculiarities of his art in some places and advices to his readers to pay attention to the hidden meanings of the literary essence:

تنگ چشمان معنی ام هستم
هر عروسی چو گنج سرجسته
که رخ از چشم تنگ بر جستم
هر که این کان گشاد زر یابد
زیر زلفش کلید زر جسته
بلکه در یابد آن که در یابد

[1.894]

(I have meanings in the narrow eyes, and I have hidden them from that narrow eyes people. Every head of the bride is closed like a treasure, the golden key is tired on the bottom of her hair. Who finds the door, he may be finds it).

This poem of Nizami, as it is seen in the name of, is based mainly on seven. The name of the work "Seven Peyker" has been translated as "Seven Beauties". However, as noted by the prominent scholar Y.E.Bertels, the word "peyker" is also known as "drawing", "picture", "idol", "planet", "portrait", "figure" and other meanings.

It is also known that the "seven" numbers were considered sacred in the Middle Ages. Because of ancient mythological imagination and scientific-religious views, the world is divided into seven climates, the sky is made up of seven layers, consists of seven planets, and the number of colors are seven represented by the seven planets.

Bahram is currently married to the daughters of seven countries who have painted their paintings at the Khaverneg Palace built by Neman Shah in their early years, bringing them to Iran and marrying them. Princess girls live in the seven-dwelling mysterious castle built by Simnar's pupil Shidan. Having learned from the simplest architectural art, this master at the same time is a master of astronomy and is a master of the mystery of the stars, connecting it with one of the seven known planets of the castle and decorate it in a suitable colors.

Bahram dresses in a colorful dress every day of the week and carries his time in a princess's Palace. Each of the princesses brought from seven different countries comes up with an interesting story about her country and praises her color.

Each of these stories, taken from different sources and connected with folk creativity, is a bitter piece of work and further enhances the emotional effect and moral-ethical value of the poem.

In addition to scientifically-philosophical views on the symbolic meanings of colors in poetry stories, Nizami provides a comprehensive solution to its social and political ideals, more explicitly to the artistic purpose and more effective and authoritative of the author's work, as well as the ethical advice taken from folk creativity. In the poem the spiritual purity, old age, moral beauty, and other attributes are suggested, but the features that define spirituality, such as grief, greed, betrayal are condemned. Therefore, the stories of the beauties of the princess encourage the king to think about him as well. It focuses

on the issues of life, the care of the universe and the secrets of creation, the deeper penetration of the human nature and the delicacy of human psychology.

The seven royal daughters of the seven countries associated with the seven planets in the seven-colored palace have a series of sequences and legitimacy in telling the seven stories. According to the views of the ancient Babylonian astrologers, the poet connects the Saturday with a planet in the black colored Palace of the first prince of the world and Bahram goes on the next day to yellow, green, red, blue, brown and the last day he goes to white Palace to listen the stories.

In stories that are based on more imaginative fantasy and legendary stories of fairy tales, stories cover real-life issues. The main point in the story is the story that calls for the struggle for truth, vigilance, high morals, moral integrity, and human happiness that ultimately will win justice.

Although it does not stand on the stories that hold a significant part of the poem, we find it expedient to familiarize readers with a few sentences about their meaning and the symbolic meaning they have in order to create a general idea of princess girls' fairy tales.

Bahram is going to the black-colored Palace of Furak khanum, the daughter of the first Climate King, wearing black dresses on Saturday, which is the start of the week with the astrological imagination of the Saturn planet. The Indian prince went to his father's palace and told an interesting story he had always heard of a woman wearing a black dress from a "black dressed king". The short summary of the story is as follows:

"A stranger in black dress who came to the city by accident as a guest spoke to a king that he has come from the city called "Bihush", and said that all men there were wearing black clothes. The guest is surprised king by the conversation. He goes to that country and tries to

find out why men are in black clothes. But nobody wants to say a word about it. After a long adventure he sits in the basket in front of a flying minaret, bringing a friend of the butcher to the edge of the city. Not too long, the king sees himself in the scenic meadow. In the evening, some beautiful girls set up an entertainment in the meadow.

The girls brought king by the order of Turknaz, the beauty of Sultan, to the entertainment and he stayed there as a guest for 29 days. The thirteenth night the king loses his patience and desires to joining with the beauty of Sultan. Although Turknaz begged for it at night, the king did not take off his own will. Finally, she agreed externally, asking him to close his eyes for a moment. The king shuts his eyes and sees himself in the basket where the butcher is sitting.

When the mystery of the black dresses turns into a mysterious mystery, and when it is discovered, he also regrets and wears black clothes.

When the prominent writer-scientist Mir Jalal, speaking about these stories in the poem "Seven Beauties", saying that "It would be wrong if somebody think that the stories described here is merely legend or fairy tale, and therefore it is written in Nizami poem... The great poet has a lot of things he wants to say in the story, one of which is the relationship between man and the universe, consciousness and existence. The story is about the darkness of the history of Chinese, the secrets of history, the terrible, the "mysterious adventures", the famous legends, the darkness of a country that has long been closed to the world, and the king's 29 days of effort to understand the secret and in the thirtieth night his efforts became empty. It is possible that the mysterious city is generally the world, "animals" are generally human

beings, and "black cloth" is the life, especially the events of the universe, which surround them and are still unexplained.”¹

In the story also expressed the desire of human beings, the knowledge of world secrets, the environment and the universe. To express impatience to gain happiness are often shown to be regrettable. Speaking about the advantages of black color, Indian beauty completes her story by saying that it is a symbol of majesty and restraint.

چتر سلطان از آن کنند سیاه	در سیاهی شکوه دارد ماه
داس ماهی چو پشت ماهی نیست	هیچ رنگی به از سیاهی نیست
وز سیاهی بود جوان رویی	از جوانی بود سیاه مویی
چرگنی بر سیاه ننشیند	به سیاهی بصر جهان بیند
کی سزاوار مهد ماه شدی	گر نه سیفور شب سیاه شدی
نیست بالاتر از سیاهی چیز	نیست رنگی به از سیاهی نیز

(1, 787)

(The Moon is beautiful in the night. That is why they make Sultan's tent black. There is no good color than the black. The fish bone cannot be as the spine of fish. The black hair is from youthfulness. And the face of youthfulness is from blackness. The eye sees the world with its blackness. If the cover of the night was not black, would be worthy of the moon? There is no good color in the black. No more than black).

On Wednesday, Bahram goes to Humay's Palace, the daughter of the shah of second climate wearing a yellow-dressed girl. In the evening the beauty of Rum told a fairy tale to Bahram, about the famous king who is known as a "King-selling Shah" in Iraq.

"With the advice of the astrologers one shah not to get married and decided to spend his life with their female slaves. But none of the king's female slaves had been able to serve him faithfully. They

¹ Mir Jalal. "About the stories in "Seven Beauties". Nizami Genjevi (articles collection), Baku, 1947, p.66.

follow the witch's advice who lived in the Palace, and they quickly get out of the way, show stubbornness, and do not serve good.

One day king wants to buy a beautiful lady in the heart from the merchant bringing beautiful female slaves from China. The merchant shows that this female slave is very proud and does not work for the desire of men, but the king does not give attention to him and buys her. From the day she arrives at the Palace, she is well-known for her kind attitude and good character. Soon, she moves away the witch and began to service and devotes her loyalty to the king, and the king begins to love him more and more. As the merchant says, she goes away from him and continues to show indifference to him and the king suffers from the love day by day. One day they sit together and decide to talk.

Their open question-and-answer, sincere confessions further enhance their love for each other. At the same time, the witch as soon as was aware of the situation, approached to the shah and advised him how to gain her love. The female slave does not return to its decision and does not tolerate the cold-blooded attitude of the king. Finally, one day, finding a favorable time, she learns that all of them are guilty of the witch. At last, they sincerely destroy all obstacle and confess that they love each other.

The story of "Solomon and Bilgeys", which is often referred as a parable of the fairy-tale in the story, once again adds to the interesting and meaningful sense of the fairy tale of the Greek prince.

The newly born disabled baby of Bilgeys and Solomon, cures only after a sincere conversation far away all kinds of lies and trickery were among them.

In this story of the Greek beauty is shown the indulgence of the family, happiness to be strengthened by its truthfulness, mutual trust, and pure love. In the story of Solomon and Bilgeys condemned the greed, cunning, stubbornness, betrayal. Straightforward, mutual

fidelity and sincere affection are not only important in the family but also greatly influences its future, confirming the importance of the new generation in a healthy and optimistic spirit.

The prince praises the beautiful yellow color and completes the story by showing the gifts:

دوق حلوی زعفرانی از اوست	زردی است آن که شادمانی از او ست
خنده بین زان که زعفران خورده است	آن چه بینی که زعفران زرد است
گاو موسی بها ز زردی یافت	نور شمع از نقاب زردی تافت
طین اسفر عزیز از این سبب است.	زر که زرد است مایه طرب است

(1, 797)

(The celebration is from yellowness. The taste of saffron halva is the taste of it, and you see that the saffron is yellow. You see the joy of eating saffron. The light of candlelight shines with yellow. The ox of Musa is valuable as it is yellow. The gold is the main of gladness as it is yellow. The yellow clay is dear from this cause).

* * *

Bahram Shah, wearing green on Thursday goes to the green Palace of the 3rd Climate Prince Nazpari keeping harmony with Ay, listening to the story of two young men who are contradictory in nature. The story says: "By accident, on the street Bishr seeing the face of a woman whose cover opened by wind, he went to visit the Beytulmugeddes to repent and wash his sins. On the way, he meets a man who is satisfied with his name, Malikha. They are traveling together. Melikha, who gives various questions to Bishr, shows that he is a well-known, knowledgeable person in the universe's secrets, and accuses his wife of ignorance"...

They reach an invisible desert. Under a tree, they see a pitcher filled with water buried in the ground. Drinking the water and rest in the shade of the tree. Malikha says he wants to bathe on a pitcher. Bishr begged him not to pollute the pure water that the good men had

left to cool off the passengers. Melikha says that the pitcher is meant to hunt for animals here and that he will save the animals by breaking it and then throwing himself into a pitcher. Bishr waited a lot and saw that his friend was not. He checked the depth of the pitcher and saw that it was a well closed and covered with faience. Taking off Malikha from the well, he was surprised that the man who was talking about the secrets of the earth, he could not distinguish a pitcher from a well. He buried him and took off his clothes and a thousand dinar gold coins and inquired and found his house and gave it to his wife. her.

The woman, who was aware of the situation, cried for a while and talked about Malika's bad temper and cruelty. She saw Bishr as a noble and kind man and offered to marry her. As the woman took off the cover, he saw the bush as she crossed the street in front of him and watched his heart at first glance. He is married to her.

By the way, it should be noted that the Turkish mystical poet of the 14th century Gülshahri translated Nizami's story into Turkish by the name of "Bishrname" in his work "Mantigut-teyr", he showed the hero of Nizami's story Bishr in "Seven Beauties" as a real character of akhi, and showed him as an example for the religious personality that they call themselves akhi.

Əxilikdən əxi Bişr ağəh durur,
Sənə əxi ad qoyan əbləh durur.
Kim əxilikdən o yetdi Tanriya,
Sənin işin qamusu zərqu-ziya.¹

Akhi Bishr knows what is akhi,
The fool who gave you the name of akhi is saved.

¹ Gulshahri. Mantikut-teyr. A.S.Levend. Turk Tarih Kurumu basim evi. Ankara, 1957,s.174

Who joined to God from akhi,
Your work is to dress the blue cloth.

As we have seen, this story, which shows that the fate of both images is compatible with the nature of the oblasts, ends with being a victim of the flesh of Malikha and the desire of the intentional Bishr.

Speaking about the beautiful green color the beauty of Kharezm she says:

سبزی پوشش به از علامت زرد	سبزی آمد به سروین در خورد
رنگ سبزی طلاح گشته بود	سبزی آرایش فرشته بود
جان به سبزی گراید از همه چیز	چشم روشن به سبزه گردد تیز
رستنی را به سبزه آهنگ است	همه سر سبزی ای بدین رنگ است

(1, 807)

(The green dress is better than the yellow. Greenery suits to the cypress tree. The green color gives beauty to the plant. The greenness is an ornament of the angels. The soul can be more like the greenery. The plant wants greenery. All youthfulness are in this color).

۲On Wednesday Bahram Shah goes to the red Palace, which is in harmony with the planet Mars (Marx) with red clothing, to Nasrinnush, the fourth prince of the climate. The Slavic beauty tell him a genius and an exciting adventure of a brave Russian prince, chosen by his intelligence and mind.

"A king who ruled in one of the Russian provinces, the famous charming daughter with a moon and a skill and knowledge of the king built for herself a magic fortress and scraped her picture on the wall with the writing that who gets to the castle and fulfills her requirements she will get marry for him. Many young people who were attracted to the beauty of the girl thought she was going to get it, but died because they could not find the secrets of the castle.

Once a brave young man arrives in the city after getting lesson for a while from a wise old man, he can open the mysteries of her fortune with his intelligence, and accomplished whatever she wants and he achieved his wish.

The story expresses the victory of the lady Saglab in the red-dressed, and the man's wisdom, the mind, the science, that of folk wisdom, courage and will. The young man, also achieve his desire with his courage. Neither the challenging conditions laid by the girl, nor the cut-off the heads next to the picture made him afraid. Self-confidence, blessing, and advice of an elder help to open the magic mysteries and gave him invisible spirit. Undoubtedly magical spells do not go on with a realistic opportunity. The hero wins not only for his own will, but also for the blessing of the people's happiness, to destroy a tragedy of many young people's unwanted blood.

As the hero for the vengeance wearing red colored dresses, the Slavic beauty notes that he became famous as “Red-dressed king”. The red color praises the kindness, the symbol of victory, and declares that this color is a unique decoration:

گوهر سرخ را بها زین است	سرخ آرایشی نو آیین است
سرخ آمد نکوترین سلبش	زر که گوگرد سرخ شد لقبش
سرخ از آن شد که لطف جان دارد	خون که آمیزش روان دارد
سرخ رویی ست اصل نیکویی	در کسانی که نیکویی جویی
گر ز سرخی در او نشان نبود	سرخ گل شاه بوستان نبود

(1, 820)

(Red is a very beautiful color. That is why the red jewel is a very expensive. For the gold which nickname was red sulfur redness became a beautiful dress. The blood that mixes with the soul became red, because it has the delicate nature of the soul. If you seek goodness in somebody, know that the red cheek is the originality of beauty. If the rose was not red it would be not a king of a flower garden).

* * *

Bahram comes to the blue colored Palace connected with the Mercuri (Utarid) planet of the fifth climate princess on Wednesday. The beauty of the West country Azeryun talks about the story of a merchant named Mahan, living in the Egyptian country, following the desires of Shah.

“When the rich young Mahan was in the evening party in a beautiful garden with his friends his companion reported to him that he had brought to him much goods and offered to transport his goods to the city at night without customs. Mahan joins his companion and goes on rejoicing. On the way, the companion of Mahan disappears suddenly. Mahan stays alone in the darkness, drowsing in the desert, in an inexplicable wilderness. Ogres, jinn and witches are repeatedly mistreated and misled him. Finally, helplessness Mahan prayed for God and asked for help. The legendary savior Prophet Khizr, saves him from troubles.

In this story, which shows that there is a great deal of trouble in the face of a man who does not have any material difficulties in the face of Mahan, it is condemned the destructive effects of covetousness in human destiny. It is condemned to be excessively alienated to the bounties of life, and the greedy person who cannot control his soul is always in a state of panic.

It is no coincidence that Mahan, who repeatedly suffered from his greediness only repents and pray for God and after giving up the promise that not to be greedy and after it he is saved.

The prince noted that Mahan’s friends wore blue dresses thinking that he died, and Mahan also after all these adventures also wore blue dress had no desire to red, black and other colors.

خوشتتر از رنگ او نیافت پرند	ازرق آن است کاسمان بلند
آفتابش به قرص خوان گردد	هر که همرنگ آسمان گردد
قرصه از قرص آفتاب کند	گل ازرق که آن حساب کند
گل ازرق در او نظر دارد.	هر سویی کافتاب سر دارد

(1, 838)

The heaven does not find a good color than blue. Who would be with the same color of sky he is able to change the Sun to his color. The flower of Azrag knows this and takes its power from the Sun. Where the sun turns its face the flower of Azrag also turns face there.

* * *

Bahram Shah went to the colored Palace of the 6th climate Prince Jupiter (Client), which is considered to be one of the successful days of the week on Friday, listening to the story of two young men called “Kheyir and Sher” (“Good and Evil” by Chinese girl Yagmanaz.

The two young men, called “Good and Evil”, are the opposite of each other in nature. Knowing that the road would fall from dry deserts, the Evil filled the glass with water and carried it secretly from “Good”. “Good” who was a stranger for the road, did not care about it, ate his own food, drank and greeted his friends generously. After a few days under the sunny sun, Good’s water runs out. He sees the water of the Evil and wants water. But the Evil needs his eyes for a little water. The thirsty lasts for a long time and made him weak. Finally he agreed the offer of the Evil.

The cruel Evil dropped onto his eyes without any hesitation. He plundered his water and put him alone in a dry desert, and did not give him water and continued on his way. But Good comes from the mercy of the merciful Kurdish girl and her noble family. Soon he reached his high rank and became rich. One day, by chance, Good met the Evil, who had recognized him, fell to his feet, asked him to forgive his sins. Although he is forgiven of Good he is being punished by the Kurd and killed.

This episode of Chinese beauty is reflected in the fact that the society has always been harmed by the Evil forces. As the Evil gained, he tried to destroy it and to cut its roots off the earth. This instructive story, which shows the necessity of fighting against social strife, once

more reaffirms that, the truth, the plain is subjected to severe blows, but it is not entirely destroyed. The victory of Evil cannot be over Good permanent. The story illustrates the existence of the real forces protecting the public from the face of the Kurdish girl and her family who helped the cause.

One of the worthy of the story is that the struggle must be done against the general Evil which is trouble for humanity. The defeat of greed is inevitable in the struggle for a noble purpose, high ideals and benevolent deeds.

In the story it is shown that Good's eyes are treated with a leaf of sandal tree. This indefinite blessedness of nature brings a few other desperate patients to life and heals them.

The Good would spend most of his day under the shade of sandal tree. The Chinese princess said that he was wearing a sandal color shirt and she adds:

بوی صندل نشان جان دارد صندل آسایش روان دارد
تب ز دل تابش از جگر ببرد صندل سوده درد سر ببرد
(1, 753)

(Sandal gives fragrance to the spirit, in the fragrance of sandal has a sign of soul. Grinded sandal takes the headache, heartburn, and pain from lungs).

* * *

On Friday the Shah wearing white dress goes to the white dome harmonious with the princess of the Venus (Zohra) planet of the seventh climate goes on to a dome. An Iranian Shah's splendid daughter Durseti¹, tells him story about the white color heard from her mother. "One day the most enthusiastic young who admires the

¹ Durseti – the meaning of the name is translated as pearl lady. This name can also be read as Dorosti (as "honesty"). In both ways, the meaning of the name is proper to the text.

genius and knowledge is surprised to see that the door is closed when he was walking in his garden. Inside of the room the music sounds are heard. The owner of the garden knocked the door, but no one can open it. He makes a hole on the fence and enters inside. He sees a group of girls playing in the garden.

The girls first assume that he is a thief and wanted to punish him. However, later they believed that he is the owner of the garden and suggested him to choose one of the beautiful girl whom he likes. The owner of the garden chose a beauty like angel among the ladies in the garden, and loves her, and goes with her to the corner of the garden. However, unexpected events that follow one another prevented the lovers. Each time, an event is flooded by the balcony, and the voices of cats, mice, and foxes frighten them. Finally, they decided not to hide in a gorgeous corner of the garden, and they decided to marry on the tradition and get married.

This story of the Iranian beauty also inspires the king to make him think about spotless morality, high morals, clean names, ghosts, desires and other moral values.

The story of the two young men who experienced an unnatural voyage every time they are facing a mania, family life invites to live in a pure name.

Finally, the lady Durseti pointed out that the white color is a symbol of purity, clarity and power:

وز سپیدی ست مه جهان افروز	در سپیدی است روشنای روز
جز سپیدی که او نیالوده ست	همه آنکه تکلف اندود است
سنت آمد سپید پوشیدن.	در پرستش به وقت کوشیدن

(1, 866)

(The light of the day is of its whiteness. And the Moon is illuminated by its lightness. All colors are faded and confused, except for the white ones,

and it has no mixture. It is customary to wear white clothes when it is time for praying).

Bahram, who listens to the sweet fairy tale of seven beauties, is deprived of state work and relies on his vizier Rast Rovshan. Rast Rovshan uses the king's trust to scatter the people, crush the army, and crush the treasure. Contacting Bahram's enemies, he tells them that the country and the people are not in a state of defiance or defense. The news of the re-attack of Chinese khagan is shattered Bahram.

Being in the most difficult position Shah finds no way out and wants to dispel the troubles with the only consoling plain. During the hunt, he met the old shepherd hanging his dog from a tree. Bahram asks the shepherd the course. The shepherd said that his dog, for many years, has secretly been in contact with the wolf and that is why this dog is cursed and punished for the horrible death:

بر امانت خیانتی بردوخت	وآن امینی به خابنی بفرودخت
رخصت آن شد که تا بخواد مرد	از چنین بند جان نخواهد برد
هر که با مجرمان چنین نکند	هیچ کس بروی آفرین نکند

(This dog betrayed his soul from it, and whoever does not deal with the guilty will be of no benefit to him. These exemplary words of the old shepherd awaken Bahram's sudden sleep, thinking deeply about it. The Shah sees a similarity between the shepherd's adventure and his present condition. As the betrayal he saw from his best helper was the cause of the destruction of the herd, Bahram sees the reason for the disaster he suffered in his country:

گفت با خود کزین شبانه پیر	شاهی آموختم زهی تدبیر
در نمودار آدمیت من	من شبانم گله رعیت من
اینکه دستور تیزبین من است	در حفاض گله امین من است
چون نماند اساس کار درست	از امین رخنه باز باید جست

(1, 874)

(He said to himself that he learned govern of the old shepherd. This is an event! I am a shepherd and a flock is my people. Because I do not have the foundation properly, so I have to ask the man I believe in. Let him say that this is a ruin, and who puts it down?)

As Bahram reached the city he called his vizier and informed him of the reason for the country's fall. Requires a list of prisoners. He looks at the paper and sees that his name is a dishonor, and good works are written in the name of the vizier. The vizier is put into the dungeon. He summoned his people to the palace, chose seven from among the prisoners and those who were losers and interrupted them. It turns out that the vizier had killed one of prisoner's brother with a great of suffer and had all that he had. He was robbed of his home because he was "an defender of enemies" and put him into the prison.

The second prisoner was forced to give his garden, then tortured and was put into prison. The third prison is the sea merchant. He often travelled. They sold ruby and earned their life. The vizier knew this gained his rubies, and robbed the other jewels and put him into prison.

Vizier took off the beautiful beloved of the fourth prisoner, and then he declared himself the owner of the observatory of the fifth prisoner and drove out of his home and children.

From the words of the sixth prisoner, it is understood that he was a stubborn fighter serving his life as a faithful servant. Vizier took him out the place of the cedar and precious arable land and his horse and his weapon and sent him to the prison for three years.

The seventh prisoner was ascetic and never thought of eating and drinking, worldly praying for God. Vizier was afraid of his

blessed prayers and ordered to tie both his feet and his hands with a rope and put him in jail.

Bahram, who is terrified by the words of the prisoners, cannot sleep at night, and punished the brutal vizier in front of everyone. The work ends with humanist views about the justice of the great poet:

وز بدی هست بد سرنجामी	از خیانتگریست بدنامی
عادلانش چنین کنند به گور	ظالمی کان چنان نماید شور
آسمان و زمین بدین کار است	تا نگویی که عدل بی یار است
کنده بردست و پای خویش نهاد	هر که میخ و کدینه پیش نهان
یاد کرد از سگ و شبانه و گرگ.	پس از این داوری نمای بزرگ

(1, 884)

The disgrace is from treachery. The disgrace comes from malice. If the tyranny continues like this, the justice people will send him to the grave. Do not say that the justice has no friend and the earth and the sky are in this state, and every one who puts nail and handcuffs before himself, he puts them for himself. He remembered the dog, the shepherd and the wolf.

Bahram called his shepherd and appointed him governor. He takes the oppression from the country. As we mentioned before, Nizami is clearly reflected in the comments and suggestions of the shepherd character depicted in the works of intelligent persons in the country's administration, which are described as symbols of human wisdom in their works.

The great patriotic poet pays more attention to the problem of justice, in the public-political thought of the country's administration, and to the vizier who can be among the state figures. In the first poem of "Khamsa", he has also created various viziers images from the wise vizier of Anushiravan, who skillfully describes the song of birds. The vizier, who recalls the poet's address to history, is also interested in the records of people who have worked in the government:

داشت اسکندر ارسطاطاليس کزوی آموخت علمهای نفیس
 بزم نوشیروان سپهری بود کز جاهنش بزرگمهری بود
 بود پرویزرا چه باربدی که نوا صد نه صد هزار زدی
 و آن ملک را که بد ملکشه نام بود دین پروری چو خواجه نظام
 (1.698)

(The Iskandarar had Aristotle, and he had learned from him the most beautiful sciences. The Nushirevan council was as the sky. He had in the world his Bozorgmehri, Perviz had Barbed which played not a hundred but a thousand hundred songs. The king of Malikshah had a vizier defender of religion, he says.)

Nizami returned to this problem his book Sharafname:

همه کار شاهان گیتی پژوه ز رای وزیران پذیرد شکوه
 ملکشاه و محمود و نویشن روان که بردند گوی از همه خسروان
 پذیرای پند وزیران شدند که از جمله دور گیران شدند
 (1, 942)

(All the shahs' works found glory with the opinions of the noble viziers. Melikshah, Mahmud, and Nushiravan, who were superior to all the kings, and they always heard their viziers' counsels, and prevailed).

The poet's familiarity with the literary and artistic achievements of many peoples, the immortal art monument created by the encyclopedic information, is a new page in Nizami's creative work, which is closely acquainted with the philosophy of the "Seven Beauties" and the period. Because of the other poems like "Khamsa", "Seven Beauties" is famous as one of the rare examples of world literature and has been lovingly followed by its value for centuries. Many prominent artists have applied this theme, and under the influence of Nizami's poem had been created a lot of colorful works of art in Western literature as in the East.

The works such as “Hasht Behisht” by A.Kh.Dehlevi (13th c.), “Heft Ovrengh” by Maraghali Ashraf (15th c), Alisher Navoi’s ‘Sabeyar Seyyar” (15th c.), Hatifi’s “ Haft Manzar” (15th c.), Ruhul Amin’s “Bahramnameh” (16th c.), Fuzuli's "Haft Jam” (16th c.), Lamini's "Haft Peykar” (16th c.), Subhizadeh Feyzullah's "Haft Seyyara” (16th c.), Navezadeh Atai's "Haft Khan” (17th c.) had been written under the influence of the poem “Seven Beauties” by Nizami Genjevi.

The stories included in the "Seven Beauties" were translated into Turkic from the 14th century by Gülshahri and included to the work of "Mantiqut-teyr”, and translated into Turkish in the 15th century by the well-known Turkish poet Mohammed Efendi Eshqi. In 1872, the poem "Seven Beauties" was translated into Turkish by a literary personality named "Emin Yumni" under the title of “Terjume-yi-haft peyler”.

Nizami’s poem gained fame not only in the Islamic world, but also in the Christian world. The 16th century Georgian poet Nodar Tsisishvili wrote a poem called "Bahramquriani" on Nizami's poem "Seven Beauties".

Extensively were spoken about the influence of Nizami on Western European literature, and spoken about the influence of poet's "Seven Beauties" on Bokkacho's "Ameto" and compared the poem ‘Seven Beauties” by Nizami with the poem "Princess Turandot" by Carlo Gozzi.

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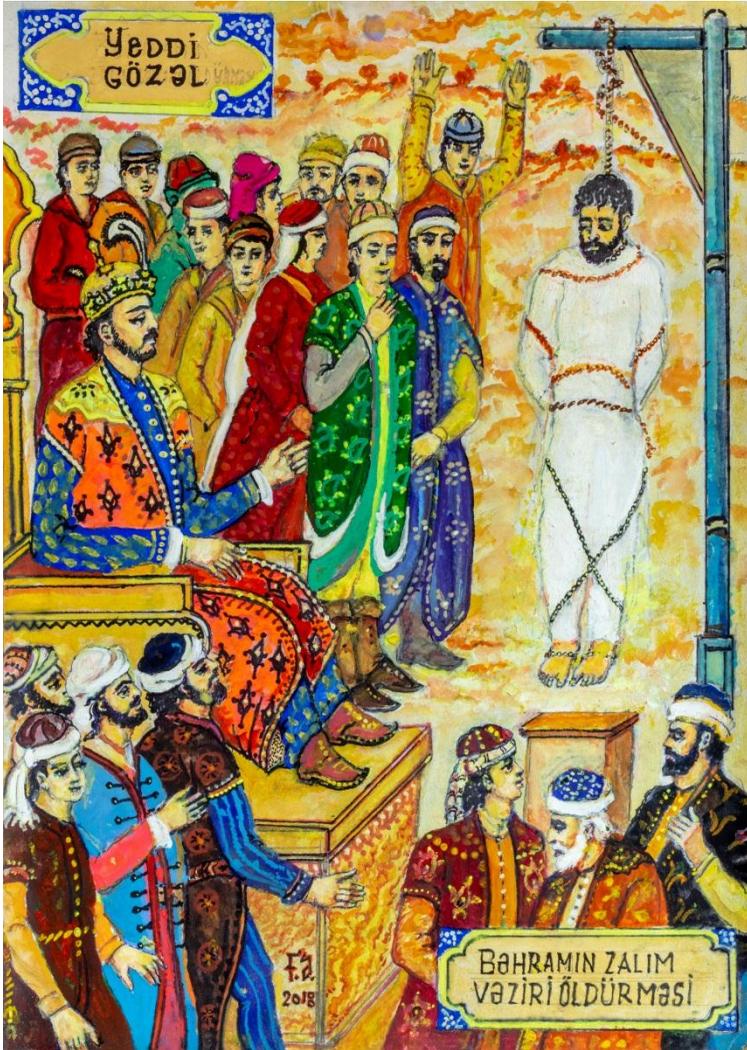
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„Seven Beauties“.Bahram slays a dragon and finds the treasure
by Fakhraddine Ali



„Seven Beauties“. Bahram executes cunning vizier
by Fakhraddine Ali

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The Lyrics of Nizami Ganjavi

The works of Nizami Ganjavi the brilliant Azerbaijani poet, are famous not only in his homeland but all over the world. Though he lived in the XII century, the subject of his works is still relevant today; which is once more a proof of his genius and unchanging personality. Like many poets who write poems in massive volumes, Ganjavi also began his creative career with lyric poems. The world-famous poet did not remain indifferent to lyric poetry, and also wrote ghazals, qasidas, quatrains and verses.

Divan of Nizami was at certain times in Turkey, Central Asia, library of Palace of Safavids; also Zakariya al-Qazwini the writer of *Athar al-Bilad* (XIII century), Dowlatshah Samarqandi the author of *Tazkarat al-Shoara* (XV century), Saib Tabrizi the writer of "Safina" (XVII century) and others have witnessed this Divan, talked about it and gave instances of it. According to Dowlatshah Samarqandi, other than "Khamseh", Nizami has a Divan consisting about 20 thousand verses. This statement makes us believe that Dowlatshah has seen "Divan" of Nizami and even calculated its volume¹.

A group of sources referring to Nizami's lyric poetry is a series of *Tadhkirahs* written at different periods. The *Tadhkirah* which has given the first example of poet's lyric is "Lubabul Ul-abab" by Aufi. (1221) Aufi did not himself see the Nizami Divan, but brought three examples of Ghazal which had heard from an old man in Neyshabur². So it seems that in XII century Nizami knew his poetry from memory, however the Divan in which these poems were collected was not yet

¹ Nizami Ganjavi. *Lyrics*. Baku, 1983. p.8.

² Yusifov.X. *The lyric of Nizami*. Baku, 1968. P.16.

spread in a vast area. Dowlatshah Samarqandi (1487) saw Divan of Nizami consisting 20,000 verses, but only brought one example of it. Abdul Rahman Jami (1414-1492) who was well-aware of Nizami's divan, responded to a number of his poems, including the well-known "Qocaliq" qasida, and was satisfied by giving one ghazal of Aufi. A century later in Tadhkirah of the deceased Taqi al-Din Kashani (1585), 21 poems of Nizami lyric were collected. The general volume of these poems is 180 verses. Interestingly, T. Kashani has not seen Nizami Divan, but collected all these poems from different sources¹.

At the end of one of his ghazals, the brilliant poet called Shirvanshah Akhsitan the owner of his divan:

پیش نظامی خرام تا بتو سر بر کند
تاج ملوک اخستان صاحب دیوان من²

**Come to Nizami, and let him be exalted with you
King of the Kings, Akhsitan is the owner of my Divan.**

He also mentioned in his poems the Nizami's lyric poetry. In his first book, "The Treasure of Secrets" he writes as following:

شعر نظامی شکر افشان شده
ورد غزالان غزلخوان شده³

**Nizami poem is scattering suger
Ghazal singing gazelles have memorized it.**

Also in his work "Khosrow and Shirin", he indicates in the following verse that the singers of "Eldagizlar" palace sing his ghazals:

غزلهای نظامی را غزالان
زده بر زخمهای چنگ نالان¹

¹ Yusifov.X. The lyric of Nizami. Baku, 1968. P.17.

² Ganjine-ye Ganjavi, A memorial and gift of Vahid Dastgerdi, Tehran, 1955, p.219.

³ Nizami Ganjavi, Makhzan al-Asrar, A scientific and critical text of Abdul Karim Ali Oghli Alizadeh, Baku, 1960, p.65.

The beautiful with harps
Sing Nizami Ghazals sorrowfully

Well-known scholars such as Y.Bertels, H.Arasli, R. Aliyev, V.Dastgerdi, S.Nafisi, X.Yusifov, and A.Rustamova studied the lyric of Nizami and wrote scientific articles and books in this field. Since 1918 Iranian scholars Said nafisi, and V.Dastgerdi, Russian Orientalist Y.N.Marr in 1924, Czech Orientalist Y.Ripka in 1935, and Y.E.Bertels and H.Arasli from the late 1930s separately began to collect and print the poems found in anthologies and Tadhkirahs.

In 1941 V.Dastgerdi published the Nizami poems he collected from various sources in a magazine called "Armaghan" in the name of "Ganjineye-Ganjavi ya daftare-haftome hakim Nezamiye Ganjavi". He divided the collected poems into three categories:

1. Poems the undoubtedly belong to Nizami (including 5 qasida, 56 ghazals, 2 verses, 9 quatrains).

2. Poems that seem to be doubtful to belong to Nizami (the 29 ghazals included here basically belong to Nizami).

3. Definitely not belonging to Nizami. The poems of Molla Nizami, lived in Iran and India, during the Safavid era (here are 7 qasidas, 49 ghazals, 6 verses, 39 quatrains).

Publishment of "Ganjineyi-Ganjavi "was an important event. It was because Dastgerdi published many poems collected from various sources as a book. Certainly, it would be wrong to call the division of the book that belonged to poems of Nizami as the ideal section. However, Dastgerdi had done a great job in his own age. After this incident, many scholars began to speak confidently, and not doubtfully about the lyric of Nizami.

¹ Nizami Ganjavi, Khosrow and Shirin, Organizer of scientific and critical text: Leh and Aleksandrovich Khee Takurov, Baku, 1960, p.787.

One of the other eminent Iranian scholars investigating Nizami's lyrics is Said Nafisi. Showing his disagreement with Dastgerdi he noted that it was necessary to publish all the works written to belong to Nizami with their sources and as they are. Because firstly the same works are written in the name of Nizami in the sources, and secondly, great poets can also sometimes write poor works.¹

Although Nafisi refers poems written by a poet known as Nizami to Nizami, but Dastgerdi does not agree with this idea and does not admit that Nizami can write a weak piece of poetry. The correctness of this statement is also confirmed by the poems in Istanbul anthology manifested by S. Nafisi. Among these poems there is not even one verse of weak work. At the same anthology, 59 poems of Nizami are given. From among these, 29 of them exist in "Ganjineye Ganjavi". According to V.Dastgerdi 27 out of the 29 poems definitely belong to Nizami, and the other 2 poems are included in the division not belonging to Nizami. Now, these 2 poems should also be included in the list of Nizami works. It is exactly this aspect that to some extent proves the value of the principles of Dastgerdi.²

Both S.Nafisi and V.Dastgerdi, despite some shortcomings, have made unexampled efforts in the collection, printing and recognition of Nizami lyrics.

"Except Nizami, the great admirer of love, nobody could create such a lyric; this lyric does not lose its power even when compared with the eye-catching scenes of his great poems".³ Famous Russian scholar Y.E.Bertels, who has given special services in the study and learning of Nizami's lyricism, wrote a series of interesting ideas about the poet's lyric in his book but did not give a broad scientific analysis.

¹ Nizami Ganjavi. *Divan of Qasads and Ghazals*, Said Nafisi, Tehran, 1959.

² Yusifov.X. *Lyric of Nizami*. Baku, 1968. P.30.

³ E.E. Bertels. *Essay on the history of Persian literature*, L. 1928. P. 38.

In Azerbaijan, when doing research on Nizami is mentioned, it is necessary to introduce the name of Professor Hamid Arasli first. In the preface of his book entitled "Lyrics of Nizami Ganjavi", he states that the poet has many times reminded of his ghazals among his poems:

**My ghazal gives ears a voice like that of organon
My work makes happy the hearts just like tulip-colored wine¹**

"It is possible to determine from compliments written by Nizami before "Treasure of Secrets" that he has first introduced himself through lyric poems:

**I am the King of meanings, my virtue is obvious
Earth and time can judge that my art is as big as sky²**

Just like his lyric poetry being a novelty, he says that his ghazals are renowned as well:

**Yes, generosity is made of compassion, and word made of me,
My art scatters freshness, as if it is a youngster.
My ghazal gives ears a voice like that of organon,
Like a tulip-colored wine, my work gives happiness to hearts.³**

One of the interesting ideas in H. Arasli's scientific and artistic work is that he speaks about his divan in the preface of "Leyli and Majnun":

**One day I was happy as if the world was,
Like Key Qubad I was in trouble.
My eyebrows are angry similar to a bow,**

¹ Nizami Ganjavi. Lyrics. Baku, 1940. P.1.

² Nizami Ganjavi. Ghazals. Baku, 1956. P. 5.

³ Nizami Ganjavi, Ghazals, Baku, 1959, p.5.

**The divan I've written is standing before me.
I raised flag to the summit of word,
I was again writing the board of art.¹**

M.A.Rasulzade in his book "Nizami Ganjavi, the Azarbaijani Poet" discusses lyrics of the brilliant Nizami Ganjavi; he states that: "the qasidas written by the poet do not resemble qasidas full of flattery written for kings and sultans of that era. The Nizami's qasidas, as the memoirists say unanimously, consist of moral admonitions calling for sufism, isolation and seclusion, diet of the worldly blessings, and trying for the good of all.² The scholar also states that, before writing "treasure of secrets", he was a well-known person through qasada, ghazal and other kinds of poets.³

One of the other scholars involved in studying Nizami's creativity, including lyric, is M.Alizade. He presented his views on Nizami Ganjavi in his book "History of Azerbaijani Literature". Alizade concluded that he (Nizami) has completed a large part of his lyric works before writing his first great work named "treasure of secrets". When many years of creativity and writing experiences gave the desired results and his ghazals were spread among people and loved by everyone, he decides to start writing works in large scales. According to Alizade, the idea that some part of Nizami's lyrics is written in Azerbaijani language still remains a strong possibility.⁴

It is obvious that the brilliant poet had used a lot of Turkish words in the works included in his "Khamse". Conditions of that period and orders of kings persuaded Nizami to write in Farsi language, but he used Azarbaijani proverbs, sayings and folk belief statements

¹ Nizami Ganjavi, Lyrics, Baku, 1940, p.1.

² Mammad Amin Rasulzadeh. Azerbaijani poet Nizami. Baku 2008. P. 62.

³ Mammad Amin Rasulzadeh. Azerbaijani poet Nizami. Baku 2008. P. 63.

⁴ A.Mubariz. Nizami Ganjavi. History of Azerbaijan Literature, Vol.1, Baku, 1960. P.19.

vastly in his poetry. Showing our consent with M. Alizade we could say that, most probably, Nizami Ganjavi has written ghazal, qasida, and quatrain in Azerbaijani language. But unfortunately they have not survived till the present time.

Nizami Ganjavi lyrics cover three forms of the Eastern poetry including ghazal, qasida, and quatrain. Even though a small portion of his poems has survived to the present time, but it enables us to express ideas of the great poet's lyrical heritage.

Pure love, sympathy, industriousness, hatred against oppressors and tyrants, contradictions of feudal society, truth, justice, and social life shape the basis of Nizami lyrics. The lyric poems of Nizami due to their powerful artistic influences are not left behind by popular poems.

As we know, in XII century, qasida possessed a very important position in Azerbaijani poetry. It was widely spread in Arab literature which emerged before Islam and later in Persian literature. Like other poets, Nizami was also attracted to this form of poetry, i.e. lyric. Qasida is rhymed as aa, ba, ca....and so on. It varies according to its subjects; they can be political, social, philosophical, and religious. Besides these, there are qasidas written in the praise of the rulers, laudation of poets, description of various events, the poet's material, spiritual state, his old age, and injustice of the era. In the early years of creation of qasida, it was more limited to the praise of the kings.

Eulogy qasidas basically include introduction, transition, eulogy, honor, and prayer sections. Although the subjects of introduction to eulogy are not restricted, but visions of nature and love pieces seem to be more suitable. The only thing that differentiated palace poets from each other was the introduction part of their qasidas.

In eulogies, the ignorant, cruel, cowardly, and murderous rulers are admired in a manner as if they take care of their heroic and fair subjects and have no equals in the world. The poets did not abstain of any kind of falsehood or exaggeration while praising one person.

There is nothing close to reality in the eulogies. The leading intellectuals of that era have always had negative attitude toward the palace poetry.

Ganjavi himself, despite his negative attitude to the palace poetry, has written several eulogies throughout his innovative career. The eulogy found in poems of his only qasida which is available today, also conforms this point.

From the "Divan" of Nizami, 6 qasidas are at hand today. One of them is about eulogy, the other is a complimentary piece, and one other is related to the image of poet's old age; the remained 3 qasidas have social and moral contents. The size of Nizami qasidas is between 30-60 verses. These qasidas began with Matla verse, and ended in Maqta verse. In the first verse of qasida, both hemistichs are rhymed. In the following verses, the first hemistich is left free, and the second hemistich is rhymed with the first verse. The examples of which are given below:

هم جرس جنبید و هم در جنبش آمد کاروان

Bells were ringing and Caravan started moving

وقت آن است که این مهره مششدر گردد

It is time for this bead to move sextet

ملک الملوک فضلم بفضیلت معانی

By virtue of meaning, I am the Malik al-Muluk (king) of virtues

در این چمن که ز پیری خمیده شد کمرم

In this world which my waist in bent by aging

سلطان کعبه را بین بر تخت هفت کشور

See the Sultan of Kaaba on the throne of seven countries

چراغ دل شب افروز است و چشم عقل نورانی¹

The light of the heart is night-kindling and the eyes of the intellect are bright

¹ Ganjine-ye Ganjavi, A memorial and gift of Vahid Dastgerdi, Tehran, 1955, pp. 174-209.

According to V.Dastgerdi, five qasidas belong to Nimazi. The author extracted the first three qasidas from the Majma ul-fusaha, the fourth from Saib's anthology and the fifth from Khalkhali. The last qasida is written in the name of Nizami in an anthology arranged in 1328. Like other poems here, there is no doubt that this qasida also belongs to Nizami.¹

Nizami's qasidas talk about various topics. He calls the oppressive kings and persons not to torment and suppress people and behave them with justice:

چون ز تو عدلی نیاید ظلم را در کش عنان
 ظالمان را در قیامت خصم باشد مملکت
 صرعیان را در مساحت چاه باشد نردبان
 نان کس مستان و آن خوب میر گر عاقلی
 تا فرشته از شیاطین خواندت جزیت ستان²

Lessen your oppression, because your travel food is made of justice,

Even if you practice no justice, rein your oppression.

In Resurrection day the estate will be hostile to the oppressors,

The ladder on the way will be a well for contemptible ones.

**If you are wise, do not take another's bread and do not make yourself a bad
 person,**

Or the angel will call you one of devils, the Jazya taker

One of the other subjects that Nizami propagated throughout his life is industriousness. According to the poet, it is an honor for a person to gain his livelihood with hard hand work, and callus made due to labor. Highly appreciating human labor, Nizami says:

گر همه جلاب دارد آبجوی کس مخور
 ور همه تسبیح باشد نقش نان کس مخوان
 شیر همت شو مخور جز کسب دست خویشتن
 تا بنخجیر تو باشد وحش صحرا میهمان¹

¹ Yusif.X. Lyrics of Nizami. Baku. 1968. P. 80

² Ganjine-ye Ganjavi, A memorial and gift of Vahid Dastgerdi, Tehran, 1955, p.80.

**Do not drink another's water, even though it is cure,
Do not lay your hands on one's bread, even though it is prayer beads.
Be a lion of effort, and only eat the earning of your own hands,
Let the wilds of the desert be guests of your table of food.**

The great poet shows his opposition with unjust rulers and believes that if the ruler maltreat and tyrannize the subjects, one day he will definitely be punished for this act. This is because the burden of misery loaded on the subjects is never everlasting. Righteousness and truth always win:

چو تو در بند رهی دانه به انبار بنه
که گیاهی به یکی خوشه توانگر گردد
وای آن روز که در کشمکش مظلومان
بر سرت هر سر مویی سر خنجر گردد
با تو کس را نبود در دو جهان رویی
همه انصاف تو در شکر تو داور گردد²

**Now that you are a passenger, put every seed in the storehouse,
Because a plant is made powerful with even one leaf.
Woe to a day when in the struggle of the oppressed,
Every strand of hair on your head will become a dagger.
In both worlds no one is hypocritical to you,
Your fairness will be your only judge.**

Nizami Ganjavi expressed his philosophical views on the world as in the following verses. The poet recalls the legend of earth's standing on a bull, and says:

کره خاک چو بر گاو نهادست بنا
هر بنایی که برین خاک نهی در گردد
گر نه شیر فلکی پنجه کشد گاو زمین
دارد آن پنجه که باشیر برابر گردد

¹ Ganjine-ye Ganjavi, A memorial and gift of Vahid Dastgerdi, Tehran, 1955, pp. 192-193.

² Nizami Ganjavi. Divan of Qasads and Ghazals, Said Nafisi, Tehran, 1959. P.224.

سگدلانند درین مزرعه میتراسم از آنک
شیر بددل شود و گاو دلاور گردد
مرغ زیرک نشود شاد برین چرخ کیود
ای بسا برج که زندان کیوتر گردد¹

**Because the Earth is standing on a bull,
Every building built on the Earth will be destroyed.
If the bull of the earth gets hands on the lion of sky,
Are its claws the same as the claws of lion.
The ones in this farm have hearts of dogs, I'm scared that,
Lion become cowardly, and the bull overcomes!
This blue sky does not make happy a smart bird,
There are many towers made to be prisons of pigeons.**

The poet who writes “Qojaliq” (old age) qasida in the last years of his life, does not discuss old age only. He opposes injustice and inequity existing among people, and calls the kings and feudal lords to the right path:

در این چمن که ز پیری خمیده شد کمرم
ز شاخهای بقا بعد از این چه بهره برم
نه سایه ایست ز نخلم نه میوه کس را
که تندباد حوادث بریخت برگ و برم²

**In this world which my waist is bent by aging,
What can I get from the branches of eternity after this.
My palm tree (being) does not have a shadow or a bitter fruit,
Because the harsh winds of the events poured down my fruits and leaves.**

Most part of the heritage of Nizami lyrics which is available today are ghazals. However, all the ghazals he wrote did not survive to

¹ Nizami Ganjavi. *Divan of Qasads and Ghazals*, Said Nafisi, Tehran, 1959. P.222.

² Ganjine-ye Ganjavi, *A memorial and gift of Vahid Dastgerdi*, Tehran, 1955, p. 19.0

the present time. It would be incorrect to refer all the ghazals written in Nizami's pseudonym to the brilliant poet.

Based on the work done so far regarding collection and publication of N.Ganjavi lyrics, and observations on a number of sources of classical Persian poetry, X.Yusifli considers the ghazals mentioned in the following sources as belonging to Nizami.¹

1. 59 ghazals existing in anthology number 4819, written in 1328 and now kept at Ayasofya library. These poems of Nizami were first discovered and published by S.Nafisi.

2. 25 ghazals existing in anthology number 2051, written in 1330 and now kept at Ayasofya library. These poems of Nizami were first discovered and published by Czechoslovakian orientalist Y.Ripka.

3. The ghazals recorded in Saib and Khalkhali anthologies. These poems were first published by V.dastgerdi.

4. A number of ghazals being in two anthologies estimated to be written in XIII-XIV centuries; one of which is kept in personal library of Majid Movaghar in Tehran, and the other is in library of literature faculty of Kabul university under the title of "Majmue-ye Lataef va Safineye Zaraef".

5. Almost all ghazals presented in Tadhkirahs of "Lubabul-elbab", "Tazkirat ul-Shuara", "khulasat al-ashar zebdat-ol afkar", "Haft Eqlim", "Riyazul Arifiye", and "Majmaul Fosaha".

Most ghazals are usually speaking about love. The poets usually wrote ghazals to describe the beauty of a woman, to praise her, to express their love, and explain afflictions and pains due to separation. Nizami also has not been indifferent to this genre and created beautiful examples:

دیدى که از غم تو بر من چه خواری آمد
بی آنکه هیچ رخنه در دوستداری آمد
رفتی چنانکه روزی رخ بازپیش نکردی

¹ Yusifov. X. Lyrics of Nizami. Baku, 1968. Pp.130-131.

ای آنکه عادت تو زنهار خواری آمد
با من که اگر نسازی خوبیست عذر خواهی
دانی که رسم خوبان ناسازگاری آمد¹

**See, how your grief disgraced me,
But my love to you did not change even a bit.
You gone, and did not turn back even a day,
Being disloyal to your promises have always been your habit.
The reason that makes you not to get along with me is your beauty,
You know well that incompatibility is the mode of the pretty-faces.**

Here the poet tells readers that he is not tired of being in love, and although this love has disgraced him but is still loyal to the lover; he is sorrowful and suffers from the lover's cruelty, but has not yet lost his morale.

Ghazals of Nizami can be distinguished from other poets' works through lively, fighting, and persistent character of the lyrical hero, who is always struggling for his freedom. The lyrical hero does not lose hope, believes in the future, is optimistic, and if he is in a desperate situation, do his best to get out of it. Even if his beloved leave him, he doesn't despair and believes that one day the lover will come back.

The poet criticizing the injustices of his time, cruelty of the rulers, and execution of the unjust laws in his works, calls people to the right path and asks them to be good to one another. These features once again prove that Nizami was a humanist poet:

خیزو کام دل از این منزل ویران مطلب
غنچه عافیت از گلشن دوران مطلب
باش قانع بنشان قدم ناقه صبر
خاک خور، خاک و در این ره ز کسی نان مطاب
دل پریشان مکن از ژنده صد پاره خویش
سر برون آر ز دامان گریبان مطلب¹

¹ Ganjine-ye Ganjavi, A memorial and gift of Vahid Dastgerdi, Tehran, 1955, p.214

**Stand up, do not ask the longing of your heart from a ruined home,
Do not ask for bud of blessing from the garden of time.
Be satisfied with the path that camel of patience shows you,
Eat dirt! To have a comfortable life do not demand bread from others.
Do not get upset because of your dress torn to pieces,
Keep your head up, and do not ask for charity from others.**

The main idea in this ghazal is patience. According to Nizami, everything in life can be achieved through patience. Therefore, it is not worth to demand anything from this ruined home! Eat dirt but do not open your hand for a piece of bread to others. He asks people to work and gain their livelihood through labor and trouble. He invites them not to be ashamed of their old, ripped clothing, and advises to always hold their head up.

Most parts of Nizami's lyrical poems are basically about complaints and dissatisfactions that the poet has of his time. He does not only complain the kings, and representatives of the upper class, but also calls people to justice and philanthropy. Everyone should engage in work that he has the power to do, and is also beneficial to others. According to the poet, if there is no justice in a society, it will fall into an abyss.

Quatrain was one of the other types of lyrical poem that the poet was engaged in. just like ghazal and qasida, only a few of Nizami's quatrains have reached until today. According to V.Dastgerdi, from among 46 quatrains he has collected from different sources, 9 of them are assumed to belong to Nizami, the rest are published in a separate section, like the works of Safavid Period Nizamis. The author has taken

¹ Nizami Ganjavi. *Divan of Qasads and Ghazals*, Said Nafisi, Tehran, 1959. P.264

5 of the 9 quatrains from anthology of Saib, 3 of them from “Haft Eqlim”, and 1 from “Majma ul-Fusaha” Tadhkirahs. ¹

This is while, S.Nafisi has published all works written in the name of Nizami, including quatrains, mentioning their references. The number of Nizami quatrains are 68 in his publication. Of course, it would be wrong to accept all the poems written in the name of Nizami to belong to Nizami. X.Yusifli considering features of form and content, whether they belong or do not belong to other authors, assumes that the following quatrains are held by Nizami:²

1. The 9 quatrains specified by V.Dastgerdi.

2. The 10 quatrains that S.Nafisi has taken from the collection of quatrains arranged by the Azerbaijani poet, Jamal al-Din Khalil Shirvani in the middle of XIII century.

3. The 2 quatrains chosen from the same poet’s anthology seemingly compiled after the death of Saadi.

So far 28 quatrains are confidently for Nizami. A great deal of quatrains, like the gazelles, is about love. The poet admires beauty and sometimes speaks of the sufferings of love:

ای رفته ز من کجاست جویم چکنم
غمهای ترا پیش که گویم چکنم
دانم که ترا بیش نخواهم دیدن
از خون جگر دیده نشویم چه کنم³

You who left me, where can I seek you? What can I do?

Whom can I talk about your sorrows? What can I do?

I know well that I’ll never see you again,

I may wash my eyes with the blood of my lungs. What else can I do?

¹ Ganjine-ye Ganjavi, A memorial and gift of Vahid Dastgerdi, Tehran, 1955, p.178.

² Yusifov. X. Lyrics of Nizami. Baku, 1968. P.181

³ Nizami Ganjavi. Divan of Qasads and Ghazals, Said Nafisi, Tehran, 1959. P.225.

In this quatrain the poet describes efficiently his distresses and suffering. It is difficult to say exactly whether the poem is written for Afaq, but the poet has indeed composed the feelings he has experienced.

Considering the mentioned points, it can be concluded that lyrics of Nizami has been analyzed comprehensively. Starting from the beginning of XX century and continuing until today, many researchers have expressed interesting ideas in their books and articles regarding Divan of Nizami, and also put forward the considerations which are significant in the study of the poet's lyrical heritage. However, the lyric of Nizami has not been studied in detail in the light of modern thinking and in accordance with the current achievements of Nizamiology.

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Miniature painted for „The Story of Two Doctors Arguing Each Other“ from „Treasury of Mysteries“ by Nizami Ganjavi

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Nizami Ganjavi and World Literature

The brilliant Azerbaijani poet and thinker Nizami Ganjavi, who occupies a glorious place among leading figures of world literature, played an important role in determination of idea, subject, plot and motive directions of the literature of peoples of the world, and developed artistic-aesthetic ideas through his rich treasury of wisdom, philosophical ideas and secular knowledge; he was the one who wrote the first “Khamsa” of world literature in Near and Middle East. Hundreds of imitative poems and responses are written to the immortal works of the poet composed beyond brightness and intelligence of human being, and in the field of Nizami original art examples are created in Persian, Turkish, Arabic, Urdu, Kurdish, Punjabi, Georgian, Armenian and Pashto languages. Famous French poet and prose-writer, Louis Aragon admires the wide dissemination of works created on the basis of Nizami Ganjavi’s motifs of poems, and also notes that the imitative poems founded upon poet’s plots are even more than the number of poems written in Latin and Greek.¹

Also, Professor Gazanfar Aliyev emphasizing the vast geographical range of distribution of Nizami related subject and plots, states: “Themes and plots of ‘Pyateritsy’ by Nizami has become the property of the literary process in a vast territory – from the Bosphorus to the Himalayas”.² Vahid Dastgerdi, the most famous and determined publisher and researcher of Nizami Ganjavi’s innovative works in Iran, has an idea in this regard which is exaggerated a bit but is not far from

¹ Aragon L. Soviet literatures. Paris, 1962. p.71.

² Aliyev G. Themes and stories of Nizami in the literatures of the peoples of the East. Moscow, “Science”, 1985. p.23.

the truth; according to him if we work well in all the major bookstores in the world, thousands of proses and poems written under the influence of Nizami's works can be discovered.¹ Professor YE.Bertels also rightly states that if we only want to count the names of writers who immitate Nizami, "Then we would have to comment on the entire history of the Middle East literature"². We can also increase the number of these citations quoted by the prominent thinkers and scholars of different nations. All this clearly shows that the Azerbaijani poet has been accepted by the whole world literary-philosophical thought. Stabilization of expressions like "Style of Nizami", "manner of Nizami", "subjects and plots of Nizami" in literary criticism science indicates the power of peot's word, depth and immortality of his wisdom. Correspondent member of AMEA, Nushaba Arasli writes in the "Nizami and Turkish Literature" monograph as: "studying heritage of Nizami, pursuing and developing the advanced traditions brought into literature by the poet is transformed to a necessity in the medieval cultural demand and literary-artistic development, and generally in the development of Eastern classic social-artistic concept it is nearly considered a basis in literature".³

It seems that writing works on subjects related to Nizami has become a test criterion among writers to approve their power and poetry talent. It is worthy of notice that writers who use subjects and plots of Nizami as resources of their works, admitted the poet's power and strength of words and phrases, and asked for help from God to

¹ Ibid, p.8.

² Y.E.Bertels. Great Azerbaijani poet Nizami. The publication of the USSR EA Azerbaijan branch, Baku, 1940, p.144.

³ Arasli Nushaba. Nizami and Turkish Literature. Baku, "Elm" publishing house, 1980. p.10.

enable them to compose a work on this level; they considered an honor even the claim of reaching to this level.

Nizami Ganjavi, the encyclopaedic wiz of his period, utilized efficiently the rich literary-historical sources while creating his immortal works. The poet has deeply studied and mastered the scientific knowledge, material and spiritual culture examples, verbal and written literary instances, antique philosophical meetings and teachings, and created outstanding masterpieces by a completely unique creative approach he had toward every plot line and image. The poet synthesized the East and West culture as it is the original form of his innovation. As Professor Khalil Yousifli noted, “Nizami Ganjavi elevated the scientific, cultural achievements to an unprecedented height on the basis of new human values”¹.

It is no coincidence that Nizami Ganjavi being one of the most investigated and imitated figures in the world literature, has always been center of focus and regarded as one of the most gifted and respected writers of the world literature. The influence of Nizami Ganjavi’s heritage, who in his innovative works manifested as original the literal-cultural achievements of his time, on world culture and literature has been admitted and studied by both national and foreign scientists over the centuries. In this regard the following scholars can be mentioned: Indian scholar Shibli Nemani, Iranian scholars including Vahid Daftgerdi, Said Nafisi, Mohammad Muin, Russian scholars including Ahatanhel Krymsky, Yevgeny Bertels, I.Y.Krachkovski, Azerbaijani scholars including Hamid Arasli, Akbar Agayev, Gazanfar Aliyev, Ali Sultanli, Rustam Aliyev, Azade Rustamova, Khalil Yusifli, Nushaba Arasli, Vagif Arzumanli, Imperial Arzumanova, Gasim Jahani, Teymur Karimli, Imamverdi Hamidov,

¹ Yusifli X. Nizami Ganjavi and his “Seven Beauties” poem. // Nizami Ganjavi. Seven beauties. Baku, Nurlan, 2014. p.3.

Mehdi Kazimov, Tahir Maharramov, Chingiz Sasani, Zahra Allahverdiyeva, Tajik scholars including A.Afsakhzod, S.Asadullayev, M.T. Mamatsashvili in Georgia, Uzbek scholars including G.Iftikhar, Sh.Shamuhammadov, C.Mirseidov, S.Narzullayeva, Turkish scholar A.S.Lavand, Turkmen scientist N.Kullayev, Latvian scientist K.Y.Kraulins and others.

The research conducted for many years by these scholars has unequivocally proved that Nizami's innovation was the main idea-subject and source for the creativity of writers who grew up in a different environment in terms of language, ethnicity, and historical-geographical position.

From the point of view of mutual study of creativity of Nizami and the great figures of world literature, in "The Nizami and Shakespeare: Typology of Literary Formation (Majnun, Bahram, Hamlet)" by Teymur Karimli, one of the successful researchers of recent years, it is stated: although they are written in various periods and under different historical and social conditions, in these works (Nizami's "Leyli and Majnun", "Seven Beauties", Shakespeare's "Hamlet") the leading problem is transforming the manner of penetration of devil into the human nature of divine origin, and the reasons for development of human in different environments, into an object of artistic investigation.¹

That is why Nizami Ganjavi's creativity has never been isolated from world literature and has been comparatively studied with it.

Today, the problem of human being and his maturity as one of the major issues of world's artistic thinking, has been also noted in Nizami Ganjavi innovation with a red mark. The original values brought by Nizami into literary and artistic thinking in the XII century

¹ Teymur Karimli. Nizami and Shakespeare: Typology of literary image formation (Majnun, Bahram, Hamlet). // Interpretation of the cultural heritage of Nizami. Baku, "Science and Education" publishing house, 2018. P. 42.

preserved its importance in our age. It is strange and paradoxical that today a society of civilians is still unable to fully disclose and understand the wisdom of Nizami, who lived nine centuries ago. Academician Teymur Karimli expresses this with a special subtlety: Just as the poet (Nizami) was astonished at the divine wisdom, for the time being we are also satisfied only with expressing our amazement regarding the mysteries of Nizami thought and art.”¹

In general, in the innovative works of Nizami Ganjavi there is great respect and reverence for all beliefs, all nations and peoples. It is no coincidence that researchers write that the homeland of Nizami is the world, and his nation is humanity. Nizami does not have any negative opinion of any religion, or nation. Regardless of his language, religion, or nationality, Nizami refuses injustice, violence and cruelty, brutality, fraud, lying, arrogance, cunning, and other traits that are not compatible with human high moral standards.

Let's mention one of the most famous verses of the poet to show the human nature of Nizami Ganjavi's innovation, his attempts being for world and humans as a whole, and his carefulness:

کوش تا خلق را به کار آئی
تا به خدمت جهان بیارائی²

Try to be beneficial to people (creation, creatures, living being, human (I think the translation of this word as “its own people” is not accurate)).

So to decorate the world with your creation(your efforts).

According to Nizami, we should pay our debt to humanity by serving to humanity. The German poet Goethe has also highly

¹ Teymur Karimli. Nizami and history. Baku, “Elm” publishing house, 2002

² Nizami Ganjavi, Haft Peykar. <http://ganjoor.net/nezami/5ganj/7peykar/sh6/>

appreciated Nizami for this feature of his work, i.e. “showing pain and sorrow for all mankind without any religious-ethnic difference.”¹

Nizami Ganjavi’s place in world literature is not measured by the width of the geographical range where his works are spread. When we look at the heroes of the poet’s works, we can see representatives of the most diverse peoples and nations, and religions.

Speaking about influence of the poet on world literature, undoubtedly it is necessary to mention, first of all, the issue of continuity and development of the traditions of Nizami literary school in the literature of the East peoples. Influence of Nizami poetry on the literature of Eastern people, and enrichment of the new topics brought by the poet to their literature with the specific features of each nation has started in the XIII-XIV centuries and continued until now. It should be noted that, “Khamisa” of Nizami Ganjavi and the transformation of imitative poems and answers written to it to a continuous literary tendency has led to the formation of “khamisa” in the Eastern folk literature as an independent genre and identification of its poetic principles; this issue has been widely investigated² so it is better not to focus on this issue much.

It is noteworthy that an important part of the writers who have continued and developed Nizami traditions in their creativity has gained a prominent place in the history of national literature and have had great reputation. This fact also played a key role in the widespread expansion of the Azerbaijani poet’s innovation and the actual continuity and constancy of the poet’s traditions brought to the literature.

¹ Abdulla Kamal. We are all a Piece of Sun. // Literary and artistic sources of Azerbaijan multiculturalism. I book. Baku, Mutarjim, 2016. p.3.

² Aliev G. Themes and stories of Nizami in the literatures of the peoples of the East. Moscow, “Science”, 1985.

In this regard, the heritages of the following scholars and writers are instances of the great Azerbaijani poet followers: Amir Khusrow Dehlavi, Khwaju Kermani, Ashraf of Maragheh, Abdul Rahman Jami, Ali-Sher Nava'i, Abdi Shirazi, Sarfi Keshmiri, and Yahya bey Dukagjini. The creativity of these writers and poets also had a great impact on the literary generation that followed them and also the subsequent literary process characterized by new trends, so it is possible to say that it has shaped the "literary tradition chain". Naturally, principles of the Nizami literary school are not just mimicked by his successive writers, but are continued and developed under the influence of various socio-political conditions and changes in different periods and literary environments. By his outstanding followers, Nizami was further popularized and illuminated in literary criticism. In this regard, we can mention investigations of Q.Aliyev and N.Arasli.¹

The originally Turk poet Amir Khusrow Dehlavi, being the first representative of Nizami Ganjavi's literary school in the world literature and afterwards known as the first author of "Khamsa", has given values and appraises to the words and art of Nizami, which are clearly manifested in the works of the Indian author. A.Kh.Dehlavi is also considered as the founder of the tradition of writing imitative poems of Nizami. In this regard, Professor Mahdi Kazimov states that: "The authors, who undertook to write imitative poems, repeatedly ascertained the talent and amazing skill of Nizami and the founder of the tradition of Amir Khusrow."² After Amir Khusrow, Mir Mohammad Ismail Abjadi al-Hindi, the XVIII century poet and author of "Khamsa", was the most famous follower of Nizami Ganjavi in Indian literature. It should also be noted that in general Abjadi's

¹ Aliyev Gazanfar. Themes and subjects of Nizami in the literatures of the peoples of the East. Moscow, "Science", 1985; Araslı Nüşabə. Nizami and Turkish Literature. Baku, "Elm" publication, 1980.

² M.D.Kyazimov. Followers of Nizami (problems in the Persian literature of the XIII-XVI centuries). Baku, Azerneshr, 1991. p. 6.

literary creativity was closely connected with Azerbaijani literature. Sources say that he is also author of his “Khamsa” and wrote comments on Khaqani Shirvani’s “Tuhfat al-Iraqayn”. Of course, all of these issues are the subject of important researches.

One of the most famous followers of Nizami was the XV century Uzbek poet Ali-Shir Navai whose “Khamsa” played an important role in spreading Nizami subjects. In other words, the authors of relatively later periods wrote imitative poems not directly of the works of Nizami, but from the works of his successors who continued the poet’s innovative work as well as his subjects and plots. For example, in Azerbaijani literature, Hagiri known as the first author who composed “Leyli and Majnun” in his mother tongue, wrote his own work under the influence of Abdulla Hatif’s poem on the same subject. As Academician Hamid Arasli points out, the writers who came after Navai used his creativity, as he had employed the work of Nizami.¹

Author of three “Khamsas”, two of which known as “Khamsateyn” and the third named “Jannate And”, XVI century poet Abdi bey Shirazi wrote his first “Khamsa” as an imitative poem of Nizami. The first verses of the imitative poem that Abdi wrote to “Makhzan ul-Asrar” and called it “Mazhar ul-Asrar”, says:

من که و این رتبه کجا تا کجا ورنه مرا این همه یارا کجا
این نه همه بیخبری را رسد همچو نظامی دگری را رسد

**If this is not the case, then where has come this skill (art) from? Me
and this level of art is far from each other.**

This cannot be achieved by everyone, but by those like Nizami.

¹ Hamid Arasli. Navai and Azerbaijan Literature. // H.Arasli. Azerbaijan Literature: History and Problems. Baku, “Ganjlik”, 1998. P. 674.

² Abdi Bey Shirazi, Mazhar ul-Asrar. M. “Danesh”. 1986, p. 34.

As it is clear from the verse, Abdi bey Shirazi appreciates the wisdom of Nizami poetry and believes that every poet cannot reach this rank and level. The author of the XVI century, knowing as valuable even the intelligence of Nizami's soil (graveyard), calls the property of word as belonging to his clean (sacred) heart only.

وه چه نظامی که خرد خاک اوست
ملک سخن وقف دل پاک اوست¹

**Nizami that intelligence and wisdom is in his soil
Property of word belongs to his clean heart**

The poet also continues his ideas in the following verses, giving his Ganja-origin teacher an important place in his work. One of the most interesting comparisons is putting side by side the word of Nizami and rejuvenating water of Khidr:

آب خضر رشحه ای از جام او
نایب وحی آمده الهام او²

**Rejuvenating water of Khidr is only a dribblet of his glass
His inspiration has come like a helper of Revelation**

It is known that in classical Eastern literature, Khidr and Jesus Christ are mostly referred to as the symbols of giving life and granting vitality. Abdi Shirazi, in order to represent the power of Nizami's pen (writing), and show that his works are like resources that disseminate love of life, simlizes and compares him with these images:

جامة او خضر مسیحا صفات
نامه او غیرت آب حیات³

His (Nizami) pen is like a Christ-faced Khidr

¹ Abdi Bey Shirazi, Mazhar ul-Asrar. M. "Danesh". 1986, p. 34.

² ibid

³ ibid

His work is the honor of rejuvenating water

Abdi bey, who values the word and work of the great predecessor as a product of supernatural thinking, says that he benefited from the word of God:

نامه او کوست بحق رهنمای

خاسته از روی کلام خدای¹

His work is a guidance to the path of God

And is raised from the word of God.

چون که بیانش ز کلام خداست

وصف توان کرد که معجزنماست²

Because his word is taken from word of God,

It can be said that it represents miracles

The poet, with a great admiration believes that Nizami poem is magic and miracle:

رگ همه را سحر بود در بیان

هست بیانش همه معجز نشان³

If all his words are magic

Then all of his expressions are signs of miracle.

Another interesting point draws attention in the section that Abdi Shirazi admires Nizami Ganjavi. It is known that of classical works begin with the verse “بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم” (in the name of God, the most Merciful), derived from the Holy Quran. But, of course, every writer presents this verse in a unique way using special wording and phrases. Nizami Ganjavi begins his “Makhzan ul-Asrar” with the following verse:

¹ ibid

² Abdi Bey Shirazi, Mazhar ul-Asrar. M. “Danesh”. 1986. P.34.

³ ibid

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
هست کلید در گنج حکیم¹

**In the Name of God, the most Merciful,
is the key to the heritag of the Wise (God)**

According to the poet “بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ” is the key to the heritag of God.

It is very interesting and remarkable that Abdi bey Shirazi also renames as a key to the Wise’s (God) heritage the Nizami’s “peotry style” that represents truth and fact, and refers to the brilliant predecessor’s famous word with a slight change in the meaning:

خامه نظمش ببيان سليم
هست کلید در گنج حکیم²

**The sound (logical) style of his expression and poetry
Is the key of the Wise’s heritage.**

In the literature of Turk nations, translators and followers of Nizami Ganjavi are also educated and trained such as the following: Fakhraddin Fakhri, Ahmadi, Sheikhi, Hamdullah Hamdi, Yahya bey Dukagjini, Feyzi, Seyid Feyzullah, Behishti, Chakeri, Rizvan, Navidzadeh Atayi.

It should be noted that Nizami Ganjavi’s innovation has not only affected the Eastern peoples literature, but also for centuries it has played a key role in the formation and development of literary-cultural relations between the various generations, predecessor-successor relationships, the transmission of poetic traditions, and determining the legality in the literary process. According to professor Ghazanfar

¹ Nizami Ganjavi. Makhzan ul-Asrar. Scientific and Critical Text written by Abdolkarim Ali Oghli Ali Zadeh. B. Publications of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Azerbaijan. 1960.

² Abdi Bey Shirazi, Mazhar ul-Asrar. M. “Danesh”. 1986, p. 34.

Aliyev: “The history of the literature of peoples ... of the Transcaucasus, Central Asia, Kazakhstan, ... Afghanistan, India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Iran and Turkey, contains a wealth of material confirming the idea of how great the role of heritage of Nizami was in the development of individual literatures, making it possible not only to explore the problem of the genetic connections of the poetic school of Nizami with the outstanding representatives of the literature of the peoples of the East and characterizing these connections in terms of content and form, but to raise and try to solve the issue of typological education: what is the commonality between separate literatures in a vast region?”¹

Although Europe’s first familiarity with Nizami Ganjavi’s creativity was at the end of XVII century, but until the XIX century, this awareness was only limited to some brief and mostly incorrect and incomplete information and translations of some short poetry. During this period, the name of the poet and his works can be found in writings of travelers, diplomats and orientalist such as the Portuguese Pedro Teixeira (XVII), German Adam Oleari (XVII), French d’Erblo (XVII), Englishman William Cons (XVIII), Englishman Scott Worth (XIX), and Con Malkolm (XIX). A. Krymsky characterizes this phase of Nizamiology very correctly: “... Nizami stayed for Europe until the beginning of the XIX century almost one naked name. ... Only three or four years later (meaning 1818 – TB) Europe finally got some expressive ideas about Sheikh Nizami, even if it’s still very insufficient. Did it in his Persian exquisite literature by Josef von Hummer”².

The study of Nizami’s heritage in the European Literature based on scientific principles has begun with the monograph of the

¹ Aliyev G. Themes and stories of Nizami in the literatures of the peoples of the East. Moscow, “Hayka”, 1985. p. 20.

² A.Ye.Krymsky. Nizami and his contemporaries. Baku, Elm Publishing House, 1981. P. 39

Hungarian orientalist Wilhelm Bacher in the German language “Life and Works of Nizami” (Leipzig, 1871). With this work, Vaxer raised interest in the innovation of Nizami in both Western Europe and Russia, and paved the way to some kind of translation and study of the poet’s works. Getting acquainted with the works of the Azerbaijani poet attracted the attention of representatives of European Oriental Studies such as Erdman, Sharmua, C.Atkinson, Dyube, A.Ruso, Auzli, G.Fleegel, A.Shrepren, U.Klark, Rie, G.Ete, and Pitti, also contributed to the study and propaganda of individual problems of the poet’s creativity. Dr. Z.Allahverdiyeva talking about the mentioned period specifically emphasizes: “It is possible to call the XIX century the stage of Nizamiology in Europe”.¹ It is no coincidence that in the XIX century the Russian orientalists also noticed the innovation of Nizami, and the well-known scholars P.Lerx and A.Krimsk included valuable essays about Nizami Ganjavi in their books. Of course among the Russian Nizamiologists, the correspondent member of the USSR E.Bertel has made a lot of efforts in the study of poet’s innovation on the basis of scientific principles. The scholar also involved in studying the life and creativity of Nizami Ganjavi and also translation and publication of his works. Among his works, preparation of a scientific and critical text of Nizami Ganjavi’s poem of “Iskandar Nameh” is given a special position. Among the Soviet scholars involved in the study of Nizami Ganjavi innovation, academicians such as Iosif Orbely, N.Y.Marrin, Professor Sh.I.Nutsibdze, I.S.Braginski, L.Klimovun, I.Y.Krachkovski, Viktor Goltsevi, Lev Asatiani, A.S.Makovelsky and others can be mentioned.

The significance of these studies was also the introduction of the Azerbaijani poet to European writers and scholars. In this way the

¹ Zahra Allahverdiyeva. Formation and development of the Azerbaijan Nizamiology. Baku, Nurlan, 2007.p. 3.

creativity of Nizami attracted not only the attention of European Orientalists, but also the giant literary figures of the Western world. Humanism ideas and Renaissance outlook that form the basis of Shakespeare, Dante, Petrarka, Bokkaço, Goethe, Shiller, Gotsi and other scholars' innovative works have been praised in the works of Eastern wisdom centuries ago.

Prof. Akbar Agayev, one of the first researchers of the problems of world literature, writes that we can find by chance the name of "Nizami" in the works of German writers Goethe and Heinze, and the French poet Theophil Gotie. Finally, the motifs and the plots of Nizami works are separate works are encountered in Western Europe writers such as Volter, Lesse, Gothie and Schiller.¹

Studying, monitoring and disseminating progressive traditions of the Nizami literary school in a completely different tradition and national-mental values has also played a role as a bridge in establishing reliable and long-term cultural and literary ties between the East and the West, and foundation of an initial and sound base for mutual understanding and dialogue. The main reason why Nizami Ganjavi's innovation has been so extensively developed and loved in Europe and in other countries of the world for centuries, and overcame any lanuage, religion and ethnic barriers is that the poet's heritage is rich with humanistic values and human ideas.

The well-known German poet Y.V. Goethe, who had a special interest in the East, has also benefited from Eastern poetry as well as the great Azerbaijani Poet, Nizami Ganjav works in his creative work and specifically in his "West-östlicher Divan", and along with the great experts of the East, he also mentioned Nizami Ganjavi and dedicated him poems. In a piece of a poetry of the German poet showing the distresses and sufferings of path of love, he refers to Nizami which is

¹ Akbar Aghayev. Nizami and world literature. Baku, Azerbaijan State Publishing House, 1964, p. 7

indicates that he is aware of the works of the Azerbaijani poet and admires his heroes.

*O Nisami! – doch am Ende
Hast den rechten Weg gefunden;
Unauflöseliches, wer löst es?
Liebende sich wieder findend.¹*

***O NiZami! but in the end
You again found the right way;
Lovers, solve the impossible
And find each other***

The “Ameto” of Giovanni Boccaccio is composed under the influence of Nizami’s “Seven Beauties”. The plot of K. Gotsin’s “Turandot” and A.Lesat’s comic opera “The Chinese princess” was taken from the story of a Russian beauty in the book “Seven Beauties”, and the philosophical narrative of Volter’s “Khasis” was taken from the story “Good and Evil”.²

Although the name of Nizami is not mentioned in works of Alighieri Dante, the author of “Divine Comedy”, Francesco Petrarca the creator of the most sensitive examples of Italian lyric poetry, and Shakespeare, the author of intense dramatic scenes in the world literature, but it can be clearly seen that the social, political and cultural issues– the rule of the state, relations between the ruler and nation, restoration of justice, moral perfection of man, the physical and intellectual freedom of personality, assessment of human labor, the right to love and be loved– that he has brought to literary life centuries

¹ Examples from Y.V. Goethe, H.Hayne lyric and “West-östlicher Divan “. Translator Alakbar Qubatov. Baku. “Adiloglu” publishing house. 2007. P. 57.

² Fuad Gasimzadeh. National Honor. // “People’s newspaper”. January 16, 1992. P. 3.

ago are still continuing and developing. The precise explanation of this can be seen in the following considerations of eminent researcher Akbar Agayev: “The creativity of Nizami turned Azerbaijan into the homeland of humanity in the XII century, while at the same period, in the Western European countries, the ideas and thoughts of the Renaissance period were still in a state of a fetus. Hence, it is possible to say with certainty that Nizami is one of the most prominent predecessors in worldwide history who was raised in the Renaissance period”.¹

The direct influence of the heritage of Nizami on the world nations' literature is also connected with the translation of individual works of the poet into different languages. Naturally, here the medieval translations are also intended. In the Middle Ages, the poet interpreters were quite creative and free to the original text, and sometimes the controversies of whether they are translations, answers or imitative poems, are even continued till today.

As it is known, the translation of Nizami poems began with translation of “Khosrow and Shirin” into Uzbek by XIV century Uzbek poet, Qutb. In Eastern literature Nizami works are translated by Fakhraddin Fakhri, Ahmadi, Heydar Kharazmi, Sheykhi and the contemporary poet Camol Kemal and others.

The translation of Nizami Ganjavi works into European and Russian languages has been made by the following names: Franz Erdman, Kar Auzli, F. Sharmua, William Cons, Scott Worth, John Malcolm, Josef Hammer, C. Atkinson, J. Mol, L. Dube, A. Russo, G. Fluegel, A. Springer, Moris Carrier, Wilhelm Bacher, Paul P. Horn, E. Braun, Georgi Frilley, Ruben Levi, S.E. Uilson, Alessandro Bauzani, Q.H. Darab, Culi Scott Meysami, Elsi Mattin, George Hill,

¹ A. Agayev. Nizami and world literature. Baku, Azerbaijan State Publishing House, 1964, p. 64.

P.Antokolsky, Rustam Aliyev, Gazanfar Aliyev, Y.Bertels, K.Lipskerov, A.Tarkovski, N.Xatunsev, K.Burgel, R.Gelpke, Anri Masse, G.Pinchin, A.Corsun, T.Fors, R.Ivnev, M.N.Osmanov and others. It is noteworthy that translations of Nizami Ganjavi's works into European languages is done even today. In 2019, selective sections from the poet's "Seven Beauties" were translated into Slovakian by Lubomir Feldek and published in Bratislava. The miniatures drawn in the Middle Ages about poets' works which are protected in the National Museum of Azerbaijan Literature named after Nizami Ganjavi in Baku, were also included in the book.

The following names are also involved in studying Nizami (Nizamiology) in Europe in the XX century: German Paul Horn, Englishman Edward Brown's works, the Hungarian orientalist Houtsma, the Italian scholar A.Pogliaro, then the English-American scholar A.Y.Arberi, the famous Czech scholar Yan Ripk, and Edinburgh University employee MV McDonald.

Here, it should be noted that one of the greatest services of the XX century Nizamiology was the development of scientific and critical texts and philological translations of poems of Nizami Ganjavi. In this regard the work of Azerbaijani, Russian and Iranian scholars should be specifically mentioned: Y.Ripka H.Ritter, A.Alizade, A.Alasgarzade, F.Babayev, T. Maharramov, R. Aliyev, Q.Aliyev, H.Mammadzade, M.Alizade, Y.Bertels, L.Xetaqurov, A.R. Arends, V.Dasstgerdi, B.Sarvatyan, B.Zanjani.

In recent years, the dissemination and accurate submission of Nizami Ganjavi innovation in the world is done by significant steps taken in 2013 by Professor Nargiz Pashayeva, rector of Baku branch of Moscow State University named after M.V.Lomonosov, and real member of ANAS, and her joint venture with Mugaddas Endrus a member of Oxford University Oriental Studies Institute, and Professor of New York University Robert Hoyland. As a result of this venture

“The Nizami Ganjavi Programme for the study of languages and cultures of Azerbaijan and the Caucasus”, was established in Oxford, the most influential educational institution in the Western world, for the study of the rich historical and cultural heritage of Azerbaijan and bringing it to the international scientific community in the UK. One of the priorities of the Center is, of course, an international study of Nizami Ganjavi’s innovation, which is a symbol of Azerbaijan’s history, culture and literature. Undoubtedly, the services of academician Nargiz Pashayeva are very significant in naming the center after the brilliant poet (Nizami) and bringing his innovation to the center of attention of world’s most famous scholars. Nargiz Pashayeva notes in one of his speeches: “At the same time, I stressed that we can prove Nizami belonged to our people and demonstrate the facts, the works of the poet, and his sayings. We show that Nizami comes from Ganja, he has Azerbaijani roots, and we show Turkic traces in his works. We also well understand and recognize that Nizami is the character of a large Islamic culture. He is a brilliant thinker of the East. Along with this, he is an outstanding representative of world culture. Valuable works by Nizami, processed by Azerbaijani scholars, should be distributed in Oxford”¹.

At the suggestion of Academician N. Pashayeva, a seminar on Nizami Ganjavi’s innovation was held at the well-known Bodleian Library where the poet’s manuscripts were also exhibited. One of the important actions of clear and correct introduction of Nizami Ganjavi’s creative works to the world is also done in Azerbaijan and Caucasus Studies Center by publishing the translation of Yevgeni Bertels’s “Nizami, the great Azerbaijani poet” for the first time in English language in Oxford Publication, the world’s largest publishing house.

¹ “On the official website of the University of Oxford, the Nizami Ganjavi Science Center of Azerbaijan and Caucasus was presented.” May 05, 2015. <http://msu.az/top/novosti/20150506065933129.html>

Besides, one of the first of the two scholars of the Nizami Ganjavi Program Center, is C.Uyte who is merely engaged in studying Nizami's "Khamisa".

Azerbaijani scholars continue to work diligently to promote and propagate Nizami Ganjavi's innovation worldwide. In June 2017, an article by Academician Teymur Karimli entitled "Nizami and Shakespeare: Typology of Formation of Literary-phenomenon" was included in the permanent database of SCOPUS Scientific Indexing System based on the final opinion of the International Scientific Evaluation Council of the Elsevier Dutch Corporation. The article is accessible through using the Electronic Library of Nanjai University in China and going to the "View record in Scopus" link. Thus, libraries of prestigious science and education institutions (about 6000 large libraries), which are subscribers of the SCOPUS base, have created an opportunity to get acquainted with the article.

One of the other steps taken to investigate Nizami Ganjavi's heritage and propagate it in the world is the launch of the Nizami Ganjavi International Center by the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev, on December 23, 2011. In 2018 an international conference named "Contemporary interpretation of Nizami cultural heritage" was arranged by the Center and Association of Comparative Literature of Azerbaijan in presence of Orientalists and Nizamiologists from many countries around the world. Also, one of the interesting reports was the speech of Kamran Talatoff, Professor of Arizona University. Speaking on the topic of "The source of ethics and social beliefs of Nizami Ganjavi," the scholar said that from religious point of view the ethics of the brilliant poet is not far from metaphysical notions. In his writing, the poet basically used allegorical concepts in the form of comparisons. His style of allegory is different and of parable style. Comparisons and conformities in the poet's

allegories are all based on imagery ideas and concepts.¹ One of the interesting points in Kamran Talatof's research on Nizami Ganjavi's innovation is criticism of the Soviet researchers' tendency to adapt the poet to the ruling ideology. In recent years among the scholars who are engaged in Nizami Ganjavi's creativity in the West the following names can be mentioned: Julia Scott Meysami, a teacher at the Faculty of Oriental Studies at Oxford University; Head of Middle East Culture and Languages Department at Oxio University, a well-known expert in the field of Persian poetry, professor Richard Davies; Kristine van Ruyumbeke, a Persian studies expert at Cambridge University; American scholar Michael Bari and others. The mentioned researchers, disturbing these or other problems of Nizami's innovation, have admitted that he has grown up in the Azerbaijani literary environment, but has made mistakes about the national origin of the poet. Azerbaijani researchers have clarified these issues in the national and foreign scientific publications with strong evidence taken from the poet's (Nizami) works. In this regard, an article by Khalil Yusifli on Michael Barry's work entitled "An interpretation on Nizami's "Haft Peykar""² can be mentioned as an example: "Not to see the obvious and overt Turkish spirit in Nizami's works, to question whether he is Turkish or Iranian in his ethnic affiliation, is nothing else than denying the evident truth"³.

As the academician Isa Habibbayli states: "there is no dispute or controversy over the fact that Nizami Ganjavi belongs to the world and to all humanity. In this sense, the West, as well as the East, also speak

¹ Kamran Talatof. *Sublime Metier: The source of Nizami Ganjavi's ethics and social beliefs.* // *The interpretation of Nizami's cultural heritage in the modern era.* Baku, March 14-15, 2018. P.32.

² Michael Berry. *Commentary on Nizami's "Haft Peykar".* 2006. Tehran.

³ Khalil Yusifli. *Some considerations about the book by American scientist Michael Barry's interpretation of Seven Beauties.* // *Philology issues.* 2016, No. 8 .pp. 303-308.

of Nizami as a genius creator of works reflecting universal ideals.”¹ Nizomiological studies conducted in the world show that Nizami Ganjavi’s creativity, with its immortal human ideas and original, unique artistic features, for decades has had an undeniable influence on the development of all human culture, artistic-philosophical and aesthetic thinking, and even today it is one of the main poetic sources of creativity of contemporary writers.

The innovation of Nizami Ganjavi has influenced not only the literature of the peoples of the world, but also development of their culture, as well as the different types of art. This impact, of course, shows itself more in the art of painting and music. Nizami Ganjavi is also one of the figures that painting masters resorted a lot. From this point of view, illustrations on the plots of Nizami’s poems and miniatures decorating ancient manuscripts are especially remarkable.

Nizami Ganjavi, the gift of Azerbaijani people to the world and one of the causes of Azerbaijan’s independence, integrity and rich culture at the present time, who has gained historical importance in the world, has long ago transcended the borders of national literature and transformed to one of the giants of world literature.

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¹ Isa Habibbeyli. Great Azerbaijani poet Nizami Ganjavi. // <https://nuhcixan.az/news/cemiyet/75-boyuk-azerbaycan-sairi-nizami-gentivi>

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Nizami and Turkish Literature

The literary activities of the great Azerbaijani poet Nizami Ganjavi, marked by world fame, had a great influence on the spiritual heritage of many cultures, including Turkish belles-lettres, made an extremely important role in the creation and development of Turkish epic poetry. It is known that in his “Khamasa” (Quintuple) Nizami glorified motherland with love and with deep sympathy he elucidated the traditions and customs of his native people. The life peculiarities of the Azerbaijani people and the Azerbaijani attitude to the world clearly shown in his poems. The widespread use of Azerbaijani folklore literature and respect for the customs and traditions of other peoples contributed to its even greater recognition among the Turkic-speaking peoples. That is why the literary heritage of Nizami received such a free artistic reflection in Turkish literature, enriched Turkish folklore with moral and ethical themes, became a standard in the glorification sublime love and heroism, creating images of lovers, people of labor, skilled craftsmen, etc.

A number of poems on the themes of Nizami were created in Turkish literature. The images of Farhad, Shirin, Khosrov, Leyli, Majnun, Bahram, Iskandar, and others became popular heroes of Turkish folk-lore. A number of poets have been appeared in Turkish belles-lettres taking the pen-name “Nizami”. The influence of the greatest poet also had an impact on Turkish lyrics.

Nizami’s use of words and terms related to the life of the Turkic people and to the ancient Oghuz-Kipchak traditions, the wide use of Turkic proverbs and sayings greatly facilitated the translation of his works into Turkish. That is why Nizami’s poems were translated as

early as the beginning of the 14th century by most of the poets writing in Turkish in the form of distich. In particular, those who developed Nizami's themes often acted as translators themselves, introduced into their works some chapters and legends from Nizami's poems, sometimes exactly reproducing certain passages and couplet. Such Turkish followers of Nizami as Ahmadi, Jalili, Ahmad Rizvan, Hamdullah Hamdi, and others, to a certain extent, were also his translators. This tradition had a great influence on the emergence and development of Turkish translated literature, enriched the poetics of the Turkish distich.

Nizami's poems were again and again translated completely into Turkish, by such talented Turkish translators as Qutb, Fakhri, Sheikhi, and Eshgi. Nizami's poems were spread in Turkey through prose translation. In the 16th century, Shami Uskublu made a prose translation of "Khamsa" and has provided it with commentaries. Later in his "Terjume-ye-hekayete -"Haft peikar", Emin Yumni gave a prose translation of the "Seven Beauties", in accordance with the literary canons of the era and additions coming from folk-lore literature. In its time, this translation became widely known. Again translated into Persian, it was further disseminated.

The influence of Nizami's literary activities on Turkish literature was also evident in the field of poetic form and genre. In Turkish literature, as in the literature of the Persian, Uzbek, Kurdish, and other Eastern peoples, the creation of works on the theme of Nizami was regarded as a creative examination. The honor of being the author of "Khamsa" was perceived by the masters of the word, who believed in the greatness of poetic power, as the highest point of mastery, a triumph in the world of art. Such representatives of Turkish literature as Behishti, Hamdullah Hamdi, Ahmad Rizvan, Yahya Tashlichaly, Jalili, Lamii, Atayi, and others are known as the authors of "Khamsa". The Turkish creators of "Khamsa" regarded their great

predecessor with a sense of deep gratitude, proudly declared that by creating the “Quintuple” they had passed a serious test before such a master of the poetic word as Nizami was. The remarkable poet of the 16th century Jalili expressed the following about the refraction of Nizami’s themes in his work:

Budur peyveste bu gönlüm meramı,
Kolam həm-pənce-i gəne-i Nizami. (1, 270)

This is the constant desire of my heart –
To compete with Nizami’s treasury.

Here is how the Turkish poet Behishti expresses the idea of creating a nezire on Nizami’s “Khamisa”:

Yazdım hele ben cevab-i Hamse,
Dimedim dahi bu dilde kimse. (1, 270)

I wrote such answer to “Khamisa”,
Before nobody made in this language.

One of the famous poets of the 17th century Atayi Nevizade said about the formerly tradition of the great poet:

Hamse erbabına edüp taklid
Eylədim pencegiri-i xurşid. (2)

Imitating the owner of the “Quintuple”,
I've been trying my hand with the sun.

The tradition of creating “Khamisa” was continued in the Turkish literature and by way of prose. Its representatives Jalili, Bursaly, and Nargisi became famous as the authors of the prose “Khamisa”.

Nizami's influence on Turkish literature was quite long: from the Middle Ages to the present period. In one article, it is impossible to cover such a long period, to analyze every poet who belonged to the literary school of Nizami, to consider all the artistic samples created under his influence. That is why we shall dwell here only on those characteristic features which connected Turkish poets with the work of Nizami, on the stages of development of Turkish literature directly related to those innovations in form and content which were introduced into it by Nizami's poetics, and on their further development in close interaction with the specific features inherent in this literature.

If we trace the stages of the emergence and development of the Turkish distich, we can see that the theme of Nizami had been repeatedly developed by Turkish poets since the 14th century. The great poet enriched Turkish belles-lettres primarily thematically. Under the direct influence of his work in Turkish epic poetry emerged a whole cluster of poems: "Mahzanul-asrar", "Munkajul-abrar", "Gulshanul-anvar", "Ganjineyi-raz", "Nafhatul-azhar", "Khosrov and Shirin", "Farhad and Shirin", "Farhadnameh", "Leyli and Majnun", "Gulshani-ushshak", "Haft peikar", "Haft seyare", "Haft khan", "Iskander-Nameh", etc.

Here we would like to note that such a frequent reference to Nizami's themes in Turkish literature, conditioned by the literary and aesthetic needs of the era, resulted from the increasing interest of people in Nizami's heritage and the need for Turkish poets to familiarize the general public with the work of Nizami in their native language. The famous representatives of Turkish literature, trying to demonstrate their poetic talent and to prove that the Turkish poetic language is quite capable of creating beautiful examples of art, reproduced in their native language the unique pearls created by the poetic genius of the East.

The Turkish masters, who turned their eyes to Nizami's poetry, saw in it a literary standard, the source of spiritual power. They gave special importance to studying and comprehending the secrets of Nizami's poetic skill and penetrating into the depths of his poetics. They analyzed his poems, tried to comprehend his couplet, put forward their judgments. Many Turkish poets who created distich remembered Nizami first and spoke with admiration about his poetic power. Let us take, for the patterns, the work of the 16th century Turkish poet Atayi "Selim-Nameh". Though the author refers to a completely different subject, nevertheless, he, first of all, remembers Nizami:

I kiss the dust of the feet of the dear Sheikh,
I strive for the spirit of Nizami.
In a moment of poetic eloquence
Shows a prophetic miracle.
Brides of meaning from non-being intimacy
One by one invites with the creak of his pen.
Saying became his Khyzr, ink – darkness.
He extracted the pearls from the living water.
Wherever his mind shines,
From the meaning forms a treasure.
Every point touched by his pen,
Becomes the pupil of the eyes of the epoch.
If the saying begins to praise him,
He will not be able to take his head out of the sea of his praise. (3)

A number of other examples can be cited to demonstrate the deep reverence for Nizami by Turkish poets.

Nizami's creative works enriched Turkish epic poetry ideologically and played an exceptional role in saturating it with humanistic social and universal ideals. The Turkish poets with pride and admiration traced the presence of the great Nizami's ideas and

thoughts in their works, put forward their judgments, consonant with the statements of their genius predecessor about the high purpose of man. The problem of man found its artistic embodiment in a significant part of the works created on the themes of Nizami, especially those that were created in response to the “Storehouse of Mysteries”.

The great poet’s views regarding the enormous spiritual potential and perfection of man, didactic judgments about the need to instill in him lofty moral principles were widespread in the works of representatives of Turkish literature, organically related to the works of Nizami.

Representatives of the Turkish distich highly respected the immortal thoughts of the poet about the welfare of work, about human achievement, which first sounded in Oriental poetry. It is no coincidence that the image of the indomitable Farhad has been inspired with inspiration in Turkish poetry. Turkish masters of the word – Korkut Shahzadeh, Nami Lamy, and others created the poems “Farhad and Shirin”, “Farhadnameh”, dedicated to praising the feat, life, and love of Farhad. The theme of labor occupies a special place here. It can be traced, in particular, in the poems that were a response to Nizami’s “Storehouse of Mysteries”. They condemn idleness, laziness, sluggishness, parasitism.

The Turkish poets thoroughly developed the idea of the usefulness of the sciences, respectfully developing the views of the Nizami in their works. The prominent successors of the literary school of Nizami, such as Ahmadi, Gulshahri, Jalili, Y. Tashlychaly, Lamii, etc., have paid much attention to this issue in their works.

One of the most important social and political problems borrowed from Nizami by Turkish poets and peculiarly refracted in their work was the problem of justice. In the works of Y. Tashlychaly “Gulshanul anvar”, “Ganjineyi-raz”, Atayi “Nafhatul-azhar”, written

under the direct influence of Nizami, special attention was paid to this issue. Ahmad Rizvan, in his “Khosrov and Shirin”, speaking of a noble, just ruler, warmly approves of the fair treatment of his subjects by the Shah, who compensated them for the losses his servants had inflicted. In the scene of Khosrov’s coronation (“Khosrov and Shirin”), Jalili notes that Umid Bozorg taught him a fine/ wonderful lesson of justice. From the sage, who instructs the ruler to adhere to justice, to distribute positions according to the merits of man, not to allow immoral people to come to power, not to enrich the treasury at the expense of the property of the poor, etc., the poet seems to be in solidarity with his great predecessor.

Following Nizami, Ahmadi describes Iskandar’s entourage in the same detail, emphasizing the merits of the scientists and philosophers who are close to him in ruling the country, pinning his hopes on the activities of enlightened people who care about the welfare of the people.

The Turkish poets were aware of the great merits of the great poet in the history of the development of verbal art. Y. Tashlichaly, who called poetry the world’s most valuable treasure, expressed judgments consonant with the thoughts of Nizami, persuaded his contemporaries poets, who wrote praising odes, not to waste their talent on them, not to belittle the high value of poetry, not to betray the poetic behests of the immortal Nizami and his worthy successors – Khosrov Dahlavi, Jami and Navoi. The same thought can be traced to Ataya’s work “Nafhatul-Azhar”.

The wide dissemination of the theme of love in Turkish distich and its enrichment with universal human ideals is also associated with Nizami Ganjavi’s name. In this regard, the most characteristic works were created in response to the poem “Khosrov and Shirin”.

Nizami’s another poem “Leyli and Majnun” dedicated to the theme of love, was also perceived with admiration by Turkish poets.

This plot, in the form of a legend, entered the works of Ahsik Pasha's "Garibname" and Gulshahri's "Mantik ut-teir". In later centuries, Shahidi, Behishti, Ahmad Rizvan, Hamdi Larendeli, Jalili, Kadimi, Hamdullah Hamdi, and other Turkish poets created remarkable poems on this theme. Like Nizami, they depicted the spiritual victory of pure, lofty love over stagnation and fanaticism, accompanied by poetic statements containing humanistic ideas about individual freedom and condemned the society of men, hostile to natural human aspirations.

The Turkish poets perceived the question of further refraction of the great poet's dream of seeing women as dignified and respected members of society as an essential necessity. This dream even more enriched the Turkish distich with new progressive ideals. Turkish poets have developed high thoughts which were consonant with Nizami about the heroism and mind of women. Sheikhi in the poem "Khosrov and Shirin" describes how Shirin, in search of her absentee lover, alone, on horseback, shows unparalleled courage in a duel with a lion that attacked her. In most of the poems of the same name created after Sheykhi, this motif is also reproduced.

A woman's mind and courage are also shown by Ahmedi in "Iskandar-Nameh". Here's what he writes:

There are many women who are exalted above men,
There are also men who are dead compared to women. (4, 292)

The Turkish poets masterfully implemented in their works the advanced creative method of Nizami, who connected the events he took from ancient sources with his era, with the problems of modernity, who taught his contemporaries do not to forget the instructive lessons of history. Though the remoteness of the eras to which the representatives of the Turkish distich addressed, associated with the literary tradition of Nizami, they nevertheless reproduced the shortcomings of their time and touched upon its urgent problems.

Thus, for example, Jalili, in accordance with the mood of the legends recreated in the poem “Khosrov and Shirin”, often returns to his time, complaining of indifference to art and feat. Ahmed’s “Iskandar-Nameh” contains quite frequent statements about his time. The turbulent era in which the poet lived, characterized by the struggle for territorial conquest and domination, boundless oppression and injustice, aggravation of religious contradictions and ideological struggle, was clearly reflected in his poem. In recounting past events and vividly portraying the wise activities of just rulers, the poet speaks grievously about his contemporaries and expresses his critical views.

I wonder why the people of today
Overthrow and burn everything? (4, 90)

Nizami’s work influenced Turkish poetry not only in terms of a high attitude towards poetic art, a glorification of earth love and people’s spiritual beauty, respect for his work and valor. Along with the above-mentioned high ideals, it also strengthened such progressive motives as a courageous attitude towards the injustices of his time, condemnation of the flaws of contemporaries, protest against the ugliness of the negative aspects of life.

The Turkish followers of Nizami’s literary school approached his traditions creatively, in terms of the tasks of their time. They having grasped the relevance of poetic art, refracted its immortal ideals in accordance with the specific features of Turkish literature, conditions and life, and enriched them with local color and contemporary issues. The Turkish poets, each distinguished by their own consideration of “Khamsa” and its individual themes, at the same time demonstrated an individual creative style, talent, poetic skill, took pains to avoid blind copying, conducted creative researches, turned to historical chronicles, wrote about their era, in short – put forward problems that occupied the minds of their contemporaries. That is why the Turkish poems created in the Middle Ages, characterized by the identity of their themes, differing from their predecessors, did not

repeat each other, differing by the creative imagination and poetic art of their authors. At the same time, it is an undeniable fact that the more than fifteen poems created in response to Nizami's "Storehouse of Mysteries" on the theme "Khosrov and Shirin", as well as numerous "Leyli and Majnun", "Haft peikar" and "Iskandar-Nameh" are united with each other by one feature – the connection with Nizami's creativity. And no matter how original they were in the developing the themes of their great predecessor, all Turkish poets learned from the school of Nizami's poetic prowess.

The traditions of the great Azerbaijani poet make themselves felt not only in the works on the themes of his "Khamsa", but also in those that stand apart in this respect. Nizami's views on love, judgments on spiritual freedom, high morality and justice are reflected in the works "Garib-Nameh" by Ashiq Pasha, "Mantik ut-teir" by Gulshahri, "Jamshid and Khurshid" by Ahmadi, "Yusif and Zuleykha" by Sheyyad Hamzi, Hamdullah Hamdi, etc.

Thanks to its profound humanistic content, Nizami's art even today enriches Turkish belles-lettres, contributes to the strengthening of high humanistic ideals put forward by the progressive art of Turkey, calls for a happy future for all people. In his poem "The Legend of Love", created and based on Nizami's motives, Nazim Hikmat, considering the traditions of the greatest humanist poet from the perspective of the tasks put forward by modernity, enriched the image of an unbendable hero, selfless lover with new positive traits of character, created by Nizami.

The contemporary Turkish poet Shahin Uçar in his work "Fantasy and Reality", expressing his attitude toward the present era, borrows from Nizami's poem "Storehouse of Mysteries", a symbolic episode in which owls rejoice in the deeds of the Shah, who has turned the entire country into ruins:

Tomorrow I will create a story,
You will hear about one wedding:

There were two owls who haggled
Over a few ruins and ruined villages,
Given as a dowry to the bride.
At this time, the one who had been matchmaking said:
“Leave the trade, pray for the shah-
If only your desire is for ruins.
As long as this Shah exists in the country.
Let there be this Shah and this time,
And you ask me for a thousand ruins”. (5, 136)

Here is reproduced the main part of the store titled “The Story of Anushiravan and his Vizier”. In this story Nizami pursued the noble goal of influencing the rulers, to call for justice, while speaking of the horrors inflicted by despots. The use of this instructive episode by Shahin Uchar clearly indicates that the advanced traditions of Nizami, who enriched the history of artistic and philosophical thought of the East, are still relevant today and have not lost their effective, transforming power.

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Aesthetic Views of Rustaveli and Nizami



„The Knight in the Panther’s Skin“.
Tavakarashvili MS. 1646. H 599-255
(Korneli Kekelidze National Centre of Manuscripts)



„The Knight in the Panther’s Skin“.
Tavakarashvili MS. 1646. H 599-030
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**Nizami and Rustaveli:
Time and the Aesthetic Creed**

Aesthetics, as the philosophy of artistic creativity, is a cultural and historical phenomenon and its forms are defined by time, epoch and the level of social development. The aesthetic of literature, in its highest sense, is the result of a worldwide historical process, and ought not to be discussed as though belonging only to one national or regional culture.

The development of aesthetic thinking has its characteristic stages with regard to time and worldview, which are characterised by diversity of perception and typological similarities.

One such time period is 12th-13th cc. – a period of significant cultural development in the world, in which the so called watershed between the Middle Ages and modernity was created. This is the phase when the secularization of society is about to commence. The religious imperative gives way to common motivations. Consequently, the paradigm changes take place – the law changes but the attitude to its primacy does not. The form and meaning of the text fits into the new frames of convention and canonicity, yet this does not mean that the author loses his freedom. On the contrary, normativity allows the author to express freely those ideals which are engendered by the tastes of the new society.

This cultural paradigm shift took place in Georgia and in Azerbaijan simultaneously and we can certainly talk about both the typological similarities and differences between them. Yet, we think that the principal aim is to define the meaning of this common cultural phenomenon, which was best expressed by Nizami and Rustaveli.

In its own time Nikolay Konrad proposed the interesting concept of an “Oriental Renaissance”, which identified a considerable array of similarities ranging from Japan to the Pyrenees (Konrad 1966). When one discovers similarities, (such as humanism, the secularization of thought, rationalism, the autonomy of the person, and so on) shared by cultures very far from one’s own, it is certainly worthy of consideration and yet, we must agree with the idea that it is not these similarities but typological interrelationships which are the most significant. (Batkin 1969:107).

Does the Oriental Renaissance exist or not? Did it occur in Georgia? These questions are heard even today, yet, there can be no dispute but that the Renaissance is an essentially Western phenomenon, since Western Europe is the place where that which was lost in Middle Ages was revived – antiquity, and the aesthetics of antiquity.

It is difficult to say what exactly was revived in the East. We did create something new, but this was more of an immanent process than a revival of something already existing. Therefore this phenomenon should probably be described as a humanistic worldview and not necessarily as a Renaissance.

Shalva Nutsubidze, who wrote a large monograph about the “Oriental Renaissance”, argued that Renaissance ideology in works by Nizami, Rustaveli and Khaghani Shervani must have emerged from the same roots. In his view these roots must be the Islamic philosophy of the East, folk poetry and Neoplatonic philosophy (Nutsubidze 1976:375)

It is difficult to prove this view for its hypothetical nature.

From the methodological perspective, one should consider the opinion of Nigiar Efendiyeva, who claims that we ought to establish how much this or that universal principle helps us identify the common processes of the history of culture embedded within the

immanent processes occurring within national or regional cultures (Efendiyeva 2000:13-14).

When we speak of common cultural processes, first of all we mean the practical intersections and relationships. These connections existed before. For example, Nizami had a close relationship with Georgia. In the opinion of some scholars, he must have even known the Georgian language. Georgia, with its geographical features and historical figures, is mentioned in his long and short lyric poems. There were also literary relationships (Gvakharia 1995:12).

Besides, it is known, that Khanghani Shervan often visited Georgia. As we find out from the poems of Khanghan, he had many friends in western Georgia, where he learned Georgian.

The first indication of similarities between Nizami and Rustaveli, according to Dilara Aliyeva, is their identical view of the human being, as a creator and expresser of its own fate. The next indication is the romantic life-force of the heroic characters; the idea of the word for them is the way of learning about the world and themselves; the concept of love is a philosophical creed for both poets, by which they present humanistic ideals; also the woman is portrayed as a presenter of humanistic ideals; and the idea of creating a harmonious society and the establishment of a humanistic worldview is present in the work of both writers (Aliyeva 1989:90).

It is also possible to speak about specific similarities. For example, in one of the chapters of the poem *Khosrow and Shirin* (“Shirin’s Enthroning”) it is said, that Shirin established such justice and order that a “wolf drank water together with the lamb in his flock” (Nizami 1964:189); Likewise, Rustaveli’s characters also established such a harmony in their kingdoms that:

“Within their territories the goat and the wolf fed together”.

(Rustaveli 1912:1571)

The unifying points between Nizami and Rustaveli's poems are the cult of festivity and luxury, and wine - the symbol of the cult; also the giving of gifts – a sign of generosity, welfare and nobility; the use of the sun and moon as the metaphors of beauty; madness as the correlate of love; the fire burning in one's heart – a metaphor of love; and reference to precious gemstones and minerals as metaphors of various meaning.

Both poets use the image of a magician dressed in green. Nizami, in his poem *Khosrow and Shirin* (chapter called "Ascension of Faighambar") writes about an angel:

"He left the heaven with a green garment"
(Nizami 1964:420)

Shota Rustaveli:

"The wizard donned a certain green mantle over his form".
(Rustaveli 1912:1253)

There is a character in *Iskandarnama* called Nestan-Darjihan, a beauty given to Iskandar. The similarity between Nizami's Nestan-Darjihan and Rustaveli's beauty Nestan-Darejan can also be found in the fact that both were taken hostage and they both were rescued by heroes.

In summary, there are things in common in their works, and yet, the conceptual meaning is carried not by similarity, but by difference as a sign of originality and uniqueness.

The famous Iranian studies scholar, Magali Todua quotes the words of Indian philologist Shibli No'man: "Ferdowsi is a man of the battlefield and he is not so skilled in poeticising love stories; Saadi is the apostle of romantic and didactic poetry, yet, when it comes to it, he becomes powerless, Khayyam is only a master of philosophy; Hafez

is famous only for the lyric poetry of Ghazals and nothing else; whereas whatever Nizami wrote, he wrote in the spheres of battle, feast, love, philosophy, and didacticism, and he is inimitable” (Todua 1964:16).

The literary world of Nizami consists of two main essences: earthly and heavenly worlds.

This is well presented in *Khamisa*. The wholeness of the earthly reality is made by every visible or invisible essence: on the one hand – human beings, flora and fauna; and on the other, mythological or fairy tale characters, that are employed for creating comparisons, metaphors and other structures of poetic images. The uncatchable bird called *Anqa* is a symbol of solitude, *Simurgh* with strong wings expresses pride and nobility, a royal bird called *Huma* stands for happiness, the night bird *Shahbaz* – vigilance.

Khosrow and Shirin offers us a description of the natural landscapes and the seasons of the year: spring, summer, autumn, and winter are presented as literary and emotional pictures, in which nature and human beings present a single unity, and this is not far from that aesthetic idea, which emerges later in the creative works of Antonio Vivaldi, Joseph Haydn, Piotr Tchaikovsky and others.

The opposite to the earthly world is the upper realm, the heavenly space or the cosmos. This is a metaphorized space, the dwellers in which are the sun, the moon and stars. According to Arig Hadjiev, the heavenly world of Nizami is a mythologized space, a literary and artistic, aesthetic world, the world of God’s work as the dwelling place and revelation of beauty (Hadjiev, 2000:112).

In Hadjiev’s observation natural beauty in *Khamisa* is revealed through sensual and material forms. Therefore, the author employs the qualities of such metals and minerals as pearl, ruby, emerald, agate, sardius, sapphire, turquoise, hyacinth, amber, coral, gold, silver, diamond, musk, camphor and others. They embellish the world and

therefore the problem of the aesthetic values of the world are brought to the surface (Hadjiev 2000:85).

The toponyms (the names of countries) in *Iskandarnama* are used for creating stylistic figures, and literary and expressive means (Hadjieva 2004:142)

Nizami's poems should be discussed as a kind of system, which consists of components that are linked together, for example: theme, idea, story, plot, the system of images, composition, style and language, creating a single unity.

In the process of analysing the ideological and thematic content of such an original system, the question of the connection between the system's units comes to the forefront. To be more specific, every single sound, word, phrase, trope, image or other form has its own function. One of the issues here is the use of personal names.

“Personal names, like the rest of the components of the work, are included in its living fabric and implement important functions such as emotional and expressive, stylistic, and onomatopoeic, which allow us to grasp on a greater depth the social and philosophical as well as ideological and thematic essences” (Hadjieva, 2010:4)

In this context we can generalize the idea of Eugene Bertels, which he expresses in the context of discussing *The Treasury of Mysteries*: The main poetic task of Nizami is to increase and elevate the meaning of every single word, grant to it a weight, influence the will of the readers and make them used to certain views and norms of action (Bertels 1959:99).

Studying Nizami's lyrical “Diwan” shows that his imagery is based upon the previous traditions of Persian lyrics, and yet, Nizami modifies the earlier forms and refines them. The same system appears in epic poetry, mainly in the characteristics portraying the characters, and in the expression of romantic feelings and lyrical expressions, which represents a typological analogy of the Middle Ages.

Yet, the images of epic characters, especially that of Khosrow and Shirin are deprived of the medieval stereotypes. The individualization of the characters is achieved by methods which are characteristic of the genre style of the novel or romance (Kaladze 1984:18).

Throughout her analysis of Nizami's literary characters, Sh. Mirzoeva draws our attention to one peculiarity: almost all characters live a complex yet splendid spiritual life.

The reason why the human being stands above the banal is that he has an ability to grasp the mystery of the world. Nizami as a philosopher and Nizami as a poet work together in harmony (Mirzoeva 1975:114).

Nizami skilfully masters the normative poetic technique, yet this technique for him is not an end, but a means for presenting the philosophical and aesthetic discourse. In the end, with the aid of technique and mastery, a special interrelationship is shaped, specifically, the relationship of the textual aesthetic to the aesthetics of being (Efendyeva 1998:27).

The world, in Nizami's view, is love, and everything else is hypocrisy and lies. All is vanity, save for love. Wherever there is no love, neither is there life. Even a plant cannot flourish and a flower will not bloom without love.

There is a chapter in *Khosrow and Shirin* called "A few words on love", in which we read:

"Follow love, for love is smart
All good and heartfelt follow love!
Love is the only one, the rest is hypocrisy,
Save for love, all is a game.
If the world could exist without love,
No one could afford to stay alive!
He who does not experience love is dull in spirit;

Even if he had hundreds of lives, he is still dead!

.....
No seed will grow without the grain of love ...
The sky won't weep, a rose won't laugh ...
Love is the root of everything in this world".

(Nizam Ganjavi 1964: 59-60)

Nizami's worldview is largely defined by that belief that love is the essence of being and this in the view of Z. A. Kuli-Zade must be the result of the influence of the philosophical outlook prevailing in the region, especially that of Sufism (Kuli-Zade 1987:131).

The Sufi influence can be traced even in terminology. For example "love" means "God". Yet, the main point here is poetic freedom. According to Nizami, love is an attraction, a universal attraction, almost the same as what physicists mean by gravitation.

The Sufi elements can be found in other literary works by Nizami, yet, he himself cannot be considered a Sufi in the fullest sense of the word (Mustafaev 1962:33). The foundation of Nizami's philosophical creed is at the same time connected with its contemporary Azerbaijani reality and also with the world literature of the previous centuries (Makovelski 1965:121).

According to Z. A. Kuli-Zade, in the poem *Layla and Majnun*, the concept of love echoes neither the Sufi nor the peripatetic understanding, yet it has a direct link with both of them. Whereas the main object of *Khosrow in Shirin* is the earthly and heavenly, and spiritual and physical love, in *Layla and Majnun* we see a preference for spiritual love. The love of *Majnun* is the supreme feeling, which restrains the carnal element as being incompatible with the main principle of being – true love (Kuli-Zade 1987:145).

Generally speaking, according to Nizami's *Khamsa*, love is that power, which generates the birth and development of every being.

Through this power evil can be transformed into the good. Love is the light, which conditions the good future of a human being.

Nizami discusses love not as a mutual feeling between two persons, but as a special state, which involves the soul and heart of every being, from insignificant creatures to vast constellations (Kafarli 2001:12-13).

As much as Nizami is a learned person so he is a free poet and this is reflected in his poetry. Besides the Islamic theology, law and logics, Nizami was also familiar with ancient philosophy, astronomy, astrology and geography (Gulizade 1984:328).

Broad erudition grants independence to Nizami's poetry. Based on the critical analysis of rational knowledge the poet creates his own irrational system, in which is revealed his poetic signature.

The idea that one can detect in Nizami's worldview a scepticism towards issues such as the origin of the world and the essence of the creator, is acceptable to a certain degree. So is the idea that here Nizami tries to separate philosophy from theology and knowledge from faith (Mamedovi 1959:15).

It is also worth noting that Nizami's aesthetics are sharply distinct from the literary works of the court poets. His aesthetics are closer to folk conceptions. The primacy of the folk tradition is his position, for which he was often attacked by the court poets (Efendyeva 2013:74).

To speak about the aesthetics of great poets spontaneously raises the question of their relation with some literary movement or philosophical school. Diversity of opinions will always exist, yet, we believe that there can be no dispute over the idea that a poet cannot belong to any particular philosophical movement. A writer in general cannot remain an outright adherent of a philosophical school. Literature and philosophical thought present two different categories and it is impossible to locate them on the same ground.

Nizami may be familiar with and even uses concepts from Sufism, Aristotelianism, and Zoroastrianism, yet this can by no means prove that he is a follower of either Sufism, ancient philosophy, or Zoroastrianism. Likewise, in Rustaveli's poetry the elements of Sufism, Manicheanism, Neoplatonism, Aristotelianism and other philosophical schools can be detected. Yet, no one can argue that he is a follower of those philosophical systems. It is simply that he uses them for creating his own aesthetic credo.

In the process of classifying the aesthetic laws of Georgian national literature, Irma Ratiani offers three cultural variants: Medieval, Romanticist and Post-Soviet models. She identifies "Rustaveli's law" separately, as a substructure, and as the first synthesis between the Western and Eastern cultural traditions in Georgian literature (Ratiani 2015:43).

There are three major philosophical and theological bases in Medieval thought: Christian – for the Western and Eastern parts; Islam for the East; ancient philosophy (Platonism, Aristotelianism, Neoplatonism) –for both Eastern and Western worlds.

Rustaveli mostly relies on Neoplatonism, yet this is not a "Christianized" Neoplatonism. The Christianization of this philosophy occurred in part in the teachings of pseudo-Dionysius, and was in part adapted to poetic thought by Rustaveli.

The Christianization of Neoplatonism – this means the replacement of Neoplatonic emanationism with Christian creationism. According to Nodar Natadze's explanation, whereas the world for Neoplatonism represents the result of the emanation of the One or god, god in Christianity is transcendent, and created the world from nothing out of his free will (Natadze 1965:183).

In Rustaveli also, god is presented as the Creator of the world, rather than its source:

“He who created the firmament by that mighty power”.

Rustaveli’s God is absolute goodness, while the temporary world is its antipode, as evil, tempting and treacherous. Donald Rayfield calls this juxtaposition a “Christian dichotomy” (Rayfield 2000:77).

In Rustaveli’s *the Knight in the Panther’s Skin* the aesthetic concept as a system is concentrated in the very title, which is at the same time a metaphor, symbol and a mystical puzzle.

The panther’s skin itself and the foundation of this trope image are to be traced in various historical and cultural traditions. *The Knight in the Panther’s Skin* connects with almost all cultural worlds, and therefore the scope of the connotations of “possessor of the panther’s skin” can be rather broad, yet, in the end it appears as the symbol of renewal, purification, and catharsis (Sulava 2009:80).

The aesthetic world of *the Knight in the Panther’s Skin* is characterized by consistent architectonics. The human being is its centre, whereas nature is the area of peripheral aesthetics. In fundamental essence, nature lacks independence. Its aesthetic value is functional rather than self sufficient. At times it is a background, and at other times it is a frame, or a reservoir of coloured paint to be used for a portrait (Nadiradze 2006:145).

As about the characters, *the Knight in the Panther’s Skin* makes a metaphor of everything that can one think of in this respect: one’s outward appearance, character, actions, thinking, dreams, feelings. Often the metaphors are expressed through the metaphors of precious gemstones, such as ruby, sardius, pearl, diamond, crystal, jet, garnet, agate, glass, cornelian, hyacinth, jasper, amber, etc.

The frequent metaphorical imagery includes lion, tiger, rose, the sun...

Most often Rustaveli mentions the word “sun”, which he uses in different contexts and presents the whole spectrum of astrological teaching, yet, mostly it refers to love, beauty, life, and freedom.

We encounter an interesting aesthetic phenomenon in the 816th stanza of the poem, where Avtandil addresses the sun: “He said : “ O sun, who art said to be the image of the sunny night”. The material sun is represented as a symbol for God while God himself is “the sunny night” and “unity of being and timeless time”.

Regarding the sun as the image of God is not alien to the representatives of the Alexandrian school, Gnoseology, ancient Neoplatonists and Christian Neoplatonists, yet, as we discover, Rustaveli borrows this symbol from Christian theology (Nozadze 1963:119).

On the whole, many literary expressions and syntagma used by Rustaveli originate from the Bible or they are philosophical interpretations of biblical images.

Together with Christian culture, Eastern culture forms the foundation of Rustaveli’s aesthetics. It seems that the poet was fluent in Persian and Arabic, was familiar with Persian and Arabic cultures, and was extensively educated in the history of Eastern literature. The Rustavelian concept of a “mad-lover”, the cult of feeling, the motifs of withdrawal into the wilderness as well as fainting, are adopted from Eastern writings. He even mentions the popular characters such as Vis and Ramin, Qays and Majnun.

According to the Rustavelian concept, love is a divine feeling, it is granted by God. Love, as the worldly, human feeling imitates the divine, original love, which rationally thinking people, having pragmatic minds, will not be able to comprehend. In order to understand divine love, one has to reach a state of madness and insanity imposed by love.

Rustaveli discusses love in both ethical and aesthetic contexts. Love, in his view is both supreme virtue and supreme beauty.

If we take into consideration the literary concept of *the Knight in the Panther's Skin* we may find it reasonable that Rustaveli depicts love not only as it should be, but also as it is (Natadze, Tsaishvili 1966:93).

Like love, friendship and heroism also move freely from the ethical scope into the aesthetic, since it is beautiful when a human being stays loyal to friendship to the very end and expresses the love for his neighbour, and it is likewise beautiful when he displays heroism at the moment of need, and gives up his own life for the sake of his neighbour.

Giorgi Nadiradze highlights five aesthetic phenomena used in *the Knight in the Panther's Skin* as key elements of the poet's artistic palette: the stars of the sky, flowers (mainly roses), precious gemstones, animals (lion and panther), plants (poplar and cypress). The most popular among them is the sun. Rustaveli regards the sun as the supreme natural beauty. The scholar called this viewpoint an "aesthetic solarism" (Nadiradze 2006:148).

Colour for Rustaveli may be considered as a category of literary work, without which the poetic image will not come into existence (Gogiberidze 1961:278).

The symbolism of colours in *the Knight in the Panther's Skin* does not significantly differ from the medieval symbolism of colours. Just like the Eastern and Western symbolism, Georgian symbolism also fits within the same cultural context. According to Viktor Nozadze, the Rustavelian symbolism of colours reveals the cultural image of the era (Nozadze 2004:511).

Revaz Siradze gives attention to the aesthetics of mystery. He notes that in *the Knight in the Panther's Sin* the phenomenon of mystery is presented not only by the religious and mystical passages,

but also through many realistic images: aesthetic feeling is born by the detection of a hidden message on the one hand, and on the other, it is brought about by feelings of incomprehensibility, obscurity and inaccessibility (Siradze 2012:45).

Zviad Gamsakhurdia goes even further, in thinking that Rustaveli reflects in the language of conditionality the main concepts of the initiation into wisdom. He creates the synthesis of syncretic esotericism by employing the language of literature. The aim of the poet is to summarize the different paths of humanity's spiritual development on the basis of both esoteric and Christian teachings. Therefore, the key to the symbolic thinking of *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* is the esoteric wisdom of antiquity and the Middle Ages (Gamsakhurdia 1991:342).

An important stratum of *the Knight in the Panther's Skin* is the binary meanings of paradigm images and words, which express Rustaveli's individuality, the amplitude of his vision, and his overall knowledge of cultures transformed into aesthetic thinking (Gonjilashvili 2017:283).

One of the major concepts in Rustaveli's poem is the Neoplatonic theory of the non-substantiality of evil, which springs from the philosophy of Dionysius the Areopagite: if God created the world and He is the supreme expression of goodness, whereas evil has no essence, no substance, it means that it is only a lower grade of goodness, then it follows that evil cannot exist for very long and it will be defeated by the good, the existence of which is everlasting: "Good hath overcome ill; the essence of (good) is lasting" (stanza 1337th).

In Rustaveli's philosophy the most common references are made to ancient philosophy and Neoplatonism when it comes to heterogenic, non-Christian elements. The poem refers to the views of Plato, Aristotle, Empedocles, Heraclitus, Proclus Diadochus and Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite. The closest to Rustaveli's aesthetics

is the Christian interpretation of Neoplatonism, which was carried out in the 12th c. by the Georgian philosopher Ioane Petritsi. Ioane translated into Georgian the work by Proclus: *the Elements of Theology*, and added to it his own lengthy commentaries, which attempt to Christianize Neoplatonism expressed in the emergence of the concept of a personal God within the Neoplatonic theory.

According to the famous theologian Pavel Svetlov, Rustaveli is neither a pagan nor a pantheist. He is a monotheist, who confesses God as the Creator. He sees in the poem the traces of that part of Plato's philosophy which is closer to Christianity (Svetlov 2018:249).

It is hard to claim that Rustaveli either follows directly or adopts the teaching of any Western or Eastern tradition. It is simply that he responds to the thinking style of his own epoch or maybe it is that very style that influences him.

In his witty expression Akaki Gatsserelia said that had not Rustaveli been a master of the mosaic of philosophical and religious ideas, he would not be Rustaveli at all (Gatsserelia 1977:16).

We think it is worth sharing the following view: when we speak of Rustaveli's worldview, we must pause neither on the Christology of Middle Ages nor Renaissance thinking, but we must look at 12-13th cc, i.e. the Christian civilization of the late Middle Ages. We must adjust the ideological world of *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* to the philosophical thought of this era and we must reveal the significance of Rustaveli's word in the context of universal culture on the basis of the same epoch's worldview (Khintibidze 2009:771-772).

From a more general outlook, Rustaveli's worldview is defined by three major universals: faith, hope and love. This is well expressed in the plot, which goes to its eschatological ending with the faith that the good will defeat evil and faith and hope will be joined together in divine love (Karichashvili 2011:30).

In *the Knight in the Panther's Skin* the two ways coincide: traditional and innovative. Rustaveli is a son of his own era, following loyally its ideology and morals; on the other hand, he transposes new, progressive ideas to his own Georgian national soil. The novelty, which emerges in the structure of the poem, is conditioned by the fact that Rustaveli is close to the leading ideology of the Middle Ages, as a result of which ideas and tendencies emerge in his poetry which were further developed later by the Renaissance (Elbakidze 2007:173-174).

In the end, the words of Morris Borea rightly claim that “*The Knight in the Panther's Skin* is a Georgian work, which looks equally towards the East and the West, yet, it is still of a purely national character” (Borea 1966:17).

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The Three *Realities* in Rustaveli

In Georgian literary scholarship, and in particular in academic literature dealing with the work of Shota Rustaveli, quite a substantial amount of literature has been dedicated to the study of the conceptual, worldview, and religious aspects of Rustaveli's *The Knight in the Panther's Skin*.¹ The aim of the present article is not to explore in depth or study critically either of the above mentioned components, but to take into account the existing academic achievements, and offer a typological analysis of the setting of Rustaveli's text from within the innovative contexts of the chronotope and liminality theories.

Reality, which is emphasized in the title of this article, is obviously conventional, because of the fundamental reason that literature is itself one overarching conventionality, a "game play" with a clearly defined notion. As far back as the 4th Century BCE Aristotle pointed to this truth in his *Poetics* when explaining the principle of *mimesis* or imitation. Poetic imitation acquires the meaning of play-of a somewhat ambivalent action for the author of *Poetics*, whereas poetic discourse imitates the truly existent discourse, and thereby creates a conventionality which will never be equal to either philosophical truth or to historical reality. "It is not the function of the poet – writes Aristotle – to relate what has happened, but what may happen, what is possible according to the law of probability or necessity. (Aristotle 1957:67). The theory offered by Aristotle proved

¹ See the works by K. Kekelidze, S. Nutsubidze, V. Nozadze, A. Baramidze, R. Tvaradze, S. Tsaishvili, E. Khintibidze, R. Siradze, G. Parulava, L. Grigolashvili, T. Karbelashvili, M. Elbakidze, B. Darchia, M. Ghaghamidze, M. Kurdiani and others.

to be acceptable for thinkers of later epochs, including scholars of modern literary studies and theory.¹ Therefore any reality that can be discussed in the context of literary texts, including *the Knight in the Panther's Skin*, is a middle form between the possible and necessary; it is a conventionality, which is shaped within the frames of the author's literary talent while it obtains a unique capacity for transformation within the structure of the text.

In our opinion, three models define the conventional reality given in Rustaveli's text: literary, historical and transcendental. Among these, the *literary reality* presents the chronotope of the text's storyline and the totality of the individual chronotopes of the characters in the text. Meanwhile the author processed and modified artistically the *historical and transcendental* models which are gradually synthesized with the general body of the text. We reckon that the connection of each of these models to the other and to their proper functioning is conditioned by:

- The artistic-literary and aesthetic principles of the late Middle Ages;
- The genre canon of chivalric romance;
- The literary activation of transformational liminal models.

1. The artistic-literary and aesthetic principles of the late Medieval era and *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* – references

The Late Middle Ages, as is well known, are the concluding stage, which follows the early medieval period and precedes the

¹ See the works by Sir Philip Sidney, Schiller, J. P. Sartre, W. Iser as well as by the representatives of the French school of Structuralism and the school of Positive Anthropology.

Renaissance. Both cultural models significantly form the late medieval artistic-literary and aesthetic principles and taste.

It is in the Late Middle Ages when the result of the titanic efforts made in the Early Middle Ages becomes obvious: Christian thinking becomes the cornerstone of European civilization, the main ideology that establishes its own aesthetic and poetic standards. Drawing from its conceptual task, which consists of establishing and preaching the principles of the Christian worldview and interpreting the Biblical texts, the European poetics of the Early Middle Ages confront the poetic tradition established within the bosom of ancient culture. It rejects a fictional plot, dissociates from the ancient concepts of imagination and pleasure, and so on. At this time the perceptual implication of the word acquires a weightier importance and moves toward the specific stylistic and linguistic models that become evident within the establishment of Christian rhetoric.¹

¹ Yet, “while studying the medieval literature, we should not overlook the fact that for a long time the difference between the imaginary and real was not fully understood” (Gurevich, 1984, p. 55). Considering the modern approaches of literary studies, the terms are conventional – there is no purely realistic, or purely artistically imaginary text (See. G. Genette, *Narrative Discourse Revisited*. Translated by Jane E. Lewin. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1988); “All that the writers and poets of the medieval period were narrating to us was taken by them and their readers, for a very long time, as true stories. As is commonly known, in the case of epic poetry, categories such as “invented” or “true” are not applicable at all. Yet, the elements of theology as well as elements of a legendary nature were also relatively powerful in historiography. “Poetry” and “truth” have not yet parted, just as the theological literature has not yet parted with the secular. It is impossible to oppose either functionally or stylistically, the works which were supposed to provide a true historical narrative of the time. to the works in which one should anticipate the subjective and artistic description of the same particular period of time” (Gurevich, 1984. p. 55). “In early medieval literature, we cannot possibly consider oppositions such as true story / invention, non-fictional / fictional, fabula / syuzhet as defining the creative process and artistic quality of the

The late medieval period, in spite of the fact that it still presents an element of the unified medieval model, begins with significant changes. First of all, it contributes to the process of the secularization of European literature. The late medieval period is the epoch of secularization and despite the fact that a number of secular texts are still encompassed within the realm of allegorical interpretation (Virgil for example), the main literary tendency reveals that Latin surrenders its place to local languages, while literature moves toward a secular territory and wrestles with new topics and goals. The primary messengers of novelty are the revival of imaginary aesthetics in literature and the establishment of new literary genres and tendencies. The authors of the late m

edieval chivalric epic poetry and early Renaissance satiric romantic novels, short stories and sonnets gladly return to the aesthetics of fictional characters and stories permeated with heroism, romantic feeling, adventures and other fictional elements. Rustvelologist Maka Elbakidze notes: “disregard for the principle of historicism should be considered as one of the virtues of late medieval literature, since it stimulated the long term process of seeking new genres and topics. The paradigm shifts that took place in the spiritual life of humankind, the so-called “Cultural Explosion”, which by the middle of the twelfth century covered most the civilized world, has left its deep imprint on the literary process”. (Elbakidze 2007: 158-159). The reader required “more dynamics, more adventure, more romance” and the literature departed from the principle of infallibility: “All of the above has become a powerful impetus for the formation of a new concept of artistic reality, the main principle of which is the

work, but rather the specific ideological content of the text, the organization of its narrative and its structural-poetic elements, which define the primary artistic peculiarities of the literary texts of this epoch, should be taken into account” (Ratiani, 2018. 72).

rejection of historicism and the emphasis on fiction" (Elbakidze 2007: 159). The dichotomy of the real and the imaginary continued to become an obvious fact, while the literary genre of the chivalric novel became a conceptual and aesthetic leap, thanks to which European writing shifted from the ideological model of the early Middle Ages to the aesthetics of the late Middle Ages.

Georgian literature, as a valuable part of Western Christian writing, is organically involved in the process of these aesthetic innovations from the 12th century. It is influenced by the ongoing political and social reforms within the country, as well as the ongoing secularization process and the new aesthetics in European literature. As a result, a recognized masterpiece of Georgian literature is created - Shota Rustaveli's *The Knight in the Panther's Skin*, which is a Georgian example of the European chivalric novel in terms of genre and concept.¹

But, despite significant changes, late medieval writing still remains a part of the general aesthetics of the Middle Ages, and all relevant components are important. Highly interesting observations on the aesthetics and culture of the Middle Ages, including the late Middle Ages, are offered by A. Gurevich, in his landmark work - *Categories of Medieval Culture* (1984), from which the following prove to be particularly noteworthy for our purpose:

- "The worldview of the Middle Ages was distinguished by integrity – that is where its specific completeness, and the indivisibility of its separate parts derive from. Hence the belief in the integrity of the universe ... yet, integrity does not imply harmony and non-

¹ However, it is also clear that the text shows a clear sympathy for Eastern poetic motifs, which, due to certain historical factors, are actively embedding themselves into the Georgian cultural space of that period and set the first precedent for the meeting of Western and Eastern cultures in the Georgian and European literary space.

contradiction. The contrast that exists between the eternal and the temporary, the saint and the sinner, the soul and the body, the heavenly and the earthly, which was laid at the foundation of this worldview, was the basis for the social life of the epoch, in the irreconcilable opposition that existed between wealth and poverty, master and slave, freedom and slavery, promotion and subordination. The medieval Christian worldview “explained” real contradictions by moving them into all-encompassing heavenly categories, and, in this sense, contradictions could be resolved only through the redemption of sins after the end of earthly history and the return of the eternal world scattered in time "(Gurevich 1984) (26-27).

- “Man’s relation to nature in the Middle Ages is the relation of the subject to the object, or rather, the discovery of oneself in the outside world, the perception of the cosmos as a subject. Man contemplates the same qualities in the world that characterize himself. There are no sharp boundaries separating the individual and the universe; seeing the world as a continuation of himself, he, at the same time, discovers the world within himself. They seem to be looking at each other” (p. 69). From here we have an understanding of the microcosm and the macrocosm. “The microcosm is not just a small part of the whole, one of the elements of the universe, but it is a somewhat reduced and embodying replica of the whole ... The microcosm is as complete and perfect in itself as the macrocosm. The microcosm is understood as a human being, which can be understood only within the parallelism of the “small” and “big” worlds” (Gurevich 1984: 70). The activation of nature as a part of the universe has been observed since the 12th century. Before that - the only model of cognition of the universe was God. Since the 12th century, nature has been active as created by God, allowing man to know himself in it, and to draw closer to God: man as the image of God.

- A special place in early medieval art is reserved for God. We her encounter the theocentric model of the universe. “But God is not only the centre of the universe, which is determined by him and around him. He exists everywhere in all His creatures” (Gurevich 1984: 97-98). The sensible and physical worlds intersect with the numinous world. This is inevitable. It is a world heavily loaded with symbolism. In late medieval art, God remains the centre of the universe. However, the cohesive system, in which the sacred sights are located in the center, and the rest of the universe is seen as the periphery, begins to open up. The human way of life is changing and the structure of space is becoming more complex. The city model emerges, entrepreneurship and trade are introduced. The outside world becomes attractive and interesting to humans. Along with the growth of urban life, man separates himself from nature and it even becomes the object of his observation. The feudal state is more clearly seen as an artistic implication of reality.

Thus, in the aesthetics of the late Middle Ages, several basic principles are preserved that define the conceptual essence of the Middle Ages: the belief in the integrity of the universe, as well as the belief in the fulfilment of earthly history and the transition to an eternal world; We face the perception of nature as part of the universe, and activated as a model created by God; Finally, God remains at the center of the universe, yet this feeling is subject to inevitable social modification.

We believe that Rustaveli's *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* carefully adheres to the above-mentioned worldview-aesthetic principles, which are characteristic of the late Middle Ages.

First of all, in Rustaveli's text God is understood as the center of the universe. According to Nodar Natadze's correct observation, in *The Knight in the Panther's Skin*:

- God is represented as the Creator of the universe and of all the substances.

- The creation and management of the country is an act of God's will and not an involuntary necessity, as Neoplatonism preaches (Natadze 1974: 108)

- God is the creator of goodness and a non-begetter of evil (Natadze 1974: 109)

Besides, Rustaveli strongly defends the two-component structure of the world. We should borrow it once again from Nodar Natadze: “The dualism of God and the world - the existence of this, one of the most fundamental contradictions of Christianity, is a fact in *The Knight in the Panther's Skin*” (Natadze 1974: 122), in Rustaveli's poem “Satsutro” (temporary place) is opposed to “Uzhamo” (timeless), and “the world” to “God” (Natadze 1974: 123). Therefore, the end of earthly history and the transition to the eternal world scattered in time seems to hold a very organic feeling for Rustaveli, notwithstanding the background that the poet does not avoid references to his contemporary historical and social context, which indicates the text's link to the principles of secular literature, as well as its foreshadowing of the aesthetics of the forthcoming Renaissance.

All of the above methodologically regulates the chronotopic framework of the Georgian chivalric novel that interests us and provides an opportunity to draw new conclusions.

2. Playing with spatial perspectives

According to Mikhail Bakhtin: “Within the framework of one work and one author there are many types of chronotope, with their complex, significant relationships for a given work or for the author's creative style, but one of the chronotopic models is always dominant,

i.e. comprehensive” (Bakhtin 1986:284). And what if the author is a figure of the late medieval period? Moreover, what if he is the author of a chivalric novel? What, then, is the balance of the chronotopic model? Which of its components is considered to be determinant? Bakhtin himself wrote: “The chivalric novel, written in early textual form, is essentially located between the epic and the novel. This defines its special position in the history of the novel. These features also determine its peculiar chronotope - a fairy (wonderland – I. R.) world and a time of adventure” (Bakhtin 1986: 190). Yet, according to Gurevich, “The medieval man, experiencing a time ‘full of events’, thinks less of its ‘external’, quantitative side, and in this sense, the understanding of the world is devoid of time. Temporal relations only began to dominate his consciousness from the 13th century” (Gurevich 1984: 151). Consequently, we dare to assume that the time of the chivalric novel, essentially adventurous, loaded with adventures and events, which in some cases may even approach the everyday model of time, remains an abstract-conventional model of time. This is confirmed by the duality of time, which dates back to the early Middle Ages and is preserved later - the protagonist becomes aware of the duality of his own existence, which besides the empirical events of earthly life necessarily implies the expansion of life in the pursuit of divine destiny. The specialization of time plays an important role here: “If the medieval author was faced with the task of reflecting the changes taking place in the inner world of man, he would understand it not as a given entity, but as a way to help the hero overcome a certain space” (Gurevich 1984: 152). This is exactly what forms the basis to the ideas of E. Kobel, A. Gurevich and other scholars studying medieval literature who express the view that before the thirteenth century, before the Renaissance, the concept of time was still known through space, and that space was the organizing force of the literary text (Gurevich 1984: 151).

What is the space of a chivalric novel like? Is it typologically diverse? As we have seen above, Bakhtin calls the space of the chivalric novel fabulous, and as a model, considers it only as a unity with the main character: “on the whole, the protagonist and the fairy-tale world are made of the same fabric and there are no inconsistencies between them (differences – I.R.)”. The protagonist, as a subject, is an organic part of the external world, and together they form an unbreakable unity. The protagonist is a model of the microcosm who knows himself only within the framework of the God-ruled macrocosm. Consequently, the space of the chivalric novel is a vertical theocentric space, the centre of which is God.

The mythologizing and the infusion of fairytale tropes into this space obviously leads to its topographical uncertainty. However, in the chivalric novels of the late Middle Ages, topographical uncertainty is not infrequently diluted with topographically defined models, which is probably derived from pre-Renaissance sentiments. In this sense, the text of *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* is exemplary: the artistic-spatial fabric of *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* is no longer based on the law of the complete domination of topographical uncertainty. Such uncertainty, of course, is detected more than once (Mulgzanzar, Khataeti, Gulansharo, Kadji Castle, etc.), but there are also tangible systems of topographic definition (seven kingdoms, the sea, etc.). Furthermore, the topographical uncertainty of space in *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* does not imply the movement of the protagonist in the heavens and the earth, or between the seabed and the sky, or between humans and gods, as in Scandinavian sagas and legends of the same period, but rather flows on a geographically credible plane.

According to the law of the genre, in a medieval novel, space is conquered by the protagonist and it is accessible to the reader insofar as it is thus conquered. But, space is not only overcome, but also experienced by the hero. “Space not only surrounds the protagonist,

but also - is experienced by him ... the spatial environment and the hero in it permeate and complement each other” (Gurevich 1984: 79). In other words, the protagonist and the space are a unity; the protagonist has a specific, individual relationship with the environment, nature, and therefore with the part of the world that, according to the Christian concept of the late Middle Ages, is a means of approaching God; the protagonist becomes aware of himself within a ‘God-created’ nature and thus he draws closer to God. Such purposefulness, we think, should be regarded as one of the main reasons for the diversity of the spatial plan in chivalric novels. The authors try to diversify the geography of the space, in the process of overcoming geographical distances, on the one hand, in order to outline more clearly the protagonist’s goals as determined by the plot and increase the reader’s involvement in the story, and on the other hand, to substantiate the logic of the protagonist’s inner transformation, which is essential in late medieval Christian writing. It is that inner transformation that should represent the writer’s and the protagonist’s perception of the world as a two-component structure. The more varied the spatial picture of the text, the more convincingly the author presents the inner transformation of the protagonist. Rustaveli is a rather advanced author also in this regard. In the text of *The Knight in the Panther’s Skin* we observe the skilful alteration of spatial perspectives: the mythological space is replaced by an artistic-geographical definition and the uncertainty of fantasy, and vice versa. Geographical and historical definition is one of the pre-Renaissance features of Rustaveli’s text. According to scholars of Rustaveli, the text of Rustaveli is permeated with historical realities such as the idea of an absolute monarchy, the direct naming and praise of the Georgian Sovereign (Tamar – I.R.), the similarity of the feudal monarchies described with the political picture of Georgia at that time, etc. Through such an alternation of spatial perspectives, Rustaveli creates a

period that does not violate the aesthetic law of the late Middle Ages, but also borders on the Renaissance understanding of the chronotope. The organization of time is also appropriate: Since a person is “not born with a ‘sense of time’, his temporal and spatial understanding is always determined by the culture to which he belongs” (Gurevich 1984: 44). We cannot escape the fact that the characters of chivalric novels, for the most part, exist outside the concept of age: “They always remain young and brave, and are ready for heroism ... The time of a chivalric novel does not shorten the time of their lives”. Accordingly, the real, the so-called empirical time lacks dynamics, it is loaded with probabilities, but is static in terms of variability. Variability means the qualitative transformation from the static to dynamic, while, the dynamism of time, as already mentioned above, will bring about fundamental changes and represent a transitional step towards ‘another reality’, towards eternity. Is this anti-historicism? According to Gurevich’s highly interesting observations, that which may seem anti-historical at first glance is in fact a sign of historicism in principle: the protagonist of a chivalric novel lives in two dimensions - earthly and human: “Indeed, man will feel, will know himself in two time continua simultaneously: in the continuum of local life and in the general-historical continuum, wherein the fate of the world is decided - the creation of the world, the Nativity of Christ and His Passion. The fast-paced and disfigured life of every human being runs against the background of a general historical drama, merges with it, acquires from it a new, higher and eternal meaning” (Gurevich 1984: 153-154).

According to this philosophical intersection of anti-historicism and historicism, God remains as the center of the universe. However, feudal society, as a historical reality or a local model, where the hero's earthly life proceeds, acquires a greater social sharpness as it draws nearer to the edge of the Renaissance novel: the text becomes socially diverse and therefore becomes more structurally determined.

Therefore, the artistic task of the author of the late medieval period becomes more complex, since his task is to show the paradigm of the inner transformation of the protagonist, the projection of the protagonist's displacement / movement from one model of time and space to another, i.e. the departure of the character from the artistic-geographical definition to the mythologized uncertainty. Then where is the border located? Where does the transformation begin, what kind of transformation is it and where is it going? What artistic models should the author apply?

We believe that Shota Rustaveli, as a pre-Renaissance thinker, is an author facing just such an artistic-aesthetic dilemma.

3. For the paradigm of transformation

Transformation, the inner change is that very process, to which Rustaveli's text is addressed.

One of the most influential classical texts of the late Middle Ages and the Pre-Renaissance (and later in the Renaissance) was considered to be Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, which perfectly fits the spirit of the time - the necessity of the inner transformation of man. Ovid's poem may have even seem an unlikely vehicle for emphasizing Christian ideals, but here the reader has clearly observed the transformation of myth into a moral model. In *The Divine Comedy* by the genius Italian Dante Alighieri, man is either distorted by sin or transformed by the love of the Christian God. Consequently, the idea of transformation carries a Christian message in *The Divine Comedy*. The same idea, albeit from a completely different angle, will retain its relevance in the Renaissance era, when the issue of "changing the

shape of body and soul”¹ is on the agenda. Accordingly, Rustaveli thoroughly understands the importance and necessity of transformation. The reader of the Georgian chivalric novel was supposed to apprehend the transformation of the characters, but the question is: what kind of transformation?

Here, first of all, we must remember how *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* ends:

“They poured down mercy like snow on all alike,
They enriched orphans and widows and the poor did not beg,
They terrified evil-doers; the ewes could not suckle the lambs,
Within their territories the goat and the wolf fed together” (1571).

Georgian poetic genius outlined an ideal-utopian structure in one phrase and ambiguously attributed it to a real space, but at the same time remained full of mystery and mysticism. The dwellings of the characters in the final stanzas of *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* are presented as an idyllic setting, where it is difficult to foresee the vices that are significant for “Caesar’s world”; There is an allusion, on the one hand, to the ancient “Golden Age” and “Arcadia”, and on the other hand, to the biblical and Christian paradise of the time, the artistic perspective of which approaches the fairy-tale-fantasy idyll characteristic of chivalric novels. We think that the author of *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* sympathizes with this second model – “like a magic fairy tale, which undoubtedly must end with the suppression of evil, the finales of the chivalric novels will also sound like a solemn accord broadcasting the victory of good over evil” (Elbakidze 2007: 51), which in essence does not contradict the

¹ Not to mention a change in the cultural paradigm: Renaissance-era writers and artists aspired to great changes, including bringing a new spirit to Greek and Roman cultures.

Christian concept of defeating evil. However, there is one interesting nuance that forces us to make a choice: the protagonist of the fairy tale does not undergo a fundamental transformation in the process of adventures and vicissitudes, but only gains experience from them; The characters of *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* are characters focused on inner change, who, as a result of their own ordeal, have to reconsider their fundamental values. Therefore, we have the right to conclude that the finale of *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* is a reference to the Christian paradise.

From the very beginning, the ancient method of realizing the “utopian dream”, i.e. the search / formation of a “good place” in a real time-space environment, was unacceptable to the Christian worldview.¹ The real problem was firstly the method for realizing the “utopian dream” in Seneca and later in the Christian worldview in general.²

From this point of view, R.C. Elliot should be quoted:

Utopia is the application of man's reason and his will to the myth... Utopia (in the sense we are concerned with here) is man's effort to work out imaginatively what happens – or what might happen – when the primal longings embodied in the myth confront the principle of reality. In this effort man no longer merely dreams of a divine state in some remote time; he assumes the role of creator himself” (Elliot 1970:8-9).

But what is the result of such an experiment? Destruction - says the Christian worldview in contrast to the classical interpreters of utopia, and cites the biblical text of the original sin as the best

¹ See, Plato, *Republic*, in Платон, Сочинения в 3т., т.3. М.: Мысль, 1971.

² See Seneca, *On the Happy Life*, in: Антология мировой философии в 4т., т.1. М.: Мысль, 1969.

argument. According to the biblical text of original sin, people could not justify the Lord's confidence: having tasted without permission the forbidden fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, they somehow assumed the role of demiurge, usurped the functions of the Creator and deserved the wrath of God in return: God cursed Adam and Eve, deprived them of the happiness of eternal life, made them mortal, caused them many sufferings, and expelled them from the Garden of Eden. "The Garden of Eden can be freely assimilated with the "Golden Age". Therefore, the conclusion is that it is impossible to achieve "idyllic happiness" within human capabilities; it is the sole prerogative of the kingdom of God.

The Christian worldview deepened and enriched its position when it actively challenged the sinful and depraved model of Caesar's kingdom and opposed it with the model of a heavenly paradise. In this regard, attention is drawn to the text of the *Book of the Revelation* of the Apostle John, where the motive of overthrowing the earthly and carnal city of Babylon as the image of sinners, adulterers, and "the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth" is contrasted with the emergence of an earthly, divine city, The New Jerusalem. Unlike Babylon, The New Jerusalem is the City of God, a paradise regained, where God will always be with the exalted people, "He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain any more, for the former things have passed away" (*Revelation* 21 :4).

A kind of continuation of this concept of *the Revelation* is *The City of God* by Saint Augustine, where the philosopher sharply separates religious goals from secular, worldly goals and objectives. In *The City of God*, he clearly expresses his heartache over the constant concern and worries of the people for the problems of the "worldly city", which, according to the Bishop of Hippo, is a clear precondition which distances people from the "city of God". Saint Augustine

believes that the only mission of humans on earth is to cleanse themselves of worldly sins, since their “real life” is in heaven. The end of the earthly pilgrimage is foreshadowed by the Day of Judgment, a day that will free the worthy from the shackles of the “worldly city” and move them to the “city of God”: “After this day”, writes Blessed Augustine, “the destruction of the old Adam will cause a transformation, which will offer an angelic life to human beings” (Augustine 1969: 605).

We find a profound theological modification of the same issue in the text of *The Wisdom of Balahvari*: And he said, "Live, O king, for ever, for the portion of the passer-by has been chosen to be eternal and better, for there is no glory in this village, for it is like a ghost passing away and like a quail disappearing". “Keep your word in your heart, for it is good for you to sell this village to the one who does not leave it”. “And when the man of God heard this, his mind was filled with tears and said: “May your life be everlasting Your Majesty, for you have chosen the eternal and better instead of the worldly, for the glory of this world is naught, for it passes like a shadow and fades away like smoke. Keep your word in your heart, for it is good to acquire the eternal life by abandoning the transitory one” (Wisdom of Balahvari 1960: 233).

This is the main context that precedes Rustaveli's *The Knight in the Panther's Skin*, however, there is another extremely important text that neither the author of *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* nor we can bypass: Davit Agmashenebeli's *The Songs of Repentance*. Nodar Natadze mentions this text, and quite rightly, if with a slightly different emphasis: „In special literature, *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* is often recognized as a Renaissance work, on the basis that Rustaveli gave an independent meaning to the corporeal world and celebrated worldly sentiments. Such an approach is obviously wrong. If this is enough to prove the “Renaissance” quality of the work, then

we should ascribe the term Renaissance to all literary or artistic creations in which even an interest in a real person is expressed... The essence of the Renaissance, and especially its value, is not that it has placed the corporeal man at the centre of its interests, but that it has achieved this by overcoming the most difficult and profound worldview – Christianity, with its highly developed asceticism and spiritualism. Rustaveli's poem, therefore, is not in the style of the Renaissance because it lauds the carnal passions; it was cultivated from within the values of a high Christian culture, and is not a trivial rejection of these values, but, in a sense, it is a conquest, and goes far beyond them. Had we not preserved David Agmashenebeli's *Songs of Repentance*, and the rich ecclesiastical literature and historical writings, which testify to the predominance of the Christian worldview, (catalyzed by the perceived need for purification of sin among the Georgians throughout the Middle Ages), then we could assert that the worldliness of Rustaveli's poem is unintentional or we may assert that it is a primordial worldliness, and is in this respect no different from the epics of Homer, *Visramiani* and the old Arabic poetry. But since we have all this literature preserved, we have no right to make such assertions. (Natadze 1974: 177-178).

We do not consider Rustaveli's aesthetics to be those of the Renaissance (as N. Natadze says) We consider them rather as pre-Renaissance aesthetics, and yet we agree with the scholar that Rustaveli's aesthetics announce certain forthcoming characteristics of the aesthetics of the Renaissance era. Whereas N. Natadze sees in Rustaveli the power of Christian culture and a "going far beyond it", we discern more of the great flowering of Georgian Christian thought, which brings together the Christian consciousness of the early Middle Ages with the evaluative philosophy of *The Songs of Repentance*. The "carnal passions" and other everyday story lines are just applications on the path to the supreme, universal love, kindness and harmony that

the characters of *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* should finally follow, and especially Tariel, who stands in need of a salutary transformation.

Where are the main demarcation lines of the heroic transformation to be found in the text?

We firmly believe that the path of the artistic transformation of the characters of *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* passes through liminal models. We will refer to our own work – *Text and Chronotope* (2010):

The term and concept – “Liminality” – was coined by Arnold van Gennep, a prominent representative of French positivist anthropology. In his work, *Rites de Passage* (1908), Gennep not only theoretically explained the importance of liminality, but also demonstrated practically its coordinating role in the process of changing seasonal variability on the one hand, and individual lifestyle on the other. The "rites de passage" is a necessary attribute of any type of variability (change of place, country or social status, age variability, etc.), according to Gennep, and highlights the dichotomy that exists between "reinforced" and "displaced" structures. The *rites de passage* is a ritual of passage, according to Gennep a necessary attribute of any type of variability (change of place, country or social status, age variability, etc.), and highlights the dichotomy that exists between “hardened” and “changeable” structures. Gennep believes that each process of displacement, or transit, is characterized by three phases: 1. Separation or singling out; 2. Marginality, or liminality; 3. Union, or incorporation. The first phase, separation, involves the formation of a specific individual or a chosen individual, the so-called Isolation of the “initiate” from a fixed social or cultural structure. It marks the detachment of the initiate from the real time-spatial environment. The second phase, liminality, expresses the ambivalent state of the initiate, like a “transit traveler”, and his displacement into the intermediate,

ambivalent social zone, in a kind of “limbo”. The third, the final phase of the incorporation, corresponds to the return of the initiate to the community, only with a renewed social status, i.e. “re-aggregation” of the individual.

The second one out of the three listed phases deserves particular attention: it is a liminal phase, in the bowels of which the individual acquires the experience of a complete blurring of the social environment and distances himself from reality. The term “liminal” is derived from Latin (*limen*, *liminis*) and means a threshold, a boundary, an exit corridor situated between two different loci. It is introduced with a similar purpose in the Gennep’s theory: the liminal phase, by its very nature and function, is a transient, dynamic, intermediate condition placed between the hardened and transformed structures. Accordingly, Gennep believes that the rites of passage can be defined as the totality of three conditions: “preliminary”, which means separation from the previous world; “Liminal”, which indicates the transit period; and “Post-liminal”, which is related to the ceremony of incorporation into the new world ... Nearly half a century later, Victor Turner transferred Gennep’s theory to the plane of structuralist anthropology and defined the liminal phase as an “interstructural situation” emerging “between different positional structures”.

Turner’s special attention in Gennep’s theory is drawn to the liminal phase, which performs the function of a threshold and separates the different stages of life. According to Turner, the temporary separation of the individual from the established social structure gives the individual not only ambivalent social status, but also frees him from any laws, norms and rules of behaviour, its status is essentially ambivalent and vague. “In the liminal phase” Turner writes, “the individual is neither ‘here’ nor ‘there’. It stands “betwixt and between” (See Turner 1995) legally, traditionally, conventionally and ceremonially established positions (Turner 1995: 126). Consequently,

both the “previous” and the “next” status of the individual is suspended, the individual is in a position of exclusion, indefiniteness, in the condition of expecting the implementation of reconstructed and updated cultural models and paradigms. According to M. I. Spariosu, “liminality for Turner is not only a form of transitoriness but also a form of potentiality” (Spariosu 1997: 133), because liminality reveals not only the isolation from hardened structures, but also a potential for the formation of alternative structures. R. Palmer notes: “The individual who moves into the liminal phase has the potential of the individual, but is caught in the gap between the worlds, that is, a kind of conceptual medium, between the alternating structures of ‘here’ and ‘there’” (Palmer 1980: 8).¹

In view of the above, “In chivalric novels, *Rites de passage* have two different schemes: they embraces either a) the motive of search, or b) the motive of wandering. These two motifs, derived from oppositional temporal and spatial models, are related to two different characters: dynamic and static. Both characters are represented in *The Knight in the Panther’s Skin*. The first is represented by Avtandil, and the second by Tariel” (Elbakidze, Ratiani, p. 30). We would like to add that other main characters can also be defined through these characteristics: The code (even though transformational) for Nestan-Darejan, Tinatin, and Phridon is introduced into the text only with respect to the characters of Tariel, Avtandil, and Nestan-Darejan.² M. Ghaganidze, Speaking of the four main personae of the text, rightly points out: “Tinatin is the only one among the young characters of the poem who does not leave her estate and, as the embodiment of

¹ For further details see I. Ratiani, *Text and Chronotope*. Tbilisi University Press. Tbilisi, 2010.

² Maybe because Tinatin and Phridon are already represented as “kings” and Rustaveli, as a medieval author, will be determined not to let the “kings” go through the phases of transformation.

wisdom, rules and manages her own household. Also, Tinatin is the only one whose status change we have been considering from the beginning of the poem - the poem begins with her enthronement - and the other characters - Avtandil, Tariel, Nestan - change their status only after they experience loneliness, suffering, and leave their homes and regain them again. They all come out of their secure and stable condition, from their usual and native environments and remain face to face with the world and themselves, they stay alone” (Ghaganidze 2009: 82).

In terms of transformational liminal models, in *The Knight in the Panther's Skin*, we believe three artistic spatial models are meaningful (defined by appropriate temporal coordinates): Tariel's cave, Avtandil's road and the Nestan-Darejan's fortress. In this article we will discuss only the model of the cave, through which we will try to present the paradigm of Tariel's inner transformation.¹

Tariel in the cave is already a “displaced” character who experiences a complete blurring of the social environment. On the one hand, the character is detached from reality, excluded and, consequently, alienated from social structures, which gives him ambivalent social status and even puts him on the verge of losing his identity, and on the other hand - is in an indefinable position, implementing reconstructed and transformed paradigms. Where is Tariel going from and where to?

Tariel, just like his brotherly Avtandil, is a character who bears the Christian chivalrous spirit of the late Middle Ages. In one of his most recent works, *Bourgeois Between History and Literature*, which contrasts the images of a bourgeois with that of a medieval knight in fiction, Franco Moretti notes: “All ‘good’ traits, but not good enough to match the type of narrative hero — warrior, knight, conqueror,

¹ We shall try to extend the discussion further in the next academic publication.

adventurer – on whom Western story-telling had relied for, literally, millennia ... It's a major discontinuity between the old and the new ruling class: whereas the aristocracy had shamelessly idealized itself in a whole gallery of intrepid knights, the bourgeoisie produced no such myth of itself. The great mechanism of adventure was being eroded by bourgeois civilization— and without adventure, characters lost the stamp of uniqueness that comes from the encounter with the unknown. Compared to a knight, a bourgeois appears un-marked and elusive; similar to any other bourgeois” (Moretti 2013: 8, 16). In other words, the knight is a hero expressing the interests of the medieval aristocracy, adorned with his best qualities, thanks to which the authors easily idealize their characters. The knight lives according to the Knights Code of Chivalry and is the epitome of a polite, noble, loyal man to whom courtly literature has added more emotion and even passion. However, the knights are the exponents of the interests of the late medieval era worldview. They are often referred to as “knights in the name of Christ”: After all it was the religious oath that provided one of the conditions for being blessed as a knight in Western culture.¹ Thus, love, loyalty, courage, devotion, generosity, patience, the quest for adventures - are the markers of the chivalrous nature of Tariel and Avtandil, while emotion, passion, pragmatism are the characteristics of human / masculine nature, and regret, self-torture, thinking of the soul are the signs of Christian mission. The complexity of the task of the author of *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* is to be found in the comparison of the dichotomies of the historical reality of the text with the eternal realities located in the transcendental world, where the same characters have to undergo the most difficult internal transformations.

¹ See *Knighthoods of Christ: Essays on the History of the Crusades and the Knights Templar*, Presented to Malcolm Barber. Ed. by Norman Housley. Routledge, 2007.

Recall the first appearance of Tariel: “They saw a certain stranger knight; he sat weeping on the bank of the stream” (85). Armored, a panther-clad giant is sitting and crying by the water. Later, when we see Tariel inside the cave, he weeps there as well: “Then he drew his breath, cried out, hot tears gushed forth” (310) which is then repeated many times later in the text. Tears are the main attribute of this character, no less important than his horse or sword. Can we consider Tariel's tears as an expression of regret, if they are just tears of grief caused by separation (with a loved one, or a homeland ...)? We think that such a question allows us to ask both the story of the text and the cultural context of its creation: on the one hand, Tariel has behind him a series of events that give him reasons to fall into grief and regret: the loss of Nestan, the expulsion from his homeland – offending his own mentor ... Tariel, on the other hand, is a knight of the late medieval era, so it is perfectly permissible to consider regret as an organic part of his worldview as well. Moreover, Davit Aghmashenebeli's *The Songs of Repentance* already exists in Georgian literature as an artistic declaration of Christian repentance. We think that Tariel's chivalry does not contradict his feelings of regret; on the contrary, it is through this combination that Rustaveli reaches the height of his hero's transformation, to which he aspires.

If we begin from the so-called origins, Tariel is a knight who initially falls in love with his king's daughter, however, despite their mutual love, because of to events in the story, they lose each other. Tariel will search in vain for his wife and, in a state of extreme emotional abstraction, which, according to Rustaveli scholars, likens his state to “madness”, he leaves his homeland, and human society altogether. He is isolated in the woods, in an empty cave, where he gives himself over to grief and sorrow. This part of the story is interesting for our research, because there, in the cave, the inner transformation of Tariel must begin.

Madness, rage, folly already represent a marginal condition, neither on one side or the other. The protagonist is different from other, normal people; he essentially no longer belongs to their number, though, as a human being, he cannot be completely cut off from society. Michel Foucault notes that in this state the madman himself draws a kind of dividing line, and his adventure is “a strictly separated (singled out - I.R.) and, at the same time, absolute (perfect - I.R.) movement” from one state to another (Foucault 1967: 11). But what could be the paradigm of movement? According to Yulia Kristeva, madness is essentially destructive and leads to an identity crisis, which is the result of experienced trauma, pain, misfortune, and so on (Kristeva 1982: 4).¹ As Agnes Kanizsai rightly points out, what is interesting here is how madness “infiltrates into the hero’s inspired chivalric body and imbues him with the deepest emotions, leading him to an identity crisis” (Kanizsai 2020: 124).

Tariel is a character standing at such a border. His fighting and unyielding chivalrous spirit is overshadowed by the trauma of love, the grief of leaving his homeland, the embarrassment caused by having offended his mentor ... He says to Avtandil in a state of half unconsciousness: I don't know what happened after that: many years have passed since then” (345).^{*} It is true that forgetting everything or amnesia is not a reality yet, but it is not a distant prospect either.

It is difficult to argue that the killing of Khwarazm Shah's son causes remorse in Tariel, for, on the one hand, he is a knight whom the law of the genre obliges to relentlessly get rid of an opponent, to fight for power, for a beloved woman, etc. On the other hand, the text does

¹ Michel Foucault has a phrase addressed to Don Quixote's character: “Madness is the imperishable life of death”.

^{*} **Translator's note:** Shota Rustaveli, *The Knight in the Panther's Skin*, New translation by Lynn Coffin, Poezia Press, Tbilisi, 2015. The strophe is omitted in the translation by Marjory Wardrop.

not provide any information about remorse; yet, all that happens after the murder - the wrath of the adopted father / caregiver Pharsadan, the loss of Nestan-Darejan, the exile from the homeland - are the causes of Tariel's madness, his devastation and destruction. He may not have regrets directly over the killing of Khwarazm Shah's son, but he certainly has a sense of regret for the other losses listed above. He is a voluntarily distracted / displaced character who is given to grief and seeks death as the only way out of the situation.¹ At the same time, Tariel faces the loss of his knightly identity: his position as a knight is shaken and even incomprehensible until he confronts Avtandil and convinces him that it is possible for him to take a new path. In our opinion, this is not at all the case of "inactive grief" as some scholars claim (with all due respect for them – I.R.), but - the logical artistic result of the events in the text, which has to become either the final destruction of the character or the beginning of his/her renewal and transformation. Rustaveli chooses the second path and, as is appropriate for the late medieval Georgian writer, inevitably associates the paradigm of personality and chivalric transformation with the idea of a Christian paradise.

In order to achieve this goal, first of all, it is necessary for Tariel to detach himself from the conventional every day and historical reality and move into the liminal space. This is how the cave appears, which is located in the forest, far from civilization, and which is an ideal place to begin the transformation of the hero. If we recall one of the above mentioned important principles of medieval aesthetics, this is the case when nature / landscape is activated as a God-created model of civilization, untouched by human beings, allowing the character to know himself within it and to begin a renewal, which should eventually outline the paradigm of his spiritual growth.

¹ Which is revealed in more than one episode in *The Knight in the Panther's Skin*.

On the other hand, if we recall the important principle inherent in the story of medieval chivalric novels, Tariel's friend and adopted brother should be seen as the catalyst for the process of Tariel's rebirth.¹ Avtandil must enter the cave, as the hero who is a necessary precondition for the presentation of the integrity of a strong person, and a knight in love, in this unique text of Rustaveli.² Tariel needs help, the support of his neighbor, if one may say, a Christian compassion: "A friend should spare himself no trouble for his friend's sake" ... (685). Tariel's departure from the cave is a credit to Avtandil's active support. It is he who helps his adopted brother in overcoming difficulties and believing in his own renewal.

In the process of Tariel's telling of his story to Avtandil, the contrast between the liminal space of the semi-dark cave and the conventional every day and historical spatial model, in which Tariel's life previously flowed perfectly: the seven kingdoms, the royal gates, the only daughter of the ruler and many other things that create allusions to the historical reality of the era.³ The political and social reality of 12th century Georgia, through the author's artistic imagination and creative talent, undergoes an artistic transformation and is revealed in the text in a measure permissible for a specific literary genre. We face the feudal state as an artistic representation of reality. The right balance of artistic time-space and historical time-

¹ See Agnes Kanichai, *The Representation of Madness in a Medieval English Romance*. http://publicatio.bibl.u-szeged.hu/5232/1/09.C381gnes_Kanizsai_2009_13_u.pdf

² For more detailed analysis of this see Maka Elbakidze, *Some Issues of the Poetics of The Knight in the Panther's Skin in Typological Relation to Medieval French Chivalric Novel*. Tbilisi, 2007, pp. 52-66.

³ Not to mention the episode of the reign of Tinatin, about which K. Kekelidze and A. Baramidze write: "There is no doubt that in these episodes the real circumstances of the concrete historical reality of the 12th century Georgia were qualitatively reflected" (Kekelidze, Baramidze 1969: 257).

space ensures the reader's belief in the plot conveyed in the story. Such is the diachronic function of the chronotope, which works especially effectively in secular texts of the late Middle Ages, particularly in the chivalric novel. Mikhail Bakhtin wrote about this: "What is the function of the chronotopes we have discussed?... The chronotopes we have discussed are distinguished by genre-typical character, they are the bases of different types of novel genres that were created and developed over the centuries" (Bakhtin 1986: 284-285). Rustaveli mixes the flow of the historical chronotope, which enters the text of *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* (states, cities, army, vassals and serfs, etc.) with its characteristic political or social nuances, and thus creates a conditional model of artistic reality. It was in the bowels of such a conventional model for artistic reality. It was in the bosom of such a conventional artistic reality that Tariel's life flowed (as well as the lives of other heroes) before he headed to the cave: birth, upbringing, maturity, love, battles and wars, and so on. In the episode when Tariel is narrating his adventure in the liminal space of the cave, the author shows the contrast between the conventional every day / historical and the artistic liminal models of the chronotope in the text, as well as the politically and socially active life vs. the voluntary isolation. The purpose of the cave is to move the hero towards self-awareness. Tariel must rediscover himself and believe in his own powers, that is, he must be born again, with the help of Avtandil, who "fills and unifies" him (Elbakidze 2007: 53).

According to the law of the chivalric novel genre, "the conscientious knight enjoys the newly acquired freedom and his actions become even more magnificent" (Kanizsai 2020: 136), while according to the law of Christian writing, the renewal of the protagonist must occur in accordance with the aesthetic concept of the late Middle Ages – the human being should turn into the "image of God". So it will happen. Not only will Tariel come out of the cave, he

will not only regain his beloved woman, his homeland and along with them his chivalrous identity, but he will also emerge as the ruler of a fairytale idyll, pointing to a model of metaphysical reality in the artistic chronotope, in particular to the biblical heavenly paradise and the “city of God”: “within their territories the goat and the wolf fed together” (1571).

No one can enter this paradise without a sense of repentance in this world. If we recall Dante's *The Divine Comedy*, in particular, his “purgatory”, we will agree that the purgatory is the place of repentance, where Christians must repent in order to be purified and move on to the next phase, which Dante calls “paradise”. The purgatory is a kind of liminal model, placed between hell and heaven. Tariel's Cave fulfils a similar artistic function in *The Knight in the Panther's Skin*. The cave is a transit zone, a liminal, transitional, “neither here nor there” model, in which Tariel must be spiritually strengthened in order to be able to undergo an inner transformation and free Nestan-Darejan. The results of Nestan-Darejan's ransom in Rustaveli's text clearly refer to the idyllic formula: “the goat and the wolf fed together ...” What else is it if not a Christian idyll? The literary symbol of the Christian paradise? There is also here an artistic allusion to another crucial principle of medieval aesthetics: human behaviour, after the completion of earthly history, as an image of God through the redemption of sins and the regaining of the eternal world, which is now scattered throughout time.

Thus, the text of Rustaveli, though already full of pre-Renaissance sensibility, is conditioned by the worldview-conceptual principles of the late Middle Ages and is focused on the idea of God and Christian harmony. Any kind of *reality* - be it purely artistic, artistic-historical or artistic-transcendental - is aimed at the myth, which suggests that Shota Rustaveli plays the same role in Georgian Christian literature that Dante does in Italian and European, and as

both do in world literature: They, though in different genres and styles, but with equal power, represent the height of Christian writing, conceptually perfecting and crowning the Christian narrative. Yet, in their transformational spirits, both Rustaveli and Dante predict a Renaissance, an era inspired by the idea of global shifts and transformations, which is impossible to imagine without these genius authors of the late Middle Ages.

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The Cosmological Views of Rustaveli and Nizami

Cosmology and artistic creation belong to different spheres of thought, but there is an inner association between them, a mental kinship, which, above all, implies a large-scale imagination and perception of the world. Man's mental and emotional aspiration to approach the mystery of the structure of the universe undoubtedly implies a sense of the integrity of existence, the desire to unite the macrocosm and the microcosm, to see them in a unified form. By comprehending the cosmos, man comprehends himself.

Cosmological and cosmographic themes are introduced naturally into literary works because they are among the most natural and effective means of perceiving the universe, of its comprehension, representation, expression, and reflection.

Cosmological Metaphor – This is the most visible and understandable trope that rarely requires an interpretation.

The cosmos is poetic as much as poetry is a phenomenon with a cosmic meaning. The physical model of the cosmos is close to the metaphysical world of poetry.

In astral motifs the world is represented as a integrated essence. Here aesthetic intuition unequivocally grasps the scale. Astral semantics and poetic meanings can be viewed as a meeting of the earthly and heavenly.

Artistic creativity sees in cosmological representations the scale of the universe, the unifying function. 'Cosmology in Poetry' - This is a universal cultural paradigm, an axiological phenomenon.

In the Middle Ages, literature was so close to cosmology that the writer felt obliged to study theories of the physical structure of the

universe. Knowledge of these theories is evident in the works of Nizami and Rustaveli.

For example, the knowledge gained in the field of physics helps Nizami to form a philosophical worldview. The interrelationships of physical phenomena, motion and causality, gravity and the active nature of light, the structure of substances, and the nature of physical processes - all these play an active creative function in Nizami's works (Hasanov 1989:12).

Nizami's lyrical poem *On the Prophet's Ascension* (Nizam 1985: 159) describes a rather grand picture of the world. At the center of the universe is the sun, which unites the nine heavens and distributes its energy through the stars, Venus and the moon. The constellations help the prophet to move further into the depths of the sky, and so he reaches the ninth heaven, perfection, the abode of the Lord God, and then returns. Here it seems that the poet is well versed in astrology, but the main focus in the verse is shifted to its poetic content. The astrological form serves to convey a poetic idea.

The mystical-religious realities as found in the lyrical text *The Second Prayer* - the first stanza: the prophet, whose hair formed the rays of the sun, adorned and beautified the nine heavens and the seven planets. Nizami here too, first of all, is a poet, a creator with the highest imaginary abilities (Nizami 1985: 162).

As it turns out, Nizami Ganjavi was familiar with the idea of the spherical shape of the earth. He shared it as the truth and repeatedly referred to this topic when discussing the structure of the universe.

According to Jamal Mustafaev, Nizami connects the idea of the spherical form of the earth with the theory of the geocentrism of the universe. He, as a medieval thinker, shares the assumption of Aristotle and Ptolemy that the spherically shaped earth is the real center of the universe around which the celestial spheres revolve. At the same time, Nizami, like Aristotle, believes that the celestial spheres consist of a

simple substance or ether, while the earthly world “under the moon” is a complex substance and consists of four elements (Mustafayev 1962: 45).

The first chapter of *Iskandarnama* (“To the Strongest”) shows the zodiac signs (constellations) and the layout of the planets at the moment when Alexander the Great was born: a multi-starred Aries who is always striving for learning, moving from knowledge to action; Gemini and Mercury meet each other; the Moon will pass near Taurus and Venus; Jupiter goes to Sagittarius, Libra shakes by the approach of Saturn; The warrior Mars ascends higher and higher and enters his sixth, glorious house (Nizami, 6).

The universe is one whole organism, and man is involved in the movements of the macrocosm. His fate is determined by the cosmos. If the layout of the stars promises happiness, then Nizami’s characters are also successful and powerful. Khosrow observes the formation of stars, studies their laws and accordingly plans to win and take the throne back:

*“When the moon came from the sign of Pisces,
The moon of Parviz ascended the throne of the Shah.
Taurus, Venus, Cancer granted him
Happiness three times more today.
The sun hung across the Aries like a bead necklace,
Behold, Zuhal also threw a beam at the rocking chair.
When the moon
And that Utarid had begun to move along the Gemini line,
Towards Mars it headed playfully.
The Comet tail filled a glass of wine for Mars,
Zuhal also turned his eye toward the cup??”*

(Nizami, 1964 : 176-177).

In the same poem (*Khosrow and Shirin*), Nizami writes that the sun revolves around the earth and that each star is an independent universe (Nizami 1964: 7).

In the chapter called “Majnun’s prayer” in the poem *Layla and Majnun*, the protagonist addresses, besides the Lord, the morning star, and Mushtar as the celestial bodies that guide human destiny:

*“First Majnun found
The morning star in the sky.
„You, who can tell fate:
Oh, fate you are my slave!
You, morning star,
The hope of the one who hopes,
You are the writer of all fates
And the one who decides them;
.....
When the witness Mushtar
Looked down from the sky,
Now he prayed to the Mushtar,
Used the opportunity to pray to him.
Asked him: “You are the star,
Which brings happiness...”*

(Nizami 1974: 282-283)

Rustaveli has used a similar scheme in one of the chapters of *The Knight in the Panther’s Skin* – “Avtandil leaving for Phridon”. Avtandil addresses seven celestial orbs: the Sun, Zuhal (Saturn), Mushtar (Jupiter), Mars (Mars), Aspiros (Venus), Utarid (Mercury) and the Moon. He, like Majnun, begs each one of them for mercy and support:

“O sun, to thee I pray, thou mighty of the mightiest mights” (937);
“Come, Zual, add tear to tear, woe to woe” (938);

"O Musht'har, I entreat thee, thou just, perfect judge" (939);
"Come, Marikh, mercilessly pierce me with thy spear" (940);
"Come, Aspiroz, aid me somewhat; she has consumed me with the
flame of fires" (941);
"Otarid! save thee none other's fate is like to mine" (942);
"Come, Moon, take pity on me; I shrink and am wasted like thee"
(943);

There is no doubt that Rustaveli follows the cosmography of Ptolemy. Zurab Avalishvili also paid attention to the fact that Rustaveli puts the sun in the first place in Avtandil's address to the celestial orbs: "The only change that Rustaveli made in this scheme was that he mentioned the sun in the first place. Indeed, in this line (according to the distances) the sun should have taken the fourth place, because Zuhā, Mushtar and Marikh [Mars] are farther away from us than the sun" (Avalishvili 1931: 5).

While discussing the cosmology of *The Knight in the Panther's Skin*, Zurab Avalishvili mentions Nizami Ganjavi's *Seven Beauties* and writes that Nizami's poem strictly adheres to the above astrological scheme, which also expresses the poet's beliefs. Yet, the main point is, the scholar notes, that the symbolism of the celestial orbs had a hidden, arcane significance (Avalishvili 1931: 25).

The astrological doctrine in poetry is understood mainly from a mystical point of view and there is nothing surprising in this. This is a tradition determined by both the physical content of the cosmos and the standards of its human perception. Plotinus writes: "Planets and stars are nothing but signs or letters written in the sky to read what is happening or what is about to happen" (Losev 1980: 663).

Avtandil also addresses the celestial orbs because he reads their signs and, at the same time, enters into the harmony they create. By entering the cosmic harmony, Avtandil restores the connection with his love - Tinatin (Nozadze 2005: 189).

Zviad Gamsakhurdia offered an even more mystical understanding, according to which the main characters of the poem - Tariel, Avtandil and Phridon - are connected with each other in astrological terms. More precisely, these three images are related to the Sun - in the aspect of Jupiter (Tariel), the Sun - in the aspect of Mercury (Avtandil) and the Moon (Phridon) (Gamsakhurdia 1991: 188).

In the astrological analysis of *The Knight in the Panther's Skin*, the question of the order of the celestial orbs causes differences of opinion. This question is directly related to the question of whether Rustaveli's cosmos is geocentric or heliocentric, or does it follow Ptolemy's system, or does it create its own new system?

Some scholars believe that Rustaveli is a heliocentrist and cite examples from the poem where the sun has a predominant place among the celestial orbs. Most often they cite the above verses (966-972) to support their argument; in these verses Avtandil begins to address the celestial orbs starting with the sun, and then moving to Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, Venus, Mercury and the Moon.

However, it is noteworthy that in the same verse, 944, Rustaveli lists the celestial orbs again, but in a different order:

*“Behold, the stars bear witness, even the seven confirm my words:
the sun, Otarid, Musht'har and Zual faint for my sake;
moon, Aspiroz, Marikh, come and bear me witness”.*

The order of Rustaveli is different from that of Ptolemy. The order of the planets given by Rustaveli is correct in the sense that the celestial orbs are arranged according to the increase of their distances to the Earth.

Astrophysicist Giorgi Tevzadze claimed that Rustaveli is a geocentrist. According to his research, the Sun of *The Knight in the*

Panther's Skin rotates around the Earth, and Mercury and Venus - around the Sun. Therefore, these two planets together with the sun perform a circular motion around the earth (Tevzadze 1979: 104-105).

According to Giorgi Tevzadze, Rustaveli's view on the structure of the world is as follows:

1. the earth is located immovably at the center of the stellar celestial sphere;

2. The celestial orbs move in a circle;

3. All celestial bodies move with the same speedequally;

4. The planets move under the influence of the power of the sun;

5. Preference is given to the sun among the celestial orbs. Its power, compared to other celestial bodies, is much greater, and reveals the following properties: it moves the planets around; its influence on these planets has always been effective; the power of influence depends on the distance between the sun and the planets; The sun has the ability to extend the force of gravity infinitely far away.

Based on these provisions, astrophysicist Giorgi Tevzadze describes the planetary system of Rustaveli as follows: the system is limited to the sphere of the starry sky. At its center is the Earth, around which the sun completes its orbital motion, and the moon, and the five planets move around the sun itself.

The celestial orbs, according to their maximum distance from the earth, are arranged according to the increase of distances.

So this system has two centers. First - Earth, the center of the stellar sky; The second is the sun, which is surrounded by planets in circular orbits (Tevzadze 1979: 109-110).

Physicists call this model geo-heliocentric, but this does not prevent us from concluding that Rustaveli, like Nizami, is geocentric.

The fact that *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* pays special attention to the sun and its artistic function must be explained by the peculiarities of Rustaveli's poetic thinking.

The Chilean writer Gustavo de la Botaro found a highly accurate definition of this context: "Rustaveli argues that *sol est mens temperario mundi* "The sun is the mind and stability of the world" (Botaro 2018: 20).

The poet, no matter how deeply he penetrates the layers of astronomical knowledge, ultimately still uses the real nature of the stars for creative purposes.

As Plato writes, man should perceive the "charming jewels" of the sky arch as the most delicate and eye-catching ornaments, and at the same time, he should reach the invisible meaning of the sky through his mind (Plato 2017: 56).

Cosmological representations play an important role in the works of Nizami Ganjavi and Shota Rustaveli. In some cases we may also talk about cognitive significance here, but the main and crucial thing, of course, is that both poets impose aesthetic motives on aesthetic functions and use them as a means of artistic modeling.

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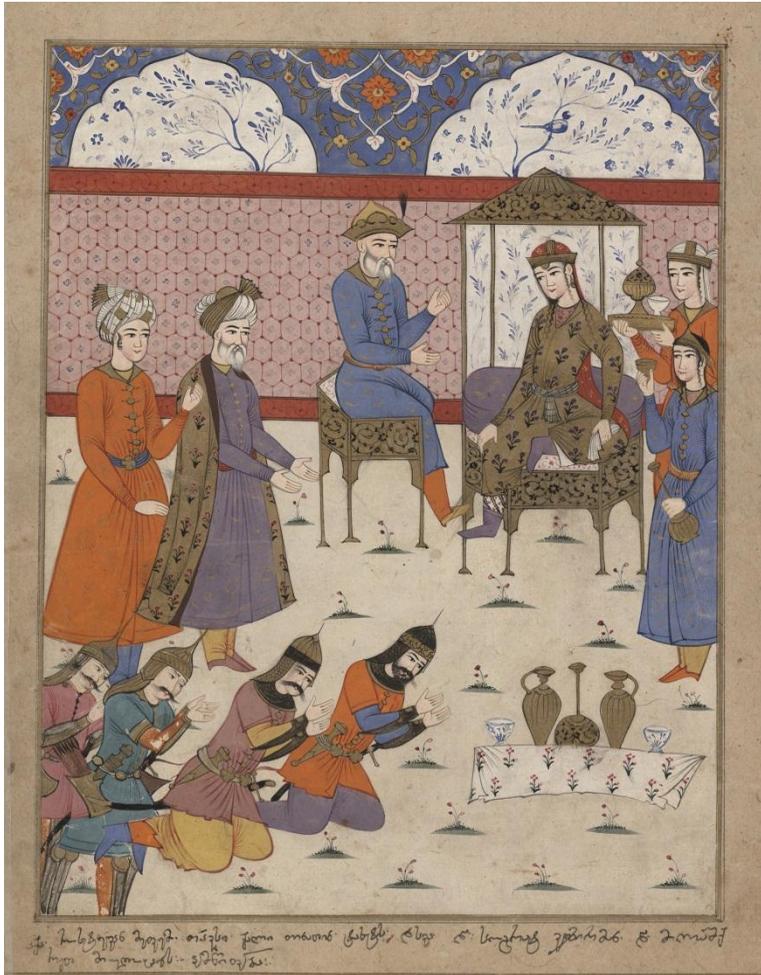
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**„The Knight in the Panther’s Skin“ .
Tsereteli MS. XVIII c. S 5006-018v
(Korneli Kekelidze National Centre of Manuscripts)**



**„The Knight in the Panther’s Skin“ .
Tsereteli MS. XVIII c. S 5006-009v
(Korneli Kekelidze National Centre of Manuscripts)**

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**For understanding the astral symbolism of
*The Knight in the Panther's Skin***

The Knight in the Panther's Skin stands at the crossroads between the intellectual systems and worldviews of Eastern and Western cultures. Therefore the influx of elements from Eastern and Western civilizations harmoniously merge within it and the poem, transformed by the creative vision of the poet, acquires an original and self-sufficient character. A whole system of Rustvelian thinking is created, covering various fields. The astrology of *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* is linked with the Eastern cultural stream, yet Rustaveli depicts it with his habitual original worldview.

The astral world in *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* carries multiple, diverse connotations. The celestial spheres, their meetings and partings, the stars, the zodiac signs, and the “ever-revolving sky”, all these events, alongside their astrological significance, also carry aesthetic connotations, as has been emphasized many times throughout scholarly literature (V. Nozadze, Z. Avalishvili, G. Imedashvili, E. Khintibidze, M. Mamatsashvili etc). It has been noted that Rustaveli reveals his broad knowledge of astrology and he evokes intentionally every nuance or feature related to it.

Among the celestial orbs in the poem, the sun and the moon are mostly mentioned from both astrological and aesthetic points of view. As for the other planets - Zuhul and Mushtar are mentioned four times, Utarid - twice, Marikh and Aspiroz - three times. The poem mentions a few times the occasion of the meeting and separation of the celestial spheres, which is founded upon an astrological view; and at the same time it refers to the main characters of the poem and

therefore contains symbolic meaning. While illustrating an important event, Rustaveli distinguishes Mushtar and Zuhal among the planets following the sun and the moon and mentions them in reference to the faces of Tariel and Nestan. According to the poem Avtandil and Phridon, who gathered together while conquering the Kadji castle, enquired after Tariel, and after leaving the tunnel, the heroes “saw: the moon was freed from the serpent to meet the sun” (1396).¹

Rustaveli presents the meeting of the lovers using mythical and astrological images, in which the meeting of the sun as Tariel and the moon as Nestan finally confirms the nonexistence of evil, and its short life as contrasted with the long life of love and kindness. The use of a metaphorical image of the meeting, with evil represented as a serpent and Tariel and Nestan as the sun and moon, has been repeatedly highlighted in academic literature. Its literary as well as astrological and mythical connotations are also emphasized (V. Nozadze, A. Baramidze, E. Khintibidze, R. Siradze, M. Mamatsashvili etc.).

M. Mamatsashvili notes that this literary image is deeply permeated with astral mythology: “We must understand the fight with a serpent as the defeat of the serpent (chaos) by the sun (logos)... the moon has been the symbol of the soul since prehistoric times, while in mythology it is the symbol of the bride of the sun. The moon is the antithesis of the sun. The sun is the guiding force of life in male beings and of love in the females, whereas the moon is the guiding force of life in the female and of life in the male. These two celestial spheres complete one another...” (Mamatsashvili, 1972: 81).

The use of the following line by Rustaveli “They saw: the moon was freed from the serpent to meet the sun” is the crowning finale and at the same time it is a manifestation of the literary images and

¹ Shota Rustaveli 1912: *The Man [Knight] in the Panther's Skin*, 1912: Translated by Marjory Scott Wardrop, London: 1912. The future references will be made to this edition of the English translation.

metaphors recorded in previous episodes. In particular, the poet presents the good or ill fortune of Nestan in the image of the full moon swallowed or “unswallowed” by the serpent (1176, 1208).

Therefore, such an illustration of the meeting between the sun-Tariel, with the moon-Nestan, who is freed by the serpent following the sack of the Kadjis, is presented rather naturally. Rustaveli does not end the theme of the achievement of the main characters’ most precious and desirable goals.

It seems that the symbolism of the sun and moon is not enough for the poet for describing such a significant event, he needs something extraordinary, something exceptional. Thus, truly, Rustaveli, with his usual mastery, selects the relevant image and idea rather diligently. In this case he used an extraordinary and unusual comparison: he compared the meeting of Nestan and Tariel with the meeting of Mushtar and Zuhul.

“They (Nestan and Tariel) embraced each other, they kissed and shed tears; they were like when Musht'har and Zuhul are united” (1397).

While in the literary image describing the defeat of the Kadjis “they saw: the moon was freed from the serpent to meet the sun” the meaning of the metaphor is revealed and the images of the characters are manifest, the comparison of the meeting of Rustaveli’s characters with the meeting of Mushtar and Zuhul (“they were like when Musht'har and Zuhul are united”) seems to be somewhat vague. It is also difficult to decipher in what way the images of Tariel and Nestan relate to the images of the celestial spheres. It is also interesting to find out which one is related to the images of the lovers, especially since Rustaveli imbues every single nuance and detail with definite meaning and purpose.

Al-Mushtari is the Arabic name for Jupiter which is considered as the “star of good fortune” (in its turn, Jupiter is the Roman equivalent to Zeus and is the god of wind, rain and thunder). “The god of theology”, Mushtar, is the sixth among the celestial orbs and it is supporting the sixth heaven. It was considered to be the cosmic creator god, and the one who can raise the dead. Astrologically speaking, Mushtar is a fair, all-knowing, impartial and irreproachable judge; it is a regal star that grants good fortune and makes a positive impact on life.

As is known in scholarly literature the prayer of Avtandil to the celestial orbs in *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* follows an astrological point of view.

The Arab commander-in-chief calls Mushtar a fair judge, and precisely because of this tendency he requires “fair justice” from it, and expects it to judge the hearts of both himself and of Tinatin. He begs the planet Jupiter not to pervert his sincerity, loyalty, and love for he is “righteous”. Therefore, Avtandil expects Mushtar to be considerate and heal his wounds.

"O Musht'har, I entreat thee, thou just, perfect judge,
Come and do justice, heart takes counsel with heart;
Twist not justice, destroy not thus thy soul.
I am righteous, judge me, why wouldst thou wound afresh me
wounded for her” (939)

V. Nozadze concludes his discussion of this episode with the following words: “Therefore, the meaning of Mushtar is astrological and its qualities are presented with one stroke and with skilful mastery” (Nozadze 1957:86).

It is mentioned in scholarly literature that “among the outstanding Iranian poets of the classical period, Rustaveli is closest in his poetic thinking, literary images, and use of comparisons and

metaphors with his elder contemporary Nizami, who created brilliant poems in Georgia's neighbouring Shirvan" (Todua 1969:95). His exceptional, unique vision, the self-sufficiency and multidimensional nature of his literary world, and his novel thinking draws these two great artists together. This equally applies to their use of astrological elements.

A whole chapter in Nizami Ganjavi's *Layla and Majnun* is dedicated to the description of the starry night. Here Mushtar-Jupiter is referred to as *Borji*; it is sealed with the love of the Shah and is the governor of fortune:

Majnun, unlike Avtandil, pleads only to Zuhrah (morning star) and Mushtar among the seven celestial orbs and asks their assistance in his love. Mushtar, for Majnun, is "the star of good fortune", the governor of happiness, justice, war and victory. Majnun's soul is elevated upon encountering Mushtar. Therefore, Majnun prays to Mushtar, who is loyal to the just deeds of the world; he is the writer of the letters of pardon, and is the one who contains the whole world:

In Majnun's prayer, Mushtar is the star that writes the book that sustains humankind. That is why Majnun asks him to guard him from misfortunes since he considers him a dispenser of good fortune and power:

At the same time, in Majnun's prayer to him, Mushtar is presented as "the source of happiness", the star of justice and virtue.

As we see the characters of both Nizami Ganjavi and Rustaveli in their prayers beg the stars to assist them in their romantic relationships and to intercede to their beloved ones. They expect them to act according to their nature and in this case they refer to Mushtar and Borji (in terms of astrology) through their characteristic features (as just, unbiased, irreproachable and a fair judge). Yet, in the prayer of Majnun the scope of the Borji's influence is much wider. Accordingly, the request is also broader than in the prayer of Avtandil.

It should also be noted that Nizami compares one of his characters Layla to Mushtar (which is quite rare in the texts of the time). Layla, who does not pay attention to the affection of Mushtar, in the words of the poet, becomes like Mushtar, probably as the bringer of happiness.

Nizami Ganjavi presents Mushtar once again in his *Seven Beauties* while describing the story of the red palace. “Mushtar bestowed bravery” (Nizami 1986: 106) on the most beautiful daughter of the Russian king, in addition to all of her other virtues.

If we allow the resemblance of Tariel with the image of Mushtar in the metaphorical picture of the meeting of Mushtar and Zuhul, then Zuhul has to be considered as the image of Nestan.

One above Mushtar on the seventh heaven is the seventh star/celestial orb Zuhul, the same as Saturn or Cronus. It is the farthest and the highest dark celestial sphere and astrologically speaking, it is the lord of violence and fall, granting suffering, sorrow, and destruction; defeat and eradication are also usually attributed to it. Arabic astrology considers Saturn along with Mars as “the black stars of misfortune” and contrasts them with the two stars of happiness – Venus and Jupiter.

The light of Zuhul and Saturn is vague and its movement is slower than that of any other planet, which according to the ancients referred to its heaviness and clumsiness; At the same time lightness and virtue were also attributed to it, since it was located in the highest sphere of the universe: “...Saturn was often depicted as a witty, careful, rude and sad old man, in whom intellectual abilities prevailed over the physical ones, and it was considered to be the brain of the universe” (Khintibidze 1975: 81-82).

Avtandil addresses Zuhul following the sun. The prayer of the character is based on his knowledge of the astrological nature of the planet. He is burdened by darkness and sorrow. The star, being black

itself, fills the heart of a human being with darkness and gloom. Such a context is voiced in the prayer of Avtandil to Zuhal. The commander-in-Chief is asking for the increase of tears and sorrow and, as to all other stars, he asks its intercession in his loving relationships:

“Come, O Zual, add tear to tear, woe to woe;
Dye my heart black, give me to thick gloom,
Heap upon me a heavy load of grief as on an ass;
(but) say to her: “forsake him not! Thine he is, and for
thee he weeps” (938).

According to the teaching of the people of Harran (Nozadze 1957), Saturn is malicious, it is a liar and is extremely dangerous. It refers to everything that is linked with evil. Its qualities are: hard feelings, rage, tribulation, falsehood, and doubt. The teaching of the people of Harran also considers the rule of prayer to Zuhal – “offer this prayer when you are sad or feel pain of your dark sorrow. Request from the Saturnus all that is in accord with its nature and then invite at the same time Jupiter, which corrects what Saturnus damages” (Ibid: 96).

Rustaveli almost copies with no alteration the astrological meaning and qualities of Zuhal. Likewise, in *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* Avtandil's prayer to Zuhal also responds to the teaching of the people of Harran – Avtandil, in the time of his greatest emotional pain, addresses Zuhal with the request appropriate to its nature and then calls Mushtar and expects his help, especially because it has a positive influence on the “dark star of misfortune”.

In *Layla and Majnun* by Nizami Ganjavi Qays-Zuhal is presented as the planet loyal to the Shah and permeated with love, while it is always in the state of combat readiness:

After all, the Zuhal-Cronus of *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* also possesses destructive power and is a warrior with a raised sword.

The first great poet of Persian and Tajik poetry, Rudaki, in his *Elegy of Old Age*, mentions Qays-Zuhal, and first attributes to him the loss of youth, of the young image, and lost happiness, and only later he transfers them to God's providence.

Zuhal does not provoke fear and trembling in Avtandil, on the contrary, the Commander-in-Chief, being himself the healer of sorrow, fearlessly asks for his hardships to be multiplied, an extension of grief, and, while he is filled with the faith to endure it all, meets the ordeal with a heart full of love and spiritual readiness.

“Behold, the stars bear witness, even the seven confirm my words:

The sun, Utarid, Musht'har and Zual faint for my sake” (944)

In *The Knight in the Panther's Skin*, God governs the order and rule of planets, their power of influence and their actions. Beyond the “approval” of Avtandil's romantic feelings and his “fainting”, the will of the supreme being reveals itself in the same way as it does in the case of Majnun's prayers.

“Rustaveli, like Nizami uses his knowledge of astronomy and astrology broadly and generously while describing the starry sky. Through this knowledge he creates complex poetic metaphors, for the evaluation of which three aspects are considered: poetic, astronomical and astrological (Imedashvili 1968: 77).

It is true that all seven celestial orbs protect the characters, yet, from the astrological point of view, the simultaneous expression of Zuhal's benevolent and destructive natures is impossible. It is worth considering that Rustaveli imbues the astrological data with literary content and employs the contradictory qualities of Cronus on purpdeliberately. According to the Rustavelian cosmology God is the power that moves the celestial orbs and directs them toward the reality of this world. Therefore, in this case also it is the will of God to reveal the double nature of Zuhal, for it is necessary to fulfil the idea: “Good

hath overcome ill; the essence of (good) is lasting” (1337), which means the liberation of Nestan, rescuing her from the dragon, the restoration of lost harmony, and the final reunion of separated lovers. Nestan is the primary reason for the destruction and the fall of Kadjeti and we think that the key to the relation of the female monarch to Zuhal is to be found here. Certain antecedents of this link can be traced in the poem. As already noted, Zuhal is a black star (in colour) and according to the ancients, it is the “great star of misfortune”. Every great tribulation: tears, hardship, and prison were considered to have generated from Cronus. “All other characteristics made Saturn look like a defeated god, one who was almost held in custody. This impression was so strong that as K. Flamarion, (one of the founders of the systematic astronomy course) remembers, Victor Hugo had told him with confidence during an informal conversation, that Saturn can be nothing else other than a prison or underworld.” (Khintibidze 1975: 81-82).

Based on the evidence presented above, the nature of Zuhal-Cronus (saviour and destructor), symbolically resembles the image of Nestan, and the similarity is fairly obvious. His love turned out to be an elevating and at the same time all-destroying feeling, drawing one near to death (Zuhal – saviour and destructor). Being a warrior by nature, the tiger-like Nestan confronted the world through her action: she contradicted the decision of Pharsadan, refused marriage to Khvarazmshah and unintentionally became a reason for the suicide of Davar. Nestan is the prisoner of Kadjis, and since her captivity she belongs to the realm of Zuhal: the female-monarch is the captive of a tragic love; she is the sharer of constant tribulation and tears, she is swallowed by a dragon and sitting in the dark. Death for her is a joy and a hope for a meeting in the other world. Therefore, Nestan shares the astrological nature of Zuhal. The black colour of Zuhal is indicated through the symbolism of the black veil of Nestan, which also

symbolizes her unhappy fate “Though in colour they are black, like my fate”, 1268). Z. Avalishvili offers an interesting observation regarding this issue while discussing *The Seven Pictures (Baramgurian)* by Nizami Ganjavi: the order of seven days along with their planets, is depicted as the order of the steps of the soul on its way to God. The first day belongs to Zuhal (Saturday); its colour is black – the black veil hides the deity from the soul of man, while he still lacks training ...” (Avalishvili 1931:25-26). We may think that Nestan, filled with love, is safeguarded against the surrounding evil by the black veil, which is considered to be a miracle of God. The same veil also seems to be protecting her from those people who cannot look into her eyes to discern her higher spiritual level, who cannot recognize her and only have their own prejudices about her inner world. Those people presume that she is either somebody’s lover and must be thinking of her beloved, or she may be wise and visionary; they think that she disregards both happiness and tribulation, and is removed, with all her being, from reality when hearing about fortune and misfortune (1160).

The grounds for juxtaposing Zuhal-Cronus with the image of Nestan can also be seen in a different episode, namely the story told to Tariel by Phridon. In this story he describes that he has seen Nestan being imprisoned by the Kadjis. Phridon, excited by the incredible beauty of Nestan says: “I would have given her the seventh heaven.” (608)

Different scholars expressed different opinions regarding this line. It should also be mentioned here that Saturn, which was placed in the highest part of the cosmos, moved slowly. At the same time a sense of lightness, virtue and fieriness were also perceived within it. “Therefore, the ancients regarded Saturn as an aged, cooled and slowed version of the sun, and they sometimes even called this miracle of the visible world the *night sun*.” (Khintibidze 1975: 81-82). As is known,

two enormous bright flat rings surround Saturn, unlike any other heavenly body.

According to V. Nozadze, “Phridon saw the moon-Nestan; and he said he would give the seventh sky to this moon. The first sky belongs to the moon; the seventh sky belongs to Cronus (Saturn, Zuhal). According to the teaching of the seven skies, the seventh sky is the highest sky – the sky of Cronus, which is considered to be the night sun in astrology. Thus, Phridon says that the woman-moon sitting in the ark was so beautiful that she was the celestial orb of the seventh sky, that is the sky of Saturnus (Cronus, Zuhal). Therefore, Nestan was the night sun – Saturnus” (Nozadze 1975:48).

S. Tsaishvili supposes (Tsaishvili 1974) that in this line Phridon speaks about giving without regret the seventh sky as a gift to Nestan,. E. Khintibidze (Khintibidze 1975) prefers the alternate interpretation, namely that Phridon is recognizing the resemblance of Nestan with the seventh sky, considering it to be more accurate within the context than the interpretation of giving the seventh sky to Nestan as a gift. He finds it extremely odd to interpret this passage as referring to the moon-Nestan lying in the boat together with Saturn. Yet, according to the same author’s explanation (Khintibidze 1975) when the two shining rings of Saturn are visible with all their flat surfaces, this celestial orb's resemblance to the moon resting in a boat is remarkable. Therefore, as E. Khintibidze notes, Saturn is a mysterious celestial orb. Phridon was also amazed at what he had seen and perceived as the farthest planet Nestan shining far away on the infinite horizon of the sea.

In astrological terms, the conjunction of Mushtar and Zuhal is a very rare event and it is a sign of a good fortune. This content probably became the foundation for one of the lines from *Layla and Majnun* translated by Teimuraz I (Teimuraz I 1933: 24); namely it says regarding the birth of Layla and Majnun that both looked like pearls

born of the mother-of-pearl. In the last three lines the astrological world is presented in order to make us experience through the all-encompassing heavenly world the event of the births of the characters, to make us feel their exceptionality and extraordinariness, while their parity is signified by the coupling of the sun and the moon. In regard to Mushtar and Zuhal, the second line of the strophe is particularly interesting, as it refers to Cronus among all the celestial orbs/planets as an illustration of the birth of Layla and Majnun, while Zeus and Utarid bestow light on the characters. Cronus, as we have mentioned is identical with Zuhal (Saturn), while Zeus is the same as Mushtar (Jupiter). In this case it is unsurprising that the great star of fortune, Mushtar, is a gift of happiness and light (which in astrology is one of the main characteristic of this planet), and yet, presenting of example of Cronus-Zuhal as the black star of misfortune is irrelevant in this context. Their meeting together may be explained by understanding the presentation of the conjunction of Mushtar and Zuhal as an unusual and extraordinary event and also by noting Rustaveli's influence. If we consider the fates of Layla and Majnun, then it may be justified symbolically to mention Zuhal and Mushtar together.

The planets of Mushtar and Zuhal are discussed together in the poem *Ioseb zilikhaniani* translated by Temuraz; namely, in the chapter "Meeting of Ioseb and Zilikhan and the King's awareness of it" – when the king, outraged by the betrayal of Zilikhan beats her cruelly (this episode resembles the scene of Nestan's being beaten by Davar), and here again, the order of celestial orbs are discussed (Teimuraz I 1933; 88). The sun is heartbroken by seeing this and the moon bruises its face by beating herself, Mushtar and Zuhal are bursting into tears and Aspiroz rushes to it to heal his wounds.

The sorrow of the celestial orbs and their anxiety are depicted as compassion and empathy for the character; they are perceived as sharing the feelings and emotions of human beings, as the heavenly

realm reaches the earthly one and embraces it. Such imagery simultaneously bestows a broader meaning to the event as if it is not enough to present it through the worldly actions and words (which precedes the abovementioned strophe) and it suggests that the whole heavenly realm is a partaker of the fate of the characters.

Let's go back to the meeting of Mushtar and Zuh al in *The Knight in the Panther's Skin*. On the grounds of discussing the abovementioned episodes and scholarly literature, we may say, that Rustaveli's implicit presentation of the images of Tariel and Nestan sharing the images of Mushtar and Zuh al is not a coincidence. These planets, just like the other planets of the astral world of *The Knight in the Panther's Skin*, not only demonstrate the brilliance, beauty and royal glory of the characters, but they express their inner emotions, feelings, and complex psychological world. Rustaveli imbues the earthly content with heavenly meaning and conversely he portrays the heavenly forms within the earthly.

The comparison with the meeting of Mushtar and Zuh al cannot be explained only by the similarity between the inner worlds of Tariel and Nestan and the planets. The only way to decode its metaphorical content and to recognize Rustaveli's mastery is to show the astrological relationship between these planets and the symbolic meaning of the characteristics of their natures. As is known from astrology, the ability of a planet to influence earthly phenomena depends on its position relative to another planet in the sky, on its degree of power and the strength of its influence. Therefore, it is possible to weaken the power of a particular planet as well as to neutralize its negative energy. Consequently, the negative energy of Zuh al, and the action of the giver of all the misfortune and tribulations, is restrained by the strong position of the great star of fortune, Mushtar, which is the messenger of goodness. After all, the teaching of the people of Harran (Nozadze 1957) proves this – one has to call upon Mushtar after praying to

Zuhal, in order to let the latter have a good effect on the black star of misfortune and fulfil the supplication of the one who prays. We should also take into account the fact that the daystars such as the sun, Mushtar and Zuhal have their best effect during the day, which was portrayed in the story of conquering the kingdom of Kadjis. The same position of daystars is presented in Avtandil's prayer to the stars, as the sources of goodness and happiness. All seven planets testify Avtandil's love and all seven of them protect this character with the pillar of light in his battle against evil; Rustaveli chose Mushtar and Zuhal among all the seven of these stars for illustrating the meeting of Tariel and Nestan. In astrological terms, it is very rare that Mustar and Zuhal may be standing side by side and it signifies a great happiness.

The majority of scholars discuss the episode of meeting Mushtar and Zuhal without alteration and consider this very relationship between the planets to be Rustaveli's literary intention. As a result of our observation we should add to the abovementioned points that a certain link between the inner worlds of Nestan and Tariel and their resemblance to the astrological nature of Mushtar and Zuhal, further secures the traditional opinion already established in academic literature. All the abovementioned could have become the basis for distinguishing Mushtar and Zuhal from the astral world and a symbol testifying their love longing for divinity.

The meeting of Mushtar and Zuhal in the poem is not only the symbol of the precious meeting of lovers sharing their nature but it is the image bearing the "unfortunate fortune" and also a bestowed happiness. The same will be manifest if we take a look at the symbolism of colours in *The Knight in the Panther's Skin*. Zuhal is the only planet which does not have a spheroidal crust. As a "black star", it has two gleaming rings around it. Mushtar, on the other hand, a bearer of lightning, and the shedder of the greatest light, "the star of fortune", radiates golden light. Therefore, the colours of Mushtar and Zuhal

address the colour symbolism of the black and yellow of the panther's skin as well as the black veil of Nestan embellished with a golden lace. The symbolism corresponds to the planets, as the images and ideas uniting happiness and misfortune. In astrology, of the fluids Zuhal owns bile, while Mushtar possesses blood, which corresponds the bleeding hearts of Nestan and Tariel, their tears mixed with blood and their sadness and the essence of longing for love until death. In the literary image of the meeting of Mushtar and Zuhal, in accordance with their astrological natures, the principle of achieving happiness through suffering arises, which is confirmed in *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* many times (870; 151, etc).

Rustaveli, as we saw it, uses the principle of antinomy: bright-dark, joy-sorrow, blood-sadness, life-death. These are accompanied astrologically by the passive nature of Mushtar and active nature of Zuhal and their contrasting features: Zuhal's coldness and drought and Mushtar's heat and moderate dampness. If we take into account that Mushtar is the planet guided by the fire and water elements, while Zuhal – by the elements of earth and air. Through them all four elements of the universe become connected and harmony is achieved. The lost bond and unity is restored, that lost bond, which Tariel himself acknowledges in front of Avtandil: "My elements are dissolved; they are joining the ranks of spirits" (864); Whereas, Nestan asks Tariel in her letter to her lover sent from the Kadji castle:

"Entreat God for me; it may be He will deliver me from the travail of the world

and from union with fire, water, earth and air..." (1280)

Thus, through the meeting of Mushtar and Zuhal and through the union of the four elements, symbolically the essential restoration of Nestan and Tariel and their unification takes place. It seems like the meeting of these stars terminated the era and the arena of their separate influence over Tariel and Nestan. The meeting of Mushtar

and Zuhā is the point of juncture between the time and space of the past and present; it is the prophetic sign of the improvement of the fortune of the characters, of triumphant love and harmony, in which one can discern the image of the future. In the end of the poem this harmony is portrayed in the life of the nations of the main characters: “within their territories the goat and the wolf fed together” (1571).

In the literary image of the meeting of the characters presented through the meeting of Mushtar and Zuhā, we can possibly discern another insinuation. In astrological terms, the meeting of these stars is a rare event, as we already mentioned, it takes place only once every twenty years and presents the most beautiful spectacle. In the poem the lives of Nestan and Tariel: their meeting, then parting, which suggests their future reunion, repeats the never-ending cycle of meeting and parting of Mushtar and Zuhā in the sky. Only death can separate the triumphant lovers, yet they will meet again in the other world. The view of V. Nozadze can be applicable to this time and space continuum of the stars and characters: “The celestial orbs here are the universal kings or princes and not anybody else... the celestial orbs belong to the aristocratic class, like kings” (Nozadze 1957: 58)

Also, attention in *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* is drawn to an episode of the meeting and parting of the moon and the morning star, which has a symbolic meaning.

At the end of the poem, the separation of Nestan and Tinatin is taken to the extreme level of painfulness and tragic feeling. From the women's conversation we learn that enduring their separation becomes the cause of their suffering and inner turmoil. Every word and every gesture is permeated with tearful sorrow (1570).

It seems like it is not enough for Rustaveli to present the acuteness of Nestan and Tinatin's farewell through earthly imagery. He addresses the cosmic space to show the scale of the union between

these beautiful souls and tries to explain this by referring to the law of astrology: “When the moon is on a level with the star of dawn,

Both shine equally; should (one) go away, (the other also) is removed;

If it go not away, the sky will make it remove” (1545).

Here the meeting and parting of the moon and the morning star symbolizes the meeting and parting of Nestan and Tinatin. The meeting and parting of the characters is usually caused not by their own will but by the will of heaven.

According to V. Nozadze (Nozadze 1957), here the talk is about an astrological event, about the turning of the immutable heavens, which is the cause of the separation of the stars of Nestan and Tinatin. Like the celestial orbs created by God, “He who created them such, He Himself shall sunder them” (1546), the fortune of characters is determined by divine providence and not by personal will: “of their own will they desire not parting” (1546).

Here also, like in the other episodes of *the Knight in the Panther's Skin*, everything including the stars and the lives of people is under God's providence.

The abovementioned episode, emotionally charged by Rustaveli, is expressed with an amazing spontaneity and refinement. The poet shares and feels the boundless sorrow of the characters. His words fail to encompass the tragedy of separation, they are powerless in expressing the pain of love for one's neighbour. It can only be experienced as one's own through spirituality. Therefore, Rustaveli adds according to the theoretical principle of hagiographers that what has been said is only one tenth of what it really was like, that it is impossible to truly describe the parting of Nestan and Tinatin in spite of his great wish to do so (1572). The poet leaves the comprehension of the indescribable feelings of the characters to the spirituality of the reader.

The symbolic connection of the images of Netsan and Tinatin to that of the moon and the morning star is based upon certain astrological views. The moon is the celestial orb, which is closest to the earth and belongs to the first sky. Astrologically it is the helper in love, protector of lovers, and a merciful celestial orb. The moon “the giver of life on earth and strengthener – boosts, during the time when it is waxing, all the life-giving powers of all living beings, including the power of love. From this derives the reference to the moon as the cause of the “disease of love” (Nozadze 1957: 532).

Aspiroz, identical with Venus, is the third celestial orb and belongs to the third sky. It is, just like the moon, considered as the planet of beauty and love in astrology. “... *Aspiroz*, the name of which is of Greek origin and is the same as a “star” (*Mtiebi*, *Aspirozi*, Aphrodite) is the brightest star among the planets. Depending on the planet’s location in the orbit in relation to the earth and the sun, it shines brightly either in the West in the evening after the dusk or in the East before the dawn. Therefore, it had two names, one of which is Greek (*Aspiroz*), and the other one is Georgian (*Mtiebi*) (“On constellations and the seven celestial spheres”, 1975: 8-9).

Aspiroz is also considered as the queen of love, image of beauty, beloved, healer and a deity of astrological theology. V. Nozadze notes that “this morning star, Venus, *Aspiroz* is called in Georgian a “star of dawn” which means the door to heaven. It was called the “door to heaven”, the “star of dawn”, the “star of the door”, because it rises earlier than the sun in the morning and thus opens the door of the sky to the sun in the East. Hence, we also encounter Venus with this name in *The Knight in the Panther’s Skin* (Nozadze 1957: 81). The morning Venus in ancient Greece was also worshipped as a goddess of war, while the evening one – as that of love.

According to *The Knight in the Panther’s Skin* *Aspiroz* is presented in the prayer of Avtandil in terms of astrological viewpoints

– it is the approver of love, healer of madness and pains, and a grantor of beauty and splendour.

“Come Aspiroz, aid me somewhat; she has consumed me with the
flame of fires,
She who encircles the pearl (of her teeth) with lips of coral;
thou beautifiest the fair with such charm as thine;
one like me thou abandonest and maddenest” (941)

Majnun in the *Layla and Majnun* by Nizami Ganjavi, prays to the stars like Avtandil, and among them to Zukhra-Aspiroz, which is the bringer of victory to kings, vessel of happiness, “the lamp looking for joy”, “kind and bright”, and the holder of the keys to fortune and fate:

Majnun begs her to open the door of hope, have mercy on him, and bring to him the message from his beloved. It is true that Aspiroz in *the Knight in the Panther’s Skin* also watches over people’s love, over extreme feelings taken to the level of tragedy, over them approaching death as well as their endless hope; it hears their prayers and the image of lovers.

In *The Knight in the Panther’s Skin* the demonstration of the astrological and aesthetic meanings of the moon and Aspiroz is the basis of understanding the symbolism of their meeting and departure. The moon and the morning star (the star of dawn) shine with equal brightness when they reach the same point on the arc of the sky and line up on the same level. Thus, Rustaveli reveals the equality of Nestan and Tinatin in terms of the equal shining of the moon and Aspiroz, as an astrological event (1568).

In the symbolic episode of the meeting of the moon and the morning star (according to Rustaveli, God had created them in their images – 1569), we may see Nestan in the image of the moon and Tinatin in the image of the morning star. The following line provides

the reason to consider Nestan as the image of the moon “separated from the sun I should not now be thus melted by parting” (1547). It provides the reason to think that Nestan likens herself to the “withered” planet separated from the sun, which, according to the poem, almost always means the extinguished and faded moon. One detail attracts our attention in this line: if the moon-Nestan parts with the sun-Tariel, in astrological terms it should wax, while approaching it should make it wane or “wither” (832, 127). Therefore, Rustaveli in this line does not follow an astrological viewpoint. In the words of Nestan the parting with Tariel-sun and with her sisterly Tinatin can be explained only by human emotion, and the context of suffering, which in the poem is described several times through the symbol of the pale moon (1157; 1185; 1346). If we recall the present line and consider Tinatin in the image of the morning star, which shines with the same light as the moon does and is its inseparable companion, in this case also the astrological “separation” and “withering” of the star will be expressing the inner world of Nestan, her spiritual condition, her pain and suffering. In the episode of meeting and parting, the moon symbolizes Nestan, while Tinatin acts as Aspiroz. If we link it to the astrological nature of the stars in *Layla and Majnun*, Aspiroz is the crown of the victorious King Tinatin; it grants and observes her happiness, it is the shining star of her fortune. The crowned Tinatin is equal to the beautiful soul of the morning star of Tinatin; it is an embodiment of a divine idea, while the star is the God-given most precious signet ring among the signet rings of Her Majesty.

The morning star, Aspiroz in *the Knight in the Panther's Skin* shines once again and in this case it happens in relation to Nestan. When the army of the Kadji ran into Nestan who had just escaped Melk-Surkhab, her astonishing beauty caused different responses in the ones who saw her. In particular, some of them said that she was the dawn, while the others saw her as the moon (1226). According to

this line, Rustaveli, in order to show Nestan's beauty and luminous magnificence, uses the brilliance of the moon and that of the morning star, which shine so similarly at their meeting that even the Kadji army finds it difficult to distinguish them clearly. This astrological symbol is once again employed in demonstrating the carnal and spiritual natures of troubled love – Nestan and it become another manifestation of the equality and likeness of the female monarchs. The astrological natures of the moon and Aspiroz are reflected in Nestan and Tinatin, as the images of love, beauty, the disease causing passion and at the same time, of patience.

Nizami Ganjavi, while telling the story of the yellow palace in his *Seven Beauties*, compares the beauty of a woman with the morning star – whereas, in the story of the sandalwood palace, the poet presented the marriage between a woman and a man through the image of the coupling Of Aspiroz and Utarid. A noble Kurd gave his daughter in marriage to Kheir:

Nizami employs the order of heavenly stars in order to describe the beauty of the daughter of the king of the Russians in the story of the red palace:

Nizami Ganjavi endows the earthly beauty of human being with heavenly brilliance and presents them as one whole. Rustaveli presents, from the astral world, the sun, the moon, Aspiroz and Zuhul as a resemblance to the images of Nestan and Tinatin and according to not only their physical features but to the peculiarities of their characters and expressions of their inner worlds.

V. Nozadze considers the use of Venus-Aspiroz-Morning star in *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* as the marker of time, and the symbol of love and beauty. All the abovementioned makes us suppose that Rustaveli's use of Aspiroz-Morning star refers to the equality between Nestan and Tinatin, which is created not only by the physical

nature of the female monarchs, but also their spiritual communion, and it refers to the wholeness of the inner world.

According to S. Tsaishvili, “The astral views occupy a special place in Rustaveli’s poetic language. The colour palette depicting the fluctuation of the characters’ emotions in *The Knight in the Panther’s Skin* is often based on the wavering of astrological viewpoints. The astral images are presented in different ways in the poem according to their particular literary tasks” (Tsaishvili 1985: 338).

During the study of the planet’s astrological symbolic impact, attention is drawn to one important point – the character of *The Knight in the Panther’s Skin* who is called the moon more times than any other character, is Nestan, in spite of the astrological or aesthetic function of the celestial orb. Academic scholarship notes that the moon in *The Knight in the Panther’s Skin* as the iconic image of Nestan mostly has an aesthetic meaning and serves the purpose of showing the deprivation of the character’s beauty, brilliance, wholeness and luminosity. The excessive stress on Nestan’s likeness to the moon in the poem may also be caused by the astrological significance of this planet. Not only the aesthetic perception of the moon (Night eye, beautiful, charming, grantor of beauty) but also the characteristics of its astrological nature (proprietor of the life of the world, grantor of love, aide in love and a healer) are revealed in the image of Nestan. Nestan herself is love, Tariel is the giver of life and a healer (518), the lord of patience, “flickering” and “filled”. If we go through the content of *The Knight in the Panther’s Skin* we shall note that in order to show the person of Nestan whether in ordeal or embraced by sorrow, the image and symbol from the celestial orbs that is most frequently employed, is the moon. In particular the fortune or misfortune of Nestan is depicted through the swallowing or disgorging of the moon by the serpent.

A similar mythological picture is created in the poem by Nizami Ganjavi *Layla and Majnun*. Layla is being watched by her jealous husband to make sure that his loyal wife is not tempted by her desire to meet Majnun. It is here when the symbol-pair of the moon and the dragon emerges:

adds the author, and looking from the perspective of true love (in relation to Majnun) he presents Layla's husband as a dragon, the dark power. Corresponding to this, Majnun on his part, weeps and laments wondering when will he see his beloved:

Layla for Nizami Ganjavi is perceived as a captive, detached from her true love, she is immersed in the entrails of evil and looks like a fading moon. It would seem that both Nizami and Rustaveli, by bringing the metaphor of the moon (and not of the sun), express the woman's being in a tragic situation and her intolerable sorrow.

Teimuraz I does not overlook the incident of the whale swallowing the sun and the moon and refers to it in the poems translated from Persian. Yet, it should be noted that it does not coincide with the relevant episodes in the abovementioned translations.

In this translation of *Layla and Majnun* the occasion when Layla is sent away by her mother with the purpose of keeping her out of the way is decried. She accidentally missed the camel caravan on her way and suddenly found herself together with the mad Majnun. In this episode, Teimuraz adds the abovementioned metaphorical picture with a slight difference, specifically, that Majnun came back to his senses, yet his vision was obstructed by the bright sunlight. This poses a question: what caused the liberation of the sun that was engorged by the whale? (Teimuraz I, 1933 : 35).

Teimuraz I, in our opinion, alters the episode of the sun's being swallowed by the whale with the mention of Layla's captivity. First of all, in this episode, Layla is not married and therefore she is not

swallowed either. Moreover, it sounds more appropriate to mention a daughter's captivity by her parents rather than to use the term "swallowed" about her. Besides, it should also be noted that Rustaveli in *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* grants a special meaning to such words as "captivity" and "capturing" and uses them more than once in reference to the main characters. One may read Rustaveli's certain influence in this saying of Teimuraz. Despite the fact that the said metaphor is introduced in a different episode according to another translation, Teimuraz uses the capture of the sun by the whale with its relevant meaning and does not disregard the usual symbolism of the poem.

The metaphorical scene of a dragon swallowing the moon appears in *Visramiani*, yet here the moon is replaced by the sun, the snake by the whale, while the essence remains the same. Vis set free from Moabad tells the nurse to tell Shahru that the sun was set free from the dragon, that her fortune has brightened up and they are now saved from Moabad (Visramiani 1982 : 331). When Vis and the wet-nurse, who were locked up in the tower, let Ramin escape out of fear of the Shah following his military journey, it is said about Vis that she found herself in front of the face of the dragon (Ibid : 386).

Ramin considers himself as swallowed by a dragon and describes his feelings and situation to Vis. In Particular, he tells her that when he parted with her, it felt like he was captured by the mouth of the dragon and his heart was filled with grief without Vis (Ibid : 249). Ramin asks the wet-nurse to intercede to Vis that he is mad and pitiable in every way, because he was captured by the bloodthirsty red dragon (Ibid : 292). We think that these two episodes must indicate the swallowing of the sun by the dragon. Therefore, according to *Visramiani*, the sun swallowed by the whale is in general an image of a troubled lover. In the poem, the swallowing of the sun by the dragon also represents death. In relation to the death of Ramin's

brother, it is said that he was swallowed by the dragon (Ibid : 314). In *the Knight in the Panther's Skin* the swallowing of the moon by the snake does not refer to death unlike this line in *Visramiani*. Besides, it should also be noted that the metaphor in the poem is used only to show the situation of the woman – Nestan.

It is worth noting that Rustaveli uses the image of the darkening of the sun by the dragon only once: Phatman and Usen try to find out Nestan's identity and her troubles, yet, all in vain. "the sun was obscured (eclipsed) by the dragon, it dawned not upon us" (1136) – says Phatman. A totally different interpretation of this line is offered by Teimuraz Bagrationi: "Nestan-Darejan's face was covered by curls floating around her face, since the curls are often seen as snakes and this is also said among the poets that when the sun becomes dark and its brilliance and luminosity does not shine over the world for a while, it is called a darkening of the sun by the dragon or swallowing of it by the dragon" (Bagrationi 1960 : 223). Therefore, according to Teimuraz Bagrationi, this metaphor implies that Nestan did not inform Phatman and Usen about her situation and put her "curls" ("snake", "dragon" – hair) all over her face ("sun" – face).

In our opinion Rustaveli, in order to show Nestan's situation here, also chose the images of the sun and the moon carefully. Nestan is not yet in danger with Phatman and Usen and keeps up her spirits. Yet, her tragic love is perceived as a darkening of the sun by the dragon. Therefore, even from this episode we see that Rustaveli mostly uses the latter among the images of the sun and the moon while illustrating the spiritual pain of Nestan clothed in a black veil and in her grief. Rustaveli's emphasis and reiteration of the swallowing and unswallowing of the full moon by the dragon is not accidental. He is somehow preparing the presentation of this literary image with a new content, in which the greatest sorrow and tragedy turns into an

unrivalled joy that is the messenger of the victory of the good over the evil.

“They saw: the moon was freed from the serpent to meet the sun” (1396).

Regarding this literary image, R. Siradze wrote: “the meeting of the sun and the moon is a fine literary image. Rustaveli borrows the whole of this metaphor from Georgian mythology. According to folk belief, when the moon is waning and is lacking light, it is captured by the dragon, and then St George goes to it, defeats the dragon and liberates the moon. “These stories are not told directly in Rustaveli’s lines, but they are implied” (Siradze 1982 : 49). Yet, if we remember the previous metaphors, the metaphor for Nestan swallowed by the snake is the “full moon”. As it turns out, Rustaveli accommodates his mythological viewpoints with the astral ones. It is common knowledge that the moon is in constant captivity by the sun, as its light depends on the sun; the appearance of the moon reveals, in relation to the sun, whether it is close to it or far away, causing it to be either waxing or full. In terms of astrology and symbolism, the Moon Nestan separated from the sun-Tariel is a full moon. “The full moon” is as pitiable as the captivated Nestan. After her exile from India she is a prisoner in spirit regardless of whether she is swallowed or not by the snake. Besides, according to her inner psychological attitude, Nestan is the lover-moon separated from the sun, expressing grief and sorrow and shedding light to the night and to darkness. Therefore, we cannot agree with Z. Avalishvili’s opinion regarding the metaphor for Nestan’s situation in terms of the sun and the moon or being swallowed or not by a snake or a dragon. He says: “The literary function of these images is to illustrate the captivity of Tariel’s lover, “sun” and “moon” and even the expression of her face” (Avalishvili 1931 : 80).

The reminiscence of the consideration of Nestan’s image as the image of the moon is found in the story of the black palace told in

Nizami Ganjavi's *Seven Beauties*. A passenger tells the king about the city clothed in black:

In order to learn about the mystery of the black city, the king, like all the residents, first contemplated the beauty of the magnificent orchard and even became worthy of the company of a beautiful woman. Yet he lost everything due to his greed and impatience. After this, the person who told the king this mystery of the black city, gave him a black veil:

Nestan covered with a black veil, like the inhabitants of the black city, is dressed in sackcloth, which is the sign of grief and mourning and in this pain it resembles the image of the moon. The daughter of the King of India dressed in a black veil like the king of the black city, loses her lover and the desired "garden", the acquisition of which is possible only through pain and trouble. In literary terms, the other episode of the *Seven Beauties* is also interesting: the story of the red palace tells us that the daughter of the king of the Russians made her father build a towered castle on a hill and settled in it:

In this respect, Pharsadan also build a house for a woman, in which the sun-like beauty Nestan was raised safely and her moon-like beauty was shedding light over the place; in its own way, the tower seized the moon.

Observation of the plot of *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* makes it clear that Nestan liberated from the Kadji brightens up like the sun, and the moon, which is the symbol of grief, trouble and hardship steps back and in times of the defeat of evil and shining of the good it is replaced with the iconic image of the sun. After conquering the Kadji castle, Phridon and Avtanil greet the sun-Nestan (1398), while the sun-Nestan meets them with her smiling and beautiful face (1399). Later the sun-Nestan liberated from the Kadji was carried on the throne by the heroes. (1470). Rustaveli compares this scene with the

picture of the sun sitting in the midst of moons (1471), while about Phatman, he says that he is glad to see a lion and the sun (1409) etc.

According to the poem, Nestan's beauty makes her the sun, the moon and all the celestial spheres at the same time (312; 1065; 1515 etc.).

Studying the texts showed that Rustaveli never brings accidentally this or the other celestial orb in order to create a literary image. The symbols of the sun and the moon, as already mentioned, present not only physical beauty, brilliance and excellence, but also serves to demonstrate their inner worlds and emotional natures.

**Phylosophical Views of Rustaveli and
Nizami**



„The Knight in the Panther’s Skin“.
Tavakarashvili MS. 1646. H 599-248
(Korneli Kekelidze National Centre of Manuscripts)



**„The Knight in the Panther’s Skin“ .
Tavakarashvili MS. 1646. H 599-013
(Korneli Kekelidze National Centre of Manuscripts)**

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The ancient origins of literary works by Shota Rustaveli and Nizami Ganjavi

Significant responses to the values of antiquity are to be found within the literatures of all nations - if one defines antiquity as a cultural fact, as a style of thinking and as a universal event within the continuum of worldwide civilization. Georgian and Azerbaijani literature are no exceptions in this respect.

Universal and historical values became popular within the culture of Transcaucasia from the early Middle Ages.

In the 12th and 13th centuries, the ancient Greek philosophical sources nourished generously the literary and philosophical thought of Georgia and Azerbaijan. This is best revealed in the works by Nizami and Rustaveli. Yet, the nature of this approach is more creative than conceptual. As usual, philosophical details present one of the elementary means for creating a poetic structure. We may call this an aesthetic aspect of philosophical influence. Besides, the philosophical influence also has ethical and theological aspects. Yet, here we are talking about a creative, not a systemic phenomenon.

The ancient philosophy of both the Hellenic and Hellenistic periods is one of the main sources of Rustaveli's poetic thought. Rustaveli is a poet of the late medieval period and his worldview corresponds to the style of the epoch: that peculiarity of thought that gave rise to the development of Renaissance ideology within Christian thinking.

According to Elguja Khintibidze, Rustaveli's ethical system is related to Aristotle's ethics and ethical principles. This scholar connects the Aristotelian concept of the "Golden Mean" with

Rustaveli's theory of infatuation. In particular, he says that the poet chooses "the middle one" from the three types of love discussed in the introduction of the poem. He chooses the third way between carnal love and heavenly love - human love (Khintibidze 2009: 395).

The "middle way" principle of the golden mean is also evident in the actions and choices of the characters. For example when Nestan-Darejan calls Tariel not to kill the army of Khwarazm Shah, and to solve the problem as painlessly as possible, this indicates a choosing of the "middle way". (Khintibidze 2009: 544).

One of the main characteristics of the characters in the poem is the virtue of generosity, which is the middle state between the extremes of parsimony and profligacy (Khintibidze 2009: 413).

Avtandil's character also corresponds to the Aristotelian ethics, especially when he demonstrates his altruistic touch of friendship (Khintibidze 2009: 418).

Nizami is a poet of philosophical sentiment, who employs diverse systems and theories of thought in order to create his own poetic world – i.e. philosophy not as philosophy, but as means for shaping a new structure.

The literary work of the poet confirms his deep knowledge of physics, and the history of natural sciences. His knowledge was based on the works and saying of Thales, Euclid, Aristotle, Plato and other thinkers of antiquity. He was also familiar with, and persistently referred to, the works of Eastern thinkers such as Al-Kindi, Al Farabi, Ibn Rushd, Omar Khayyam, Ibn Sina and others (Hasanov 1992:10).

Some traces of Indian philosophy can also be found in his works.

Nizami addresses the problems of the origins and conception of the world in more or less all of his works, yet, we see the poetic shades of philosophical topics mainly in three poems, specifically *Treasury of Mysteries*, *Khosrow and Shirin*, and *Eskandar-Nama*.

In *Eskandar-Nama*, there is a large episode, particularly 17-26 chapters, in which we hear a conversation of Alexander the Macedonian with seven wise men. Nizami briefly describes to us the worldview of ancient Greek philosophers and adds to it his own opinions, by which he outlines his own philosophical conception.

Alexander the Great is entertaining his guests at the palace; the guests include Aristotle, Thales (Thales of Miletus), Socrates, Būlīnyās (Apollonius of Tyana), Furfūriyūs (Porphyry of Tīre), Hermis (Hermes Trismegistos), and Plato. As we see, Nizami does not exactly follow a chronological order. Thinkers of different eras, with a maximum difference of 800 years, are needed for poetic purposes, and he does not take the trouble to maintain accuracy in conveying their views either. The subject under consideration is the origin of the universe. Philosophers briefly and succinctly convey their concepts regarding the meaning of the creation and how Being was created.

Aristotle: First there was a rotational movement, which gave rise to the second movement, followed by the other movements. These movements were concentric, and in their centre a matter emerged that thickened, expanded, and came down with its tiny particles rising up back to the periphery.

Then the rotation produced fire, from fire air was generated, from air – moisture, from moisture, sediment, i.e, the earth. The creator joined together the four elements. Their attraction to one another caused the plants to grow, and then animals also emerged.

Thales (Thales of Miletus): the origin of the world – is water. Fire erupted from within it. Fire and water together produced air. Earth separated from water. The sky came into existence out of the froth, and the rotation began. From this derives the well-known idea that the basis of the creation is water and that human beings emerged out of a drop of moisture.

Būlīnyās (Apollonius of Tyana): The origin of everything is the earth. During the rotation it was continually shrinking and steam was released. The clearest and brightest of steams produced heaven. The other parts of the steam moved to the centre and thus have fire, wind and water been produced.

Socrates: Before the creation, the first principle was the Lord God, the Creator who created clouds. Clouds generated lightning and then rain. From rain was created the round sky, lightning evolved into the moon and the sun, and steam evolved into the earth.

Furfūriyūs (Porphyry of Tyre): In the beginning the Creator created a single substance. According to the Creator's will, the water separated from the substance and began flowing down. The substance divided into two parts: the upper and the lower. One part dried out, the other one dampened. The upper moved, the lower remained still. The moving water became the sky, the still water became the earth. The mind cannot go beyond this point; it cannot attain the mystery.

Hermis (Hermes Trismegistus): The heavenly arc displays clouds laid on top of the peaks of mountains, behind which the pure light is hidden. Clouds (i.e. steam) look like a curtain, pierced with tiny holes, and the light passes through these holes. Planets and stars are these very lights. I believe that the Creator exists, I know, but I do not know how he might have created all this.

Plato: The beginning of all things was the nought (nothingness). Had the Creator created things from other things, then matter would have been at rest. He created every substance separately without intermediary agents. Then a conflict arose between the substances and that is when the human being was created.

Alexander the Macedonian also expresses his own opinion, that there is no painting without a painter, everything has its own Creator and everything in the world bears the imprint of His hand. If humans knew how the Creator created the world, they would create it too.

How can we possibly comprehend the Creator when failing even to comprehend the creation?!

“You explain the creation differently and that is why you are all wrong, i.e. we can only say that there is no painting, the world, without its painter-creator” – says Alexander to the philosophers.

Nizami of course, summarises the discussion himself: there is no need to touch the door of the world with its key, the mystery of the creation is incomprehensible – says Nizami, – first the Creator created the mind and installed his own light into its eyes. Then the Creator looked at the world through these eyes and planned everything that was intended to be fulfilled later. Yet, the first image became inconceivable to the eyes of the mind.

The mind can apply a key to anything except the first image. Hence, let us look at everything through the eyes of the mind yet, let’s not think about that incomprehensible one since we are not going to get an answer anyway, especially in that the answer will not be expressed through words – concludes the poet (Nizami 2007: 300-304).

The relationship between Alexander the Macedonian and the philosophers does not end with this. When Alexander begins to prepare for his series of campaigns around the world, he becomes familiar with exhortations of Aristotle, Plato and Socrates delivered to him in the form of messages.

Aristotle writes in his scroll that Alexander needs to use his knowledge and stop listening to ignorant people. He should fear the Lord and stay away from the evil eye. He should not try to outrun everybody else, in order to avoid envy. In the end, Aristotle teaches him how to rule over the country and in general, explains to him what the ruler should be like.

Plato suggests that he should not give himself over to lust and gluttony; not be bloodthirsty, and remember that life is passing and death is unavoidable; he advises him to get rid of daily concerns, to

refuse greed and senseless trivialities, to be grateful for small things and to master his own passions. Besides, he gives him guidance on military strategy. In the end, he tells him, my advice may not be necessary at all, because you are guided by God and by your own mind.

The Socratic message has a didactic character: "Be careful, do not be parsimonious, know moderation, trust your friends" – he tells Alexander, and adds – "Remember, if you do not live like a man but like a bull, you shall be resurrected as an ass in your next life".

By the way, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe also used Nizami's method of including ancient philosophers as characters in the literary work. In the second act of the second part of *Faust* we see Thales, Anaxagoras, and some representatives of Greek mythology, engaging in a discussion about philosophical issues including the topic of the four elements (Goethe 2017: 105-192).

Here, we certainly cannot talk about influence. Yet, we know that Goethe was familiar with Nizami's work and was sympathetic towards his characters (Goethe 1981: 31; 38).

In the concluding part of Nizami's reminiscences of ancient philosophy – describes the seven wise men and their last words before their deaths.

Aristotle gives advice from his deathbed to several philosophers who come to him, to give up their idle attempts at comprehending the world. Aristotle is holding an apple. In the moment when his soul flies away, the apple drops down and rolls to the philosophers' feet.

Hermis goes to the seashore, pronounces some words about the heavy burden of existence, compares himself with an antelope trapped in the corner waiting for the hunter's arrow and remembers God as his only haven.

Plato says that he is considered as the greatest philosopher, who looked beyond the curtain of death, yet he is only a child, who sleeps in cradle and in truth he has not solved any mystery at all.

Thales addresses the philosophers standing by: “everything in this world – good and evil, fortune and misfortune depends on stars and planets”.

Būlīnyās (Apollonius of Tyana) speaks about the transmigration of souls. He says – my soul is as immortal as Khizra and flies freely in existence. After this, he folded his arms across his chest.

Porphiry (Furfūriyūs) claims that the world is ephemeral, and the good fails to balance the evil in this world.

Nizami notes about Socrates, “I have heard that he was secretly poisoned” (which of course contradicts the famous ancient account). Socrates is not worried about leaving this world. They ask him: “where do you wish to be buried?” He says: “Do not think about the dead, just bury me wherever you like”.

Nizami summarizes the “philosophical dispute” using his own judgment, which in some ways coincides with the view of Alexander the Great. This, in fact, is not surprising, since the poet needs both the Alexander’s “summary” and his own in order to present his poetic and philosophical scheme: God created the world; yet, we cannot solve the mystery of the world just as we cannot comprehend God. Nature, the material world, is the objective reality, and it exists in time and space. Four elements are the foundation of the world: water, earth, fire and air, the synthesis of which produces the variety of things.

Water, earth, fire and air are referred to as the symbols of order in the poem *Khosrow and Shirin*. In the second chapter “On Protection and Intercession”, the poet writes that if the four elements are in harmony with one another, this is only the expression of God’s will.

*"If water, earth, fire and wind
Always agree to come and go
Also, until His order
The son of Adam will not be likened to any human face".*

(Nizami 1964: 36)

Nizami's scepticism, and its nature, is of a theoretical importance, yet, the practical significance is also apparent, in that it suggests to humans to concern themselves with the knowledge of this physical world instead of seeking the hidden and mystical one.

We may discover the components of an elemental dialectic in Nizami's worldview. In his works we encounter references to the motion of the world, to changeability and to contradictory origins, and yet these are individual hypotheses rather than a systematic teaching about the dialectical development of the world (Mamedov 1959: 23-24).

However, in literary studies views are expressed according to which Nizami is presented as a consistent and committed materialist. For example, R. Nurulaev considered Nizami to be a materialist. He relied on those concepts in Nizami's work which we discussed earlier, such as eternal movement and references to the unity of contradictions (Mamedov 1959: 9).

S. Mamedov considered this view to be an exaggeration and argued that Nizami was neither a materialist, nor a dialectician in spite of the fact that in his works the aspects both of elemental materialism and of dialectic are highlighted. According to S. Mamedov Nizami is rather inclined more towards idealism and metaphysics (Mamedov 1959: 10).

J. Mustafaev believes that Nizami is more familiar with Indian materialism than with Greek philosophy (Mustafaev 1962: 91). Regarding this, this scholar supposed that the main source for Nizami must have been literature written in the middle Persian (Pahlavi)

language (Ibid: 95). As regards to Nizami's references to ancient authors, J. Mustaphaev thought that the poet needed to support his argument with ancient thinkers in order to bring life into his philosophical thinking that had been narrowed down by dogmatic discussion (Ibid: 124).

The analysis of Nizami's literary work shows us that the poet knows ancient philosophy well and uses it for his own poetic purposes. The theories of ancient Greek thinkers appear in three modes in his works: 1. Declarational; 2. Free; and 3. Poetic. In the first case he expresses one or the other philosophical concept accurately; in the second scenario he alters a particular theory and adds to it his own views; the third one is the instance in which the relevant material is used for constructing poetic texts and plots.

In the literature and philosophical, historical and theological writings of the 12th and 13th centuries we encounter quotations, excerpts and reminiscences of ancient and Hellenistic thinkers and writers. In *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* there are references to the ideas of Plato, Aristotle, Empedocles, Heraclitus, Proclus Diadochi, Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite and others, yet, a preference is given to Neoplatonic ideology for systematic use, which had come into Georgia through the books of Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite. Rustaveli is also familiar with the Christian adaptation of Neoplatonism, the author of which is the 12th century Georgian philosopher Ioanne Petritsi.

One of the main postulates of the philosophical concept of *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* is the non-substantial nature of evil, the immediate sources of which are the Areopagite books. According to this theory the foundation of God's creation is the good, and evil is only an absence of this good, or its degradation. Therefore evil has no substance, it has no existence. It exists only in defined, concrete time,

while the good is eternal since it has a substance, it has existence and substantiality. This is meant by Rustaveli when he lets Nestan say:

“I recognize the shortness of evil, Thy goodness is everlasting”. (1411)

Avtandil says the same:

“Good hath overcome ill; the essence of (good) is lasting”. (1337)

In the 1468th strophe Rustaveli writes directly:

*“This hidden thing Divnos the sage reveals:
God sends good, He creates no evil, He shortens the bad to a moment;
He renews (? repeats) the good continuously (? for a long time),
His perfect self He makes more perfect, He degrades not Himself”*

Sometimes Rustaveli tends to give more significance to the style and content of ancient philosophy than to Christian doctrine. We may see Rustaveli’s creative character in his unrestricted approach to religion - through combining hitherto incompatible beliefs he creates independently an original, full, and self-sufficient image of the world (Natadze, Tsaishvili 1966: 77).

It should be noted that the author’s direct approach to ancient philosophical sources is revealed in the very opening of the introduction of *The Knight in the Panther’s Skin*. The second line of the prologue refers to this directly.

“O, one God! Thou didst create the face of every form!”

Here “face” stands for the ancient Greek philosophical term “eidos”, while form means the body. It is obvious that Rustaveli relies on the well known Platonic theory of ideas. In particular he relied on

that postulate which claims that every material thing or being that exists in the world are the physical manifestations of their ideas. In other words, the heavenly origin in the world is the “face/image”, from which the body or the physical thing is created.

Viktor Nozadze related this strophe to the Platonic theory of ideas (Nozadze 1962: 284).

Plato is mentioned directly in the will of Avtandil. Avtandil writes to the King:

*“I venture to remind thee of the teaching of a certain discourse made
by Plato:
Falsehood and twofacedness injure the body and then the soul”. (770)*

We are dealing here with poetic mystification. There is no such idea anywhere in Plato’s works. In spite of this Rustaveli makes up an aphorism with the signature of an influential philosopher, which is given an informal, figurative character and right in front of the reader’s eyes a certain effect is created, which in modern language is called “negative equation”.

In the popular chapter of *The Knight in the Panther’s Skin* called “The Letter Written By Nestan - Daredjan To Her Beloved”, specifically in the 1280th verse, he uses the Empedocles’s concept of the four elements.

*“Entreat God for me; it may be He will deliver me
From the travail of the world and from union with fire, water, earth
and air.
Let Him give me wings and I shall fly up, I shall attain my desire day
and night
I shall gaze on the sun’s rays flashing in splendour”.*

Empedocles considered that the physical world is made up of the four basic elements: earth, air, fire and water. Two contradictory powers have influence on these four elements: love and hatred (sympathy and antipathy) and as a result of their effect all things, bodies and forms are created.

Nestan-Darejan begs her beloved to help her in acquiring freedom from the captivity of the four elements i.e. from the physical world. Nestan wishes to flee from worldly concerns, to pass beyond her physical existence and therefore embrace the space outside the limits of the four elements. She wants to acquire a spiritual substance and be elevated to heaven, where she will find eternal life. From a poetic point of view, this is a metaphor, like, for example a famous painting by Titian: *Heavenly Love and Earthly Love*. Yet, the philosophical context is not alien to this verse.

Shalva Nutsubidze, as a philosopher used to explain this verse conceptually and referred to the teaching of Proclus Diadochi while discussing the theory of the four elements. In his opinion, we should understand the world as bound together through the four elements in dualistic terms. In it we find simultaneously the origins of both fortune and misfortune. The world with four elements is the existence of necessity, which hinders the longing for freedom. When a person starts feeling like a prisoner of the world of necessity, she starts to fight for freedom, tries to escape her captivity and to head towards the bosom of freedom and happiness. This is the problem of the relationship between freedom and necessity, which has been an important topic of discussion in both eastern and western teachings.

It is precisely because of this that longing for freedom meant liberation from the swaddles of the earth, i.e. from the four elements, and a subsequent striving toward heaven. Yet, having considered the whole context of the problem, Shalva Nutsubidze concluded: Freedom is attained without breaking the ties with the earth, which ultimately

signifies a longing for freedom on the earth, or the preservation of the elements of this world within the conditions of heavenly freedom (Nutsubidze 1976: 335).

As was said earlier, Rustaveli's vision of the moral perfection of an ideal human being agrees with the Aristotelian teaching on virtue ethics. In *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* the idea of virtue ethics applies perfectly to the Aristotle doctrine of the Golden Mean and his ethics in general (Asatiani 1996: 147).

The same theme of the Golden Mean is related to the oxymoron verse of *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* "Who hath ever heard of aught harmless that was the work of devilry?" Here Avtandil is explaining to Tariel, who is blinded by love, that there is evil in love. This aphorism echoes a famous theory in ancient Greek philosophy that love is the middle point between good and evil (Khintibiidze 2019: 14).

The elements of Aristotle's philosophy emerge many times in different episodes of *The Knight in the Panther's Skin*. According to Elguja Khintibidze's observation, Rustaveli's poem reflects Aristotle's teachings on the meaning of the soul, on causality, and on the main problems of ethics. The ethical qualities of Aristotle and Rustaveli are the same: wisdom, generosity, wealth, reason, concession, reserve. Yet, as obvious as these commonalities may seem, Rustaveli still cannot be considered as an Aristotelian. The Aristotelian stream is only one source for him for shaping his own, original aesthetic belief (Khintibidze 2009: 49).

It would be a methodological mistake if we started looking for some specific philosophical system in Rustaveli's worldview. Philosophy in *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* is an element rather than a system. Rustaveli, as an artist, is interested in philosophy only so long as he can transform philosophical concepts into aesthetic images.

For example, In Rustaveli we find the image of the sun borrowed from Neoplatonic theory, yet, in the literary context of the poem, the sun is not a philosophical concept, but it is an aesthetic image (Nadiradze 2006: 19).

Greco-Byzantine or Western and Persian-Arabic or Eastern literary and philosophical sources had an enormous influence on Rustaveli's work, yet, this influence made him create not a philosophical system, but an original poetic text, which is based upon Georgian cultural and literary traditions.

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Some aspects of a critical study of the influx of Islamic elements in the *Knight in the Panther's Skin*

The question of the relationship of the *Knight in the Panther's Skin* to the Muslim world has always been relevant, and will continue to be so since the issue of its congruence with an Islamic worldview occupies a very significant part within the multitude of scholarly theories about Rustaveli's worldview and religion (Christianity, Islam, Manichaeism, Sethianism, Solarism, etc.), second only to the consideration of its conformity with a Christian worldview. To be more precise, in Rustvelological studies, a large portion of research is dedicated to the study of its Islamic roots. To the present day the research on *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* in connection with the Eastern Muslim world has been conducted in two main directions:

1. *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* and literature composed in the Muslim world (for example, parallels with Nizam, Ferdowsi, Fakhraddin Gorgani etc. as well as references to Sufism);

2. *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* and the confession of the Muslim faith: this includes the works, which deny the presence of the Muslim understanding of God, world, romantic love and the relationship between men and women in *The Knight in the Panther's Skin*.

In our opinion, despite the fact that the direction of the research was well chosen by the scholars studying Rustaveli, the methods and approach to the issue still remained superficial; After getting acquainted with most of the works in Rustvelology, we can boldly argue that no issue related to the Muslim religion in the poem has been thoroughly studied within Islamic theology, philosophy or fiction. So, in the future, Rustaveli's as an artist's attitude towards the Muslim world and religion should be studied in the following three directions:

1. Rustaveli and Muslim theology / cosmogony
2. Rustaveli and Muslim philosophers (Ibn Sina, Al Ghazali, Ibn Arabi etc.)
3. Rustaveli and Sufiism / Literature created in the Muslim East

The issues listed above certainly involve and take into account many years of work, as each of them, in turn, encompasses many other aspects, and therefore the work goes beyond the efforts of one person. Therefore, the aim of our paper is to study the views expressed up to the present day and critically approach only those problems which are currently referred to in the critical study of the influx of Muslim elements in *the Knight in the Panther's Skin*. However, in our opinion, the evidence they give proves to be rather weak by today's standards. This does not diminish the merit of those scholars in Rustvelology who have properly served and still serve the development of the field.

Studying the link between *the Knight in the Panther's Skin* and Islam usually led Georgian scholars to the consideration of the author's faith. It is true that very interesting arguments and contrarguments are also presented here. Yet, our present aim is to reconsider the fundamental or at least apparent presence of Islamic traces in this literary work rather than enquiring into the personal faith of the author.

After the extensive study of the works of Georgian scholars (such as N. Marr, P. Ioseliani, P. Ingorokva, I. Abuladze, A. Manvelashvili, N. Zhordania, Z. Avalishvili, M. Gogiberidze, K. Chichinadze, K. Kekelidze, A. Baramidze, E. Khintibidze) many key points have been outlined. Therefore, we found it important to study and analyze them in greater depth, in order to reveal clearly either the veracity or fallacy of all the arguments and contrarguments. In this respect the following list of issues have been drawn: 1) The understanding of God in *the Knight in the Panther's Skin* and its dissociation from Islam; 2) Rustaveli's attitude to Islam and his so-called "sarcasm"; 3) The prayer of Avtandil; 4) the religious rites compulsory for Muslims: daily prayers, fasting, pilgrimages etc.; 5) The consumption of wine as the proof of the characters' being non-Muslims.

We think that the contemporary level of Rustvelological studies requires a reconsideration of the above listed issues, for which we use intertextual research in the present study.

The understanding of God in the Knight in the Panther's Skin and its dissociation from Islam

The foundation to the study of the Georgian-Eastern relations, as it is known, was laid by N. Marr and his disciples while they were still at the University of St Petersburg. However the study acquired a systematic character only after the establishment of Tbilisi State University. The topic of research was certainly *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* and therefore the research began with the study of the author's worldview. Rustaveli's Muslim worldview was first pointed out and supported by the academician N. Marr in his letter "Shota Rustaveli's Georgian poem *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* and a new cultural and historical problem", in which he mentions: "the poet never betrays his own view of the Muhammedan concept of the One God, meaning that there is one God and there is no other God except him. Even in those passages in which he speaks his own mind, there is never a mention of the Holy Trinity, or a Christian saint or even the Mother of God. It is likely that Shota was well-informed in Christian literature and he could reveal his knowledge more than once had he chosen to do so" (Marr 1917:497).

K. Kekelidze, in the second volume of his *History of the Ancient Georgian Literature*, which discusses the author's worldview as heard in the *Knight in the Panther's Skin*, employs the following arguments as opposed to the views of N. Marr: "the author of our poem cannot be a Muslim, because 1) the image of God in *the Knight in the Panther's Skin* is generous, kind, merciful, hospitable, considerate, and a comforter; such qualities of the deity are unknown to Islam; their God is terrible, an angry tyrant, at the same time cruel and heartless who is always guided not by the principles of love and justice, but by arbitrariness. Therefore a Muslim cannot love God, his only guide in the relationship with God is fear". (Kekelidze 1981:187).

M. Gogiberidze in his letter "The notion of a supreme being in *the Knight in the Panther's Skin*" interprets the notion of God in Islam in this way: "Islam does not have a completely independent conception of God from the Christian one. Therefore, the Islamic point of view in

this respect almost constitutes Christian sectarian view instead of representing originality. For example, the Islamic concept of deity is nearly indistinguishable from the Aryan deities. In addition to this is the fact that Rustaveli views the official Muslim religion just as suspiciously as he views **Christianity** (emphasis added - O.K.) (Gogiberidze 1941: 97-121).

Another scholar E. Khintibidze also relies on the views of K. Kekelidze and M. Gogiberidze in his monograph *the World of Ideas and Worldviews in the Knight in the Panther's Skin* (2009) when he explains the following in the footnote in reference to the discussion about the names of deities in the poem: “we must also consider that some of the names and attributes of the deities in the poem also resemble the epithets for the Islamic God: First and last, visible and invisible, self-sufficient, almighty, omniscient, all-embracing, self contained, eternal, one in essence, etc. Yet, the Islamic deity with its **jealous and vengeful** (emphasis added - O.K.) character differs significantly from the Supreme Being found in *the Knight in the Panther's Skin* (Khintibidze 2009:229).

E. Khintibidze also writes: “it is true that the characters appear to be Muslims, yet, their religious beliefs do not fit into the frames of this religion and nor is their God the Islamic deity” (Khintibidze 2009:231). The scholar supports his argument with the characters’ ironical attitude towards Islam and its followers. He also refers to the view expressed by N. Marr who claims that Avtandil would have been thrown out of a “masjid” [mosque] for such a prayer.

E. Khintibidze rightly notes that “nor does the God of *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* resemble the God of the Orthodox Christian faith. The Christian God, unlike the Gods of other monotheistic religions is presented as Trinity, it is Trinitarian. Following this the scholar formulates his conclusion in this way: “therefore, the supreme being in *the Knight in the Panther's Skin* obviously is not the Trinitarian God of Christian dogmatics. However, this fact requires a correct evaluation. It is not to conclude that the God of the poem is the God of either Islam or of any other monotheistic religion. The poem bypasses the Christian God, yet it also **ignores** (emphasis added - O.K.) the God of Islam... the supreme being

in Rustaveli's poem possesses a unique and original character. (Khinitbidze 2009:235).

We should start a discussion, first of all, with K. Kekelidze's argument. In general, we should note that Georgian scholarship on Islam and the Qur'an is mostly based not on the study of the academic, philosophical and theological works created directly by that world, but on the biased interpretations of Islam presented by foreign scholars, in which a polemical mood overshadows objective and analytical argument.

It is also noteworthy that neither the Qur'an nor the *Sacred Sayings* of the prophet Muhammad agree with the abovementioned arguments presented by K. Kekelidze.

The Prophet Muhammad is named in the Qur'an as "the seal of the prophets" (Khātīm al-Anbiyā') which refers to his title as a successor of the biblical prophets and the fulfilment of their work. This, itself implies the same origin of all the prophets and that they are sustained by the same God. Yet, since God is not going to send another prophet after Muhammad, he (the Lord) ultimately warns people, that they should listen to him, while faith in God itself "determines also the belief in the world beyond which is mysterious and unseen (Al-Ghaib), the two aspects of which – heaven and hell are practically depicted as a counterbalance to human behavior" (The Qur'an, (Introduction) 2006:60). This emphasizes that God acknowledges the freedom of human will.

The Qur'an consists of 114 surahs or chapters. 113 of them begin with the formula "In the name of Allah, the most gracious, the most merciful" (Bismillah al Rahman al Rahim), whereas the 9th surah, called "repentance", does not.

However, in the 27th surah called "the ants", the formula "In the name of Allah, the most gracious, the most merciful" is given twice: once after the title of the surah followed by the number of ayahs and the second time it is repeated in the text itself, particularly in the 30th Ayah, which tells the story of queen Bilqis receiving a letter from Sulaiman (Solomon). Let us quote Ayahs 29th and 30th: "She said: "O chiefs! Verily! Here is delivered to me a noble letter, Verily it is from Sulaiman (Solomon), and verily, it (reads): In the Name of Allah, the

Most Gracious, the Most Merciful". (The Qur'an 27:29-30). Therefore, in the noble Qur'an the graciousness and mercifulness of God is proved 114 times in titles alone; and within the text itself and its deeper meaning, they are mentioned every time after God promises to punish hypocrites, gentiles, and the ones who associate partners with Allah, he always adds that "Verily, Allah is One Who forgives, the Most Merciful" to those who repent.

Besides, Muhammad himself tried to replace "Allah" with "Ar-Rahman" or "Merciful" – "in order to sever all ties with paganism; he even wanted at one time the name Al-Lahi, which might have stirred up some memories of pagan idols in the minds of believers, to be replaced with this epithet (meaning Ar-Rahman - O.K.)" (Lobzhanidze 2008:240).

K. Kekelidze's argument claiming that the God as understood in Islam is the seeker of revenge, is unsupported since his statement promotes the view that revenge was the major aim of God. The fact is that in the Qur'an God promises punishment only to those who multiply evil on earth, but to those who repent – God is generous and merciful. It is noteworthy that such a concept of God is not alien to either Judaism, or Christianity, where God also says: "I will punish them on your behalf".

Thus, we are dealing with a supreme being who is not vengeful, but who punishes this or that person or persons for wrongdoing, and there is nothing surprising in this. So there is no direct reference to God in the Qur'an and its exegesis as "seeking of envy" and even less to his "jealous nature". Based on all the above, it makes no sense to point out a difference between the God in *the Knight in the Panther's Skin* and the God preached by Islam. As for E. Khintibidze's conclusion that "the poem bypasses the God of Christian dogma, yet it also ignores the God of the Muslim religion" – according to the argument formulated above in relation to Islam, this conclusion cannot be confirmed. In addition, it remains unclear why do they say "ignore" – maybe he also bypasses it? Is it not true that *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* is not a polemical literary work?

Rustaveli's attitude to Islam and his so-called "sarcasm"

The second issue that is taken for an antimuslim attitude is the so called "sarcasm" or "irony", which is usually referred to as an argument for denying the presence of "the God of Muslim religion" in *the Knight in the Panther's Skin*. K. Kekelidze writes regarding this "Our poet mentions Muslim religion with an unconcealed sarcasm and irony, he mentions its rules with a smile on his face. The same tone of voice is also heard in the words of the merchants who were saved by Avtandil:

"He dismounted. They said: "We are Baghdad merchants,
Holders of the faith of Mahmad; we never drink new wines. (1010)

We hear the similar in the words of Avtandil:

"All the muqris and mullahs watched round me,
In their hands they held the Koran, all of them read;
They thought I was struck by the Adversary of mankind,
I know not of what they raved". (339)

We hear the same in the story about Usen" – continues the scholar – "who "forgot those oaths; what (to him were) Korans and Meccas" (1144). Certainly this cannot be expected from a faithful Muslim! He is not expected to disregard the requirements of the Muslim moral code described in the poem (fasting, prayer, pilgrimage, righteousness)" (Kekelidze 1981: 186-187).

This view of K. Kekelidze is shared by E. Khintibidze – who writes "It is true that the characters of the poem appear to be Muslims yet, their faith does not fit into the framework of that faith; nor is their God the Islamic deity" (Khintibidze 2009:231) – and puts forward the following as his first argument: "the epic characters leer ironically and indifferently at the rules of the Muslim religion and its followers" (Ibid.)

The first episode, which the scholars take as the irony towards Islam on Rustaveli's part, refers to Tariel's "fainting" caused by seeing

Nestan for the first time. Tariel tells Avtandil about his state at the time. In order to have the right understanding of the issue, first of all we need to analyse in detail the relevant episodes of the text:

“All the muqris and mullahs watched round me,
In their hands they held the Koran, all of them read;
They thought I was struck by the Adversary of mankind,
I know not of what they raved. For three days I was lifeless;
Inextinguishable fires burned me”. (339)

The idea of passing out due to falling in love unexpectedly was also well known in literature earlier than Rustaveli, as the indication of the true and eternal value of the feeling. For example, in *Visramiani* the moment when Ramin sees Vis is described this way: “When Ramin saw Vis’s face, it was as if an arrow of the length of a stadium had struck his heart; from his horse he dropped, light as a leaf, the fire of love enflamed his heart, burned his brain, and carried away his mind. In the twinkling of an eye passion took hold of him, love deprived him of heart and soul. From his love such a tree came forth, whose fruit was roaming in the field and madness. When he fell from his horse he fainted, and for a long time lay unconscious. His rose-like face changed into saffron, and his red jacinth lips became blue as the sky; his life seemed to have fled without hope of return. Whatever magnates and knights were there, footmen and horsemen, surrounded Ramin, looked upon him, and none could tell what had happened that he was thus deprived of sense... Everyone wept at his thus passing away; and by reason of his trouble all were grieved; **all** those standing near **thought** that Ramin doubtless **had an enemy**, and now the **enemy** had struck him (emphasis added - O.K.) (Visramiani 1964:44-45).

The same picture is viewed in *Layla and Majnun* in this respect. Qais, driven mad by the love of Layla is also called *Majnun*. *Majnun* is derived from the root “Jin” that means evil spirit. Just like in *Visramiani*, in *Layla and Majnun*¹ the bystanders fail to discern the

¹ Detailed discussion on the differences between Fakhreddin Gorgani *Visramiani*, Nizami Ganjavi’s *Layla and Munjum* and Rustaveli’s *The Knight in*
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reason of fainting or madness of these characters. Therefore, their every attempt to heal them is in vain. The same happens in the case of Tariel: immediately when the amirbar glimpsed Nestan-Darejan, he fainted unexpectedly and lay unconscious for three days, except for short episodes of occasional wakefulness. He, just like Ramin, is surrounded by people: “the household surrounded me like one who is embarking on a ship” (337). The same treatment is given to *Majnun*, while persuading him to stop loving Layla and for this purpose they take him on a pilgrimage to Mecca to pray at *Ka’bah*. When he gets to *Ka’bah* and hears the word “love” suddenly he grabs tightly the edge of Kiswah and begs God in these words:

Let my love grow stronger, let it endure, even if I perish.
Let me drink from this well, let my eye never miss its light.
If I am drunk with the wine of love,
Let me drink even more deeply.

.....
‘They tell me: “Crush the desire for Layla in your heart!”
But I implore thee, oh my God,
Let it grow even stronger.
Take what is left of my life and add it to Layla’s. etc.

(Nizam, 2004: 43)

As we see, for one’s liberation from the evil spirit the methods such as pilgrimage to holy sights or reading sacred texts are to him rather traditional. Tariel too is seen as “struck by the adversary” at the Royal Court, therefore “mullahs sat round, they called my sickness bewitchment of Beel-zebub” (337). The “muqris and mullahs” quite naturally fight against the “enemy” with the sacred book – Mushaf, which means the written copy of the Noble Qur’an. Yet, since in the cases of *Majnun* as well as Tariel we are dealing not with an evil spirit meaning devil, but with divine love and attempts at casting it out with the aid of the Qur’an or praying at the *Ka’bah* are bound to remain in vain. Therefore, using the word “rave” does not necessarily imply

the Panther’s Skin and parallels between them see in Kekelidze, K. *History of the Ancient Georgian Literature*, Vol. 2. pp. 127 -136.

mocking Islam or the Qur'an directly, yet it applies more to the *muqris* and *mullahs* and even that only partially, because 1) they were brought to offer prayers for Tariel by those who thought Tariel was "struck by the adversary"; 2) Tariel himself says "They thought I was struck by the Adversary of mankind, I know not of what they raved". i.e. those are "raving" who think so about me because they cannot understand the essence of my state and fight with divinity against divinity; 3) the word "rave" is said not in the same line where Mushaf is mentioned ("In their hands they held the Koran") but in the line which speaks of his being "struck by the adversary" ("They thought I was struck by the Adversary of mankind, I know not of what they raved"). The word "Chmakhva" (to rave) is explained in the dictionary by Sulkhan Saba Orbeliani as "spreading an ill word" and "Chmakhuli" (the raved) as "the ill word that has been spread" (p. 321) and since reading Qur'an could not be performed in the form of a dialogue or "spreading", then the mentioned word does not refer to the holy book of Muslims. Therefore the above mentioned verses apply not only to spiritual leaders, but to everyone who thinks the way those ones did. Besides, we should not forget the other episode in the poem, in which the Qur'an represents the sacred book for the heroes, and their holy of holies. Let us remember the meeting of the enraged princess and Tariel after the council was held about the wedding of Nestan. Tariel calms down her tigerish anger by swearing an oath on the Qur'an and by this also proves his own innocence:

"I looked, and saw on the lectern the Koran lying open;
I raised it, I stood up, and, praising God and afterwards, her (514).

This episode shows that Nestan-Darejan reads Qur'an ("I looked, and saw on the lectern the Koran lying open") and Tariel accepts the fact with respect and reverence, then he stands up and starts praising God with the Mushaf in his hands. There is absolutely no trace of "irony and sarcasm" in his acts and words and neither is it in Rustaveli's thought.

The second argument in favour of “sarcasm” and “irony” is considered to be the episodes of the Baghdad merchants. Let us address the text:

“He dismounted. They said: “We are Baghdad merchants,
Holders of the faith of Mahmad; we never drink new wines”.
(1010)

According to K. Kekelidze here too an ironical attitude emerges towards Islam. The Scholar may be given two reasons for saying this: 1) Why does Rustaveli specify the personal religious belief of the merchants so directly? 2) While everyone drinks in *the Knight in the Panther's Skin*, not drinking wine (“we never drink new wines”) may seem odd and even amusing, therefore the passage must include irony and not only towards the merchants but towards the Islam itself, since they are Muslims.

We think that this may become clearer if we find out the attitude of Islam towards trade as a skill. The point here is that trade was the job of the prophet Muhammad himself, who began to work as a merchant when he was given the caravan raid after he looked after the camels. Before the rise of Islam, the Arabs led their caravans on quite long distances, yet, Muhammad granted to the profession even more honour when he regarded the concept of honest and just trade as piety, meaning that he applied ethics to it. Besides, merchants were meant to not just sell and buy but they also had other missions rather important at the time. For example, they were travellers, equipped with diplomatic missions and often they were the emissaries to various countries. Also, considering their commercial activities, they sometimes had to go to some holy cities for trade and became pilgrims. This generated the famous expression “trade and pilgrimage”, which implies a double benefit – earned in both worlds: this one and the next. Derived from their pilgrimage, and having the prophet Muhammad as the role model in this enterprise, the merchants showed more commitment to keeping religious rules, or to be more precise, it was inevitable for a merchant to have a reputation of a devout believer, since this would thereby increase people's trust in him. Due

to the fact that merchants themselves were not warriors, they always hired armed units for guarding their caravans. Thus, in the above mentioned episode of the poem 1) the merchants characterize themselves as “keepers of the faith of Muhammad” and also they point out that they “never drink new wines”, therefore perception of self-irony here would be impossible. 2) Such an emphasis on something that they boast with in front of Avtandil implies that not drinking new wines is actually something even worthy of pride. Irony towards the merchants or to be more correct, the attitude of the aristocracy towards them manifests in the following words of Avtandil:

“You merchants are cowards, unskilled in war.
Lest they slay you with the arrow from afar, shut the doors behind
you” (1019)

The circle of traders occupies an important place in the feudal society in *The Knight in the Panther's Skin*; This merchant circle is at the lower level of the public order and the feudal class looks down on them ... The merchant is not a soldier or a warrior, and thus it is enough in feudal society to look down on him with arrogance” (Nozadze 1958: 85-86).

Therefore, there is absolutely no irony towards Islam or the prophet to be found in the episode of Avtandil and the merchants either.

The case of Usen further extends this issue (“forgot those oaths; what (to him were) Korans and Meccas” (1144). To say briefly, drunken Usen broke the oath given to his wife and told the King about Nestan-Darejan. Fatman remembers with great sadness about the breaking of the oath by Usen:

“When the king had drunk before Usen many great goblets,
Still they quaffed and again filled more tankards and beakers;
He forgot those oaths; what (to him were) Korans and Meccas!
Truly is it said: 'A rose befits not a crow, nor do horns suit an ass!’”
(1144).

From this it is clear that Usen is an unscrupulous man. The reason of him breaking his word appears to be his drunkenness, which makes him forget the value of his promise as well as the sacredness of the place and the book, on which he swore his oath. As we see the suggestion of the scholar who says that “Certainly this cannot be expected from a faithful Muslim! He is not expected to disregard the requirements of the Muslim moral code (fasting, prayer, pilgrimage, righteousness) emerging in the poem” can only be understood as a general principle and Usen’s act can hardly manifest either his or Rustaveli’s ironical attitude to Islam.

Considering that the issue of so called “sarcasm” also includes the topic of wine which is of particular interest to us, we shall examine it immediately. The episode of Avtandil’s meeting with the Baghdadian merchants is probably the only place throughout the poem where the drinking people dissociate from the non-drinking ones. Yet, before we move on to discussing how much the fact of drinking excludes the characters from the Muslim faith, we must add that the merchants talking to Avtandil are also Muslims (the ones who do not drink) and so is the chief merchant of Gulansharo, Usen (who drinks). Thus, it turns out that religious belief, as it is everywhere, is a personal choice among the merchants, or it may also mean that Usen is the only one who drinks because of his close connections with nobility and under their influence.

Famous and honourable Georgian scholar Victor Nozadze in his book *Societies in the Knight in the Panther’s Skin* discusses the phenomenon of wine in the poem. The author discusses very briefly the meaning of wine in Islam, in Muslim countries and in *The Knight in the Panther’s Skin*. In his view, the examples of praising wine in the ancient Georgian literature are very few “while in Persian and Arabic poetry... large part is dedicated to wine not only in festal poetry but also in the attempts of mystical achievements” (Nozadze 1958: 284). V. Nozadze also notes that even though it is true that Islam forbids drinking wine, “... yet, aristocracy, the upper class rarely followed this rule forbidding the consumption of wine” (Ibid.) However, here the scholar instead of drawing a similar conclusion in regard to *the Knight in the Panther’s Skin* (meaning to point out that

the situation is similar in the poem – O.K.), leaves the question open when he writes that “in *The Knight in the Panther’s Skin* we find ourselves in Islamic countries and the characters of the poem, who seem to be Muslims, should be following and keeping the rules of Islam if they are truly faithful believers. Islam forbids drinking wine, but in *The Knight in the Panther’s Skin* wine is pouring in immeasurable and limitless portions”. (Nozadze 1958: 284). The above cited fragments reveal a contradiction, which can be summarized this way: if the Muslim aristocracy chooses to drink anyway regardless of everything (and this was true in most cases – O. K.) then why do we regard the aristocracy in *The Knight in the Panther’s Skin* to be non-Muslim?

Besides, wine is consumed by the characters of heroic or romantic epic poems composed in the Muslim East whether it be the characters of *Shahnameh*, Nizami or Fizuli. For example, in Both Nizami and Fizuli the Majnun, to whom Nawfal promises a meeting with Layla just to keep his friendship, drinks wine and wine here does not stand for something that brings *theosis* but it is an ordinary component of a feast.

Many other similar examples can be drawn from the Eastern Muslim literature, in which wine occupies an important place, yet, listing all of them would take us too far away. Thus, it is clear that it will lack academic support to specify the characters’ religious beliefs either based upon either their drinking or not drinking.

The prayer of Avtandil

One more issue, which N. Marr addresses particularly is “Avtandil’s prayer in the mosque”. He discusses the episode of Avtandil’s prayer as a reference to his Muslim religious identity. Yet, he also notes that “A Muslim praying in such a way would be considered in the best case as a lapsed Muslim or apostate who **mocks** (emphasis added - O.K.) the faith of the prophet Muhammad and his faithful followers”. This view of N. Marr is also shared by E.

Khintibidze when he mentions: “It should be emphasized that none of the prayers of the poem’s characters ever resemble the **strictly** organized cycle of five daily prayers; Never during the Avtandil’s annual travels has our attention ever been drawn to the **strict** (emphasis added - O.K.) fasting month of Ramadan” (Khintibidze 2009: 231). We can only draw one conclusion from the above cited quotations of various scholars – not only that Avtandil is not a Muslim, but he is determined to belittle and insult Islam together with all its preachers and followers. We think that such an approach contradicts the spirit of Rustaveli’s writing. Here we are dealing with a univocal understanding of the concept of “prayer” and this creates the ambiguity. Yet, “prayer” has both: broad and narrow meanings – its broad meaning is ritual service, which people conduct according to certain rules, while its narrow meaning is a supplication, begging, asking God for help and support in the affairs of this world (S. S. Orbeliani interprets prayer in his dictionary like this: “prayer is a mental elevation to God, i.e. asking God something that is right, prayer is a supplication” (Orbeliani 1991: 423). Therefore, in Islam *Dua* (plea in Arabic) and *Salat* (ritual prayer in Arabic) differ from one another. It is noteworthy that every religion including Islam has a special set of ritual prayers meant for being conducted at particular times during a day or night; they may be either festal or simply grace-giving, or as a supplication for the protection from some disasters. There are six compulsory ritual prayers in Islam:

1. Daily prayers;
2. Prayers for the departed;
3. Prayers for protection from natural disasters (Hurricanes, floods, earthquakes etc.);
4. Prayer during the pilgrimage to Ka’bah;
5. Lapsed (qaḍā’) prayers of a father (due to passing away) that are obligatory on the eldest son.
6. Friday prayer in case of making a promise, oath swearing.

Only the first one on the list above is compulsory on a daily basis – they are ritual prayers which have to be performed five times a

day. They are divided in a row during at specific times of the day from the dawn to midnight and each has a name relevant to its timing:

1. Salat al-fajr: dawn, before sunrise.
2. Salat al-zuhr: midday, after the sun passes its highest.
3. Salat al-'asr: the late part of the afternoon.
4. Salat al-maghrib: just after sunset.
5. Salat al-'isha: between sunset and midnight.

Regarding the non-ritual supplication, it is permitted even before, within or after these prayers. Avtandil's prayer, as E. Khintibidze notes, is not in accord with either the Muslim ritual prayers or with the Christian ones. Yet, considering the narrow meaning of the word "prayer", when it (prayer) is identified with the plea derived from human suffering, everything becomes clear. Besides the fact that the prayers performed by the characters while they suffer is natural and human, in literature it also reflects a significant psychological drama: 1. Even the invincible hero becomes powerless and beseeches God's help; 2. Will God hear his prayers? 3. If he hears then it means that the hero is serving a good purpose in life etc. Avtandil's prayer taken separately is more of a supplication than a ritual prayer with both its form and meaning. The poet keeps silence about the rest, since, as E. Khintibidze rightly concludes, such is "the non-dogmatic religious tendency of the poet". It is true that Rustaveli takes Avtandil into the mosque, but we know his prayer: ("God, God, I beseech Thee..."), which ends with a vow: "If I survive, I shall serve Thee, I shall offer sacrifice to Thee" (792) and which is not a ritual prayer. Avtandil commends his love to God: "uproot not the love sowed by her for me!" (791).

Considering all this, the question – in what can we find that Avtandil abuses Muslim religion and its rituals and therefore why should he be presented as an apostate? – remains unanswered.

All the above confirms that it has not been Rustaveli's aim to either deny Islam or praise or promote it. Thus, the views of the Georgian scholars quoted above need to be searched carefully and replaced by stronger evidence, which will present the situation more objectively, because:

1) As it turns out, the Georgian scholars are not sufficiently familiar with Muslim religion, theology and philosophy; therefore, their arguments regarding the features and nature of God in Islam mislead the Rustvelologists in regard to research on the Eastern world.

2) None of the examples quoted from the poem by the Georgian scholars show any sign of disrespect for Islam and even less “sarcasm” or “irony” towards it.

3) It is obvious that claiming the characters’ non-Muslim identity in *the Knight in the Panther’s Skin*, based only on drinking wine, fails to offer a valid scholarly argument, since there are ample of similar examples of the consumption of wine in other Eastern heroic and romantic epic stories.

4) “The Prayer of Avtandil” does not contradict Islam in any way and using it as an argument claiming that it does not resemble the Muslim ritual prayer cannot prove Avtandil’s apostasy (from Islam) and his Christian identity cannot be built solely upon this argument.

“Pitiful fainting”

The theme of passing out due to the great power of love occupies a large and significant place in both romantic and epic poetry. It is often used as an indicator of the veracity of the feeling especially among the male characters. It becomes the reader’s detector of the true feeling of the characters towards the beloved. In this respect, *The Knight in the Panther’s Skin* is not only no exception but on the contrary, Tariel’s fainting out of love displays striking parallels with *Ramin and Majnun*. K. Kekelidze in the 2nd volume of his *History of Ancient Georgian Literature* notes on the page 129 in relation to Ramin, that when Ramin accompanied “Vis’s litter, suddenly, by the providence of God, there arose a great wind, and it tore the covering curtain of the litter. The face of Vis appeared; it was as if lightning shone forth from a cloud, or suddenly the sun arose; and at her

appearing the heart of Ramin was taken captive. It was as if a sorcerer had poisoned Ramin, for at one look his soul was reft from him. ... He fell from his horse, he fainted, and for a long time lay unconscious. His rose-like face changed into saffron". We encounter a similar episode in *the Knight in the Panther's Skin* – writes the scholar – describing the first fainting of Tariel. Also he notes on page 135 when he makes a parallel with *Majnun*: "the spiritual suffering of both Tariel and Qays is the same: they both attained the state of fainting, therefore *Majnun* or *Mijnuri* (mad lover) is their common name".

In our opinion, Tariel's "fainting" is similar with that of Ramin and Qays only in the first instance while on other occasions it is engendered by other causes, and what is most important, these other occasional "faintings" are not as lengthy as in the first instance – when he lay unconscious for three days ("For three days I was lifeless; inextinguishable fires burned me"). In particular the fainting of Tariel is accompanied by three undertones: 1) triggered by the first sight of Nestan; 2) caused by the understanding of his own unhappiness, born out of desperation; 3) brought about by an unexpected excitement. Let us go through the relevant fragments: the first instance, as we noted, was caused by the sudden sight of Nestan-Darejan, he was infected by love, which made him appear as "struck by the Adversary" to his companions:

"Asmat'h drew aside the curtain; I stood outside the curtain.
I saw the maiden (Nestan); a lance pierced my mind and heart". (332)

Then it follows:

"I gave her the partridges, she took them from me who was burned
with fire.

Ah me! Since then in eternal furnace I burn!" (332)

We witness Tariel's swooning several times while he is telling Avtandil about his adventures and in particular about Netsan:

"The knight swooned when he sought to mention her name.
Avt'handil also wept; his fire made his heart like soot.
The maiden revived (Tariel); she sprinkled water on his breast.
He said: "Hearken! But this truly is the day of my death". (315)

Also:

"Now failed that light which despised even the sun;
He could tell no more, he fainted, groaning bitterly". (333)

The above quoted two examples make it obvious that Tariel's faintings are more related to realizing his own unhappiness than simply by rekindling the passion of his love when remembering Nestan. His fainting after killing lions and tigers is of the same order yet of a slightly different nature:

"He could no longer feel, he had stepped forth from the world"
(848)

Since, as he tells to Avtandil, the tiger reminded him of his beloved and killing him reminded him of the fire that "first flamed" in his heart. Here we see him missing Nestan first of all, and that itself causes his following collapse.

The third type of "fainting" is caused by the unexpected joy or excitement. Avtandil overjoyed by his success of tracing Nestan to the castle of Kadjis forgot about his usual caution and showed Tariel his lover's letter and veil without first preparing him for it. Tariel took them and:

"He recognized the letter and the fringe of the veil and unfolded them,
He pressed them to his face; he fell,

A rose pale in hue, his spirits fled, The watchman of jet bowed his
head.
Neither Caen nor even Salaman could bear sorrows like his". (1316)

Yet, the question is how does Nestan take Tariel's first fainting?
– It is extremely negative. In the chapter called "Letter of Nestan-Darejan to his lover" she repeats her negative attitude twice:

"I am thine. Die not, but I hate vain fainting ...". (363)

Then she confirms it once again:

- 1) "Pitiful fainting and dying, what love dost thou think this!
It is better to exhibit to the beloved deeds of heroism". (364)

This "complaint" coming from Nestan addresses the specific type of fainting, which is caused by the feeling of love, and which she identifies with idle and passive weariness. With these words Nestan establishes a somewhat new standard of "mad lover", which also distinguishes Rustaveli from his contemporary poets.

Ramaz Khalvashi selects a few passages from the poem in his study "A map of misreadings from *The Knight in the Panther's Skin to Davitiani*" and discusses them as representing both an inspiration by and a repudiation of *Visramani* and *Layla and Majnun*, and other works by famous or anonymous poets of the Muslim East (Khalvashi 2016: 216). We think that the previous Nestanian "revision"¹ of the expression of love needs to be discussed precisely in this context, while Rustaveli describes the ideal of a "mad lover", which existed in his own

¹This word is brought in this context from the work of R. Khalvashi "A map of misreadings from *The Knight in the Panther's Skin to Davitiani*". (See "A map of misreadings from *The Knight in the Panther's Skin to Davitiani*", in *Word Made into an Icon* – anthology dedicated to the 80th anniversary in honour of Revaz Siradze, "Biblio", Tbilisi, 2016, p.211).

time, yet, at the same time he questions the certainty of its main expression – fainting. Besides, as we noted above, we think that Tariel’s faintings are not all of the same nature.

The concept of *raqith*

As E. Khintibidze points out, the main moment in the development of the plot in *the Knight in the Panther’s Skin* is the episode of “secret assassination of the son of Khvarazm-Shah” (E. Khintibidze 2009:262), which caused a great disagreement among scholars and researchers. In particular, the disagreement is caused by questions such as is the “groom to be” guilty or not? What is “true justice”? How ethical is it to murder someone in this way? E. Khintibidze addresses this issue several times in his monograph *Ideas and Worldviews in The Knight in the Panther’s Skin*¹ and discusses the views about it expressed by the scholars such as K. Tsintsadze, N. Marr, P. Berkov, A. Baramidze, V. Abashmadze, and others. He represents the issue from three different angles - 1) “The Golden mean” and focusing on the lesser “evil”; 2) “true justice”, which according to him addresses not the assassination of the groom to be, but the avoiding of widespread bloodshed; 3) “means and end” – the main goal in this case is Nestan’s and Tariel’s being together, while the means is getting rid of the Kvarazm-Shah’s son.

We do not discuss the above mentioned issues separately, since our aim is to try to interpret the characters’ attitude to the son of the Kvarazm-Shah in the light of the widespread image of a *raqith* in Muslim literature. We should also note here that this serves as a raising of the issue rather than providing a solution to it.

¹ *Georgian Church and the Knight in the Panther’s Skin*, p.362 and *For the Concept of True Justice*, p. 439.

“Raqith” is an Arabic word and means: 1) waiting one, guardian; 2) rival; 3) enemy.

The image of “raqith” or a rival in a love relationship is certainly taken from the holy books of monotheistic religions, where the devil-Satan, the demiurge of God and the adversary of human beings is the destroyer of harmony between them. In the Sufi literature, which, as an Azerbaijanian scholar Rahim Aliev points out, “makes up at least 90 percent of Muslim literature” (R. Əliyev, 2012: 38), the image of *raqith* is actively employed. Considering that Sufi poetry is vastly allegorical, in which “God turned into a beautiful “beloved” and a human being into his suffering “lover”,¹ the Satan is seen as *raqith*, which has to be done away with by the joint efforts of the beloved and the lover. It can be said that at first the anthropomorphised image was given to the devil, who stirred up hostility between the two lovers (God and the human being), and since then pejorative names such as Satan, devil, separator, adversary, followed by dog, devi, are encompassed in the meaning of *raqith*, which became an obstacle between the romantic couples.

In general as attractive as *raqith* may seem on a personal level, it still has to be dismissed as superfluous. Nizami in his *Layla and Majnun* addresses the engagement of Layla to Ibn Salam in this way: “The moon was fed into the mouth of a monster” (Gəncəvi N, 2004:138) and this is when Nizami tells us a lot about the charity and generosity of Ibn Salam. *Majnun* does not rejoice at the hearing of the death of Ibn Salam at first at all and even expresses it clearly. Also, in *Khosrow and Shirin*, in spite of the extremely charming character of Farhad, he is still *raqith* to Khosrow and Shirin. Therefore he has to be dismissed *a priori*.

¹ *Iranian Poetry*, Preface by Vakhushti Kotetishvili, Tbilisi, 1977, p. 24

Let us now move on specifically to *the Knight in the Panther's Skin*. We reckon the son of Khvarazm-Shah to be an “innocent criminal” – he is innocent and blameless since neither he nor his own state are the initiators of his arrival to India¹; on the contrary, he is the one who accepted an invitation from India. E. Khintibidze presents this point well in a dispute with V. Abashmadze.² In particular he argues against V. Abashmadze’s accusation for the son of Khvarazm-Shah, where he writes that “the 'groom to be' had to know at least that by his actions he was depriving the throne of its legal heir”³, and he supports his argument by quoting the following line:

“God gave thee no son; thou hast an only daughter.
If thou appointedst Khvarazmsha king,
What would have been left for me in exchange?” (550).

This means that Khvarazm-Shah sent his son based on this information, after receiving an offer from the royal court of India. Yet, the son of Khvarazm-Shah is still guilty of his strong and nearly divine love as a rival and separator or *raqith*, even if he acted unconsciously. And concerning *raqith*: no matter how attractive he appears to us, and how sad is his death, he still has to go. Therefore, Nestan-Darejan and Tariel do not act only out of “true justice”⁴, which as E. Khintibidze explains “consists in their humanity, in their respect for human feeling and longings” (E. Khintibidze 2009:465). Neither are the characters

¹ Unlike even Nizami’s Ibn Salam, who went to Layla for the second time for asking her hand in marriage after Nawfal had a war with Layla’s father because of *Majnun*.

² See E. Khintibidze’s monograph, p.144.

³ V. Abashmadze’s above mentioned view is quoted by E. Khintibidze in his monograph.

⁴ Such a formulation belongs to E. Khintibidze in the second note on page 467.

guided by a distinct and exclusive type of ethics¹, but they act against *raqith* in the name of their unexpected love, and in accordance with characteristics derived from their attitude towards *raqith* (such as hostility, demonization etc.). *Raqith* is not supposed to hold a victory over true love. Therefore it means that *raqith* the son of Khvarazm-Shah is a negative figure for the lovers and the right to act against him is granted to Nestan and Tariel precisely by this “law” of love.

The romantic episode of Avtandil and Fat’man and the concept of temporary marriage in Islam

Avtandil’s relationship with Fat’man also became a topic of numerous discussions and interpretations for scholars, since this action of Avtandil contradicts the ideals of romantic relationships as well as the doctrines of all the religions regarding fornication, and also the code of chivalry. An interesting interpretation of this episode is offered by N. I. Gulak in his book *On Rustaveli* written in Russian in Tbilisi in 1984.

He notes regarding the episode in question that Avtandil’s action is typical of “the person of the Muslim East”; that “Muslim merchants and travellers to various cities used to embrace short marriages (for several months) and this was not considered to be immoral among them.”

¹ In the views of I. Makaradze and T. Mikeladze “according to Aristotle ‘happiness consists in ethical and moral life...’ therefore the justification of the characters’ action is to be found in their quest for earthly happiness and in the righteousness of their decisions on this way not according to Christian ethics or the code of knighthood/chivalry, but in accordance of the “true justice” established by the characters”.

The issue of a temporary marriage or the so called *Mut'ah* is discussed in a book by Nana Gelovani *Woman in Islam* where she also notes that the Arabs in the time before Islam as well as after the rise of Islam employed the concept of temporary marriage while travelling for their trade. In pre-Islamic Arab tradition there were several types of marriages between a man and a woman. Islam reduced them to three: 1) Permanent marriage between equals, since the man had to have financial security and the woman was supposed to be a free woman, provided for by her family; 2) Temporary marriage which covers an optional period from 1 hour to 99 years; 3) Marriage to one's own maid or a slave woman, for which the bridal fee or *Mahr* was not paid.

The right of temporary marriage is confirmed in the 24th *ayah* of "women's" *surah* where it is formulated as follows:

"Also (forbidden are) women already married, except those (slaves) whom your right hand possess. Thus has Allah ordained for you. All others are lawful, provided you seek (them in marriage) with *Mahr* (bridal money given by the husband to his wife at the time of marriage) from your property, desiring chastity, not committing illegal sexual intercourse, so with those of whom you have enjoyed sexual relations, give them their *Mahr* as prescribed; but if after a *Mahr* is prescribed, you agree mutually (to give more), there is no sin on you. Surely, Allah is Ever All-knowing, All-Wise" (Qur'an 4:24).

Based on this *Ayah* both Shia and Sunni Muslims acknowledge the confirmation of temporary marriage in the Qur'an, yet, the disagreement between them takes place on the point that according to the Sunni Muslims this regulation worked only at a certain time before first the Islamic prophet and then Caliph Umar forbade it again.¹ The

¹ Interpretation of this *Ayah*, see, The Noble Qur'an, 2006, p.481, interpretation 20, (translated from Arabic into Georgian, with the introduction and interpretations of Giorgi Lobzhanidze).

Shias disagree with this view and they still exercise the practice of temporary marriage.

The prohibition against temporary marriage to already married women applies just as much as it would in the case of a permanent marriage (until divorce).

Since Fat'man is married to Usen, her contact with Avtandil and Avtandil's relationship with her according to Muslim tradition (including both Shia and Muslim) cannot therefore be a temporary marriage.

Conclusion:

1) Nestan openly reveals her extremely negative attitude towards fainting as an idle weariness, while the "fainting" of Tariel carries a slightly different undertone which we can attribute to Rustaveli's originality.

2) Tariel does not regret the death of the son of Khvarazm-Shah probably because he comes out of the Eastern understanding of the image of *raqith*. Besides, the scholars are aware that in Nizami's version in the beginning *Majnun* rejoices at the death of Ibn Salam.

3) The romantic episode depicting the love between Avtandil and Fat'man is not a "temporary marriage" because the Muslim rule forbids such a contact with women and considers it as an adultery.

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The Question of the Four Elements in the Works of Nizami and Rustaveli

In ancient consciousness, the four elements - fire, water, air, earth - were considered to be the closest phenomena to Man, and thus he was revered as sacred and special. This type of consciousness has been characteristic of all periods of human history. Therefore, we often find this idea in the writings of various scholars and poets. One of the most important elements in the study of the history of civilization and culture, is the comparative study of the views of poets from different cultural backgrounds and speaking different languages.

In our work we discuss the issue of the four elements in the work of Nizami Ganjavii and Shota Rustaveli. The comparison of the two poets is important, since they lived in the same historical period and were contemporaries of one another. Additionally, both poets created works within the same geographical region, *i.e.* the Caucasus. We would like to add that at this stage we present our research, which is of a comparative nature, in the form of a question.

The source of the myth of heaven and earth in Persian literature

Many peoples of the world consider heaven as their father and earth as their mother. This belief is found in Indian, Egyptian, Chinese, Japanese, Iranian and other cultures. It is difficult to say which culture

was the first to acquire this view. In the Abrahamic religions, the sky is one of the essential sacred symbols, parallel to the concept of God and religion. The sky is the abode of the gods in the imaginations of the first human beings (Alam 1387: 120). In the Pahlavi texts, Ahura Mazda first creates the heavens and then allows other spirits to settle there. Only Angra Mainyu is prohibited from entering that world. The heavens and the power of rainmaking are a symbols of God's supremacy. In Mazdeanism, too, the sky is a sacred phenomenon (Alam 1387: 121). In the Abrahamic religions, excellence, holiness, spirituality, and intimacy with God all are associated with heaven. Therefore, the heavens are the eternal abode of the angels, and the source of light. Revelation will be bestowed from heaven, and the Qur'an will be revealed from heaven. The Qur'an commands: "The people of the Scripture (Jews) ask you to cause a book to descend upon them from heaven".¹ Before the spread of Islam, in the ancient Iranian myth, the four elements were perceived and worshiped as goddesses and deities. In Sumerian and Babylonian mythology water is the source of creation. In ancient Iranian mythology, the water goddess Anahita is evidence of this belief.

The sacred union of heaven and earth

The sky, in addition to its sacredness in ancient religious values, had another advantage, and that advantage was its masculinity, which is wedded to the earth. This is often found in Iranian, Chinese, Indian, and Greek mythologies (Zumrudi 1382: 5). According to Nizami, the four elements are the cause of the emergence of Man, and Man was

¹ *The Noble Qur'an*, Surah An-Nisa, āyāt 152, translated into English and with commentaries by Dr. Muhammad Taqi-ud-Din Al-Hilali and Dr. Muhammad Muhsin Khan, Madinah, 2005.

created as a result of their union. Yet, here we must not forget the will and providence of God:

“In spite of the fact water, earth, wind and fire
Greeted one another with benevolence,
None of them obey the orders of the others,
Only God subordinates them all under His power”.

Seven Beauties (Haft Peykar)

According to the ancient view, the sky consisted of seven circles. These circles were stacked on top of each other like the layers of an onion. One star moved inside each circle and each had its own name. Their Persian names are:

1. Māh 2. Tīr 3. (A)Nāhîd 4. Mehr, Hôršîd 5. Bahrâm 6. Berjîs 7. Keyvân.

Their Arabic names are:

1. Qamar 2. 'Utarid 3. Zuhara 4. Shams 5. Marrikh 6. Mushtari 7. Zuhal.¹

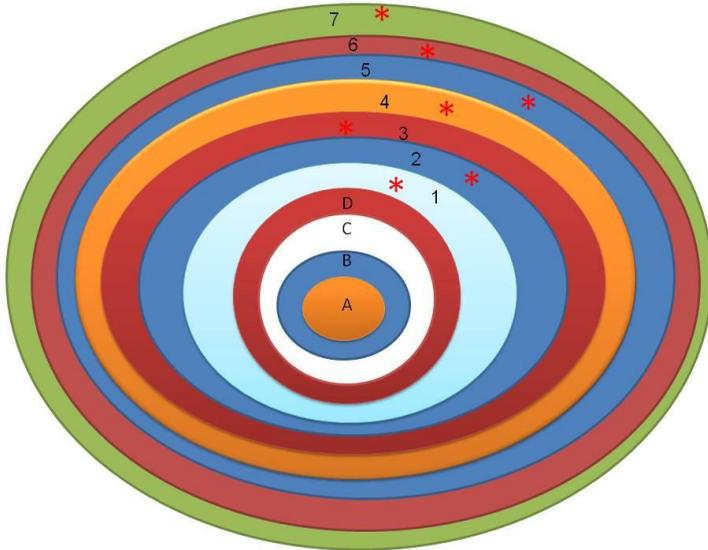
Just as each celestial orb has a major impact on the four major elements, they also affect human beings. For example, every sin and every earthly calamity a person receives from Bahrâm and Keyvân (Marrikh and Zuhal), while Nāhîd and Berjîs are the causes of happiness and abundance. According to the ancient people, Bahrâm (Marrikh) caused small calamities, while Keyvân (Zuhal) caused great calamities; Nāhîd (Zuhara) brings moderate success, while Berjîs (Mushtari) brings great happiness.

¹ It is obvious that the names of the stars in *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* are given in both Arabic and Georgian, for example, 'Utarid, Marrikh, Zuhal, Mushtari, etc...

The four elements

According to the ancient notion, the earth is the center of the universe and is unmovable. The element of water is moving along the earth's surface, and air blows above the water. The fire is above all of them. All four elements sit in the chariot of the Qamar (moon) and they are governed by the moon.

The Layout of Seven Celestial Orbs and Four Elements



Four Elements: A) Earth B) Water C) Air D) Fire

Seven Planets: 1) Qamar / Māh 2) ʿUtarid / Tîr 3) Zuhara / Nâhîd
4) Shams / Mehr / Hôrşîd 5) Marrikh / Bahrâm 6) Mushtari / Berjîs
7) Zuhal / Keyvân

The four elements in the human body

According to ancient philosophers and physicians, including Ibn Sina, the human body is made up of four elements - water, air, earth, and fire, which have four natures: bile, melancholy, phlegm, and blood (Ibn Sina 1993: 488). Symbolically speaking, water is blood, air is soul, earth is body, and fire is the warmth of the body. According to ancient medicine, health and life depended on the balance of these four elements (bile, melancholy, phlegm and blood). (Ibn Sina 1993: 488). Domination of one over the other was a precondition for either illness or death.

The four elements in Rustaveli's work

This philosophy of the elements, was inherited from the ancient world and which gained popularity in the Muslim and Christian worlds throughout the Middle Ages, could not be ignored by the great poets. Nizami returns to this topic many times in his various poems and gives it considerable emphasis. Nizami, however, considers the phenomenon wherein the four contrasting elements are combined, not merely as a plain philosophical fact, but as an act of divine providence and power, and thus eulogizes it. In the foreword to the Azerbaijani edition of Nizami's *Iqbalnameh*, the researcher Z. Guluzade writes: *"It is interesting that when Nizami allows his heroes - his philosophers - to speak, he conveys their thoughts not with realism, in the manner they might have really uttered them, but rather has them express these thoughts from within the context and in the manner of Eastern philosophical currents"* (Italics are ours – O.K.).

Such an approach is also perceptible in Rustaveli's poem and it is completely natural probably for two reasons: 1) the poet / writer /

creator creates a new world, a new reality, and tries to understand, and to grasp, the existing postulates; 2) there are new approaches and interpretations in his time, therefore, the writer has also to take these into account; on this question, E. Khintibidze notes in his monograph *The World of Ideas and Worldviews in The Knight in the Panther's Skin*: “It is not typical for Rustaveli to quote biblical or theological-philosophical books accurately. He often refers to a particular source and cites an opinion, which constitutes the essential idea of a certain concept or thesis of the named source, while giving his own interpretation of a particular idea” (Khintibidze 2009: 349).

Interestingly, Rustaveli does not mention the four elements in the prologue (for example, in the first and second verses written on the creation of the universe and God), instead they appear in the letter of one of the characters of the poem, in this case, Nestan.

E. Khintibidze writes: “We see in *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* that the human body, as a material object, consists of these four elements, as their combination is the cause of the body's inception: death is understood as the disintegration of the body, the severing of the combination of these four elements, and the liberation of the soul from them. This is how Nestan describes the ascension of her own soul (person) to heaven:

“Entreat God for me; it may be He will deliver me from the travail of the world

And from union with fire, water, earth and air.

Let Him give me wings and I shall fly up, I shall attain my desire day and night

I shall gaze on the sun's rays flashing in splendour” (1280) (Khintibidze 2009: 521).

In *The Metaphorical System of Nature in The Knight in the Panther's Skin*, Viktor Nozadze lists the places where the notion of earth / land is mentioned (eg. land as a sacred place upon which one

may swear an oath, land as a place to be worshipped, land that provides a grave, or indeed a cradle, the land/earth in the sense of 'this world') and singles out the earth, as one among the four elements. He also explains the phenomenon of water: "The word water in *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* also has another meaning – a philosophical one. 'Water' here refers to the fourth element in the combination, or an element alongside the other three, of which all things are made up". (Nozadze 2005:388). Here again, he quotes the above mentioned strophe. One of the chapters in *The Metaphorical System of Stars in The Knight in the Panther's Skin* is dedicated to air. The scholar refers to Sulkhān Saba Orbeliani's *A Bundle of Words* and points out that air as one of the four elements. While referring to the role and meaning of air in the poem, he adds: "As we have seen, air is not forgotten in *The Knight in the Panther's Skin*, and starting from the earth, the splendor of the objects and events of which is also used to exemplify beauty, so air, ether, sky ... are also intended to exemplify the beauty and goodness of the heroes of the poem". He also gives us an interesting hint: "It is true that in *Shahnameh* by Ferdowsi and in the five poems by Nizami ... astronomy and astrology occupy a large place and both demonstrate an extensive knowledge of this field, but ... their views are scattered throughout their enormous works - and here in *The Knight in the Panther's Skin*, which is a smaller work, they are expressed briefly and eloquently: for artistic purposes" (Nozadze 2005: 251-2).

It is noteworthy that in Nizami's poems, after presenting the earth, water, air and fire as integral ingredients of life, the poet refers to such images in which these four elements are symbolized separately. There is a similar approach in *The Knight in the Panther's Skin*, which is indicated by Viktor Nozadze. Let us examine the following examples:

Wine as water on fire

Iskandarnameh draws the image of fire from the metaphorical description of water and wine in the book called *Sharafnama*. The poet asks the wine pourer to pour into the cup water as pure as a flame of fire, by which he means wine. Wine is a remover of sorrow and grief and a purifier of the earth:

*“Hey, wine pourer! Dreaming of fire, arise with the wine,
Fill up the amber cup!
Let the pearl drained down from this black earth
Make my heart merry and remove all my sorrow”.*
(Ganjavi, *Sharafnama*, 2004:362).

In the bayts quoted below, the poet compares wine to paradise water poured into a fired cup. The poet wants to kill his thirst with water and fire, i.e. wine in a fired cup.

*“Make haste wine pourer to fill up my clay cup
With the water of paradise!
Do not keep me away from that water and fire,
It is me who is bedewed by that water and fire”.*
(Ganjavi, *Sharafnama*, 2004:362)

Contrast and paradoxicality of elements with Nizami’s poetry

In the bayt quoted below, first he compares the young man with water. The reason for this comparison is probably his youthful cheerfulness and mirth, but on the other hand, warmth and heat radiate from the nature of the young man, which produced the paradoxical and contrasting expression such as “water, which is fire”:

“Even if an old man injures me, the wound will not render me
unconscious,
The charm of youth is boiling in my blood like wine.
Youth grows wiser from head to toe
By pounding its head upon a rock”
(Nizami, *Treasury of Mysteries*, 2004:93).

The paradox of sparking water

In praising the hero in question, the poet makes a fascinating description; the sword of the hero is so powerful that it can make water emit sparks, while the clouds become forced to shield the sun from this fire:

“When he stabs the water with his sword and makes fire,
Clouds will protect the moon from the flames of that fire
(Nizami, *Iqbalnameh*, 2004:32).

The romantic relationship between water and fire, their love and mutual attraction

The bayts below show the idea that a loving communion and attraction reigns between the objects in the visible world, and therefore a mutual love exists between the elements of water and fire:

“Those sweet frolickings quickly faded away,
Two fires, water, the water joined the fire.
The infinite attraction, the flaming love,
Was thus magnetically drawn to it”
(Nizami, *Khosrow and Shirin*, 2004:291).

Description of the wedding night of Khosrow and Shirin. The Metaphors of water and fire

In the poem *Khosrow and Shirin* Nizami tries to describe in detail the meeting of Khosrow and Shirin. While the whirlwind of love, affection, and passion are all tangled up, Nizami is still forced to present all of them within the framework of modesty and purity, in the style of oriental expression. So in the bayt below, he uses water and fire metaphorically:

“The mother of pearl nested on the branch of coral,
Water and fire vowed to stand together.
Water and fire joined together and unified,
Their bed was dyed in mercury and scarlet”.

(Nizami, *Khosrow and Shirin*, 2004:425).

Funeral poem to Shirin and the four elements

Khosrow sends Farhad to his mother to inform Farhad about Shirin's alleged death. The grandmother recites *marsyia* – a mourning poem commemorating Shirin. This *marsyia* emphasizes the coming of Shirin's death together with the wind. According to the old custom, the graves were sprinkled with perfume and rose water, and the road, on which Shirin's body was to be taken, was washed with water pouring from eyes, i.e. tears.

“Alas, when a poplar tree once grew taller,

The death has come, the wind blew and the earth swallowed it.

From the earth its amber resin was poured upon the moon. The earth was washed thoroughly by the water shed from the eyes”
(Nizami, *Khosrow and Shirin*, 2004:316).

For the understading of “water” in *The Knight in the Panther’s Skin*

V. Nozadze distinguishes The function / meaning of water in Rustaveli’s poem as follows:

Water - river

“As the river is also called “water” in *The Knight in the Panther’s Skin* – “There on the farther edge of the plain flows a stream ; on the bank of the stream are rocks” (78).¹

Water - for thirst

Here the scholar brings three examples:

“I fled from my home, like a stag seeking water” (835);

“If he be athirst, what sane, reasonable man would pour away water!” (899),

“As deer pant after mountain streams, I want to return to this land” (1648).

Water - healer

When Tariel fainted “Asmat'h sprinkled water on his breast” (322),

“The maiden revived (Tariel); she sprinkled water on his breast” (326),

“Asmat'h sprinkled water (upon him), Taria came back to consciousness” (346).

¹ **Translator’s note:** The numbering of the verses from the *Knight in the Panther’s Skin* follows the English edition translated by Marjory Wardrop and published in 1912.

Water - extinguisher

V. Nozadze points out that the poet also uses “the concept of water as an extinguisher that puts out the fire, which is itself a metaphor for a very strong feeling and deep emotions in the affairs of the heart: “Then she restored him to consciousness, his fires she quenched with water” (499).

“Why did I in my haste pour water on a fire difficult to quench!” (1319)

Water - tears

“They shed on the fields tears from the eyes like waters from a spring” (929).

“There the roses were sprinkled by the water of tears dammed up in the jungle” (984).

Rose water

V. Nozadze notes regarding rose water: “Rose water was very expensive in the past as a fragrance and when *The Knight in the Panther’s Skin* mentions rose water as a bathing water, it points to the luxury designed especially for Nestan: “in front was a little garden and a fountain of rose-water for bathing” (318).

“There were many fountains of rose-water for baths” (341).

Water - entertainment

The scholar here bring another three examples:

“As they sported they gazed at the stream and the edge of the glens” (83);

“They saw a certain stranger knight; he sat weeping on the bank of the stream” (84);

“When he saw a stream he dismounted; he gazed on the rippling of the water” (820).

According to V. Nozadze: “Seeing a stream and gazing upon it is the means of calming, distracting, amusing and diverting oneself by entertaining one’s eyes”.

Fluent / Eloquent (‘Watery’ - in Georgian)

Rostevan is: “moreover fluent in speech” (32)

Vizier: “the vizier sportively spoke thus, with eloquent words” (59)

Avtandil: “The eloquent and nice-worded one ended this letter” (169)

Avtandil and Phatman: “They sat down together and began to kiss, to sport pleasantly” (1077)

In the following example, where Phatman writes a letter to Nestan - “elegant and eloquent in words, lovely, fair-tongued” (1245), the scholar notes: “Even though Nestan only said a few words, yet her wording carries the sense of performing the rules of good manners: eloquent and fair-tongued” (Nozadze 2005:385)

Water - *Javari*

V. Nozadze writes: “The word ‘water’ has another special meaning, which is connected with precious gemstones ... “Javari” is a Persian-Arabic word and means - the beauty, splendour, brilliancy, fineness of precious gemstones ... Nestan writes to Tariel and writes in his book: “I have seen the loveliness of thy gemlike brilliancy” (477).

According to Nestan, Tariel possessed the loveliness of gemlike brilliancy – the lustre, splendour and beauty of a precious stone or pearl”. (Nozadze 2005:387)

Water – honour, fame, and glory

According to V. Nozadze, in the following stanza of *The Knight in the Panther’s Skin* Vepkhistkaosni, in the moments “when Rostevan

says about Tinatin: “my solace and jewel, my water of life” (104) and also about Avtandil: “a knight of the world, in quality a gem and a faultless ruby” (693) water represents “pride, honour, fame, and recognition”. To prove this, the scholar draws parallels with Nizami: “The poem *Iskandarnameh* says – “give me water and a stone in return, and I will throw your stone into the water with my own hands”. Prof. Barthel says in his commentary to this sentence – “stone” here means “serenity” and “strength”; while “water” means “fame” and “glory”.

In the following part – “**Water-Union**” The scholar points to the well-known passage in Nestan’s letter to Tariel as a confirmation of water being one of the four elements in the poem, as we have discussed earlier.

The next element is “earth”. Let us recall the relevant examples from the works of both poets.

Veneration of the earth by heaven in Nizami’s works

According to Nizami’s imagination and his manner of narration, it is as if the sky, with its rotation and curviness, reclines to kiss the earth every night:

“Maybe I could also step over your doorstep,
And venerate your doors with all my heart every night”.

(Nizami, *Khosrow and Shirin*, 2004:257)

Resemblance of standing up and sitting down to the wind and earth

In this bayt, Nizami focuses on the speed of wind and its acceleration, as well as the layout of the earth and its stillness. He longs to rise with the speed of the wind and to be laid down like the earth over the the tomb of the prophet:

“I can stand over the sacred tomb like a pilgrim,
I can lay on it like a dust and I can blow over it like a wind”

(Nizami, *The Treasury of Mysteries*, 2004: 17).

According to Nizami, another common feature of Man and the earth is manifested in the earth-like humility of the Man. Nizami advises the one to whom he appeals, to be as humble and polite as the earth when relating to others. And as for the wind, the feature of the wind is that it is always empty and leaves nothing to itself. So, according to Nizami a person should have empty hands and no friends when meeting others: “Let your softness please everyone like the softness of the earth,

May you always blow like a wind and may your hands always be empty. Nizami, *Treatury of Mysteries*, 2004: 17).

For understanding “the earth” in *The Knight in the Panther’s Skin*

V. Nozadze, after describing the meanings of “water” in *The Knight in the Panther’s Skin*, also presents the concept of “the earth”. He points out that the earth has always been a sacred notion for Man and it was even venerated as a deity; therefore, swearing an oath on the earth and its veneration was a natural custom in various cultures. All of this had an impact on *The Knight in the Panther’s Skin*.

Swearing an oath on the earth

The scholar brings here a few examples from the poem:

“I, Avt’handil, earth under your feet, am an archer before you” (67)

“Give ear! I, Avt’handil, earth beneath your feet, write this unto you;
With mine own hand have I written this epistle” (166),

The scholar notes with caution that “in both cases, I think we are dealing with swearing an oath on the earth.”

Earth – for veneration

V. Nozadze writes: “the reference here is made to falling down to the ground, kneeling, kissing the earth, bending one’s knees, bowing, and other such gestures that express veneration and respect before the king and the ruler in general ... It originates from religion, particularly from the deity of the earth, and the worship of other gods. When Tariel and Avtandil presented Phridon with precious armor as a gift:

“He laid his face to the ground, he wasted not time” (1384)

King Ramaz when appearing in front of Tariel

“He fell to the earth in obeisance to him” (1648);

Rostevan, the King of Arabia -

When he saw Tariel on his bended knees, the king was dismayed;

“he went back a long way, he did homage, he fell down to the earth” (1500) (Nozadze 2005:380)

Earth – as a grave

V. Nozadze writes, by citing a relevant example, that “the earth is referred to as a tomb or a grave:

“Unless she give me healing or the earth a grave” (15);

Shermadin tells Avtandil that life without him is worthless:

“It were better that the earth cradled me too than that I should have to think that thou art alone” (161);

Tariel tells the same to Asmath -

“If thou seest me a corpse, weep for me, sob ceaselessly,

Dig a grave for me, here let the earth cradle me” (297), and other examples (Nozadze 2005:381).

Returning to the earth ("earthing").

The scholar says about "earthing" that this term is used for making a comparison:

"Like a corpse he became lifeless, like earth he was brought to earth" (206);

Tariel also says about himself:

"Only I became as earth and cinders; my heart quivered to and from" (496).

In both cases "earthing" means silencing, muting, taking one's life away" –the scholar adds (Nozadze 2005:382).

Earth – as the world

"Just as in the modern Georgian language, in *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* the "earth" is used as a reference to the world.

Avtandil sends his message to Rostevan:

"All the face of the earth is subjected to you by your sword" (142)

Tariel also tells Rostevan:

"Formerly my sight of thy ground made you angry" (1481)

In both cases the word "earth" here means the world, or a country" – adds the scholar (Nozadze 2005:382).

Earth - in the sense of ground, soil, or land.

In regard to the "earth" the Nozadze writes: "in *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* the word 'earth' is used infrequently to mean 'earth, ground, soil' as such" and he gives only two examples for illustrating the point:

"He sat down and moaned bitterly, his tears were mingled with the earth" (334)

“I, alas! vain earth, what am I ? Of myself, what have I done?”(1029) (Nozadze 2005:382)

Finally, earth as a **union** - V. Nozadze here also names the strophe (1280) written by Nestan to Tariel.

Nizami, after a metaphorical understanding of the four elements, presents their role in the creation of the universe through the mouths of ancient philosophers. In *Iskandarnameh*, Iskandar (Alexander the Great) summons seven wise men and inquires about at what level the composition of the elements and their combination took place during the creation of the universe.

Aristotle

Aristotle answers that the motive cause is the source of existence and the center of creation. It moved slowly at first, then accelerated, and as a result the heaven emerged:

“Together with the movement of radiant bodies
The radiant heavens also emerged”

(Nizami, *Iqbalnameh*, 2004:101).

Here the circle formed the celestial levels by drawing itself to its own center, that is, the creation went from the outer layers towards the inner layers, and finally, the first of the four elements of circular motion – fire, emerged:

“Whenever the first drawing compass drew a circle
These high heavens were born of it.
Fire emerged out of the rotation of heaven,
And as is known fire emerges out of force in motion”.

(Nizami, *Iqbalnameh*, 2004: 101).

The second element - air - arose from the force of fire, gravity and motion. That is why the property of air is its fiery heat:

“Air was produced from the force of fire,
And air also flamed up like fire from the heat”
(Nizami, *Iqbalnameh*, 2004: 101).

The heat caused moisture to form in the air, and this systematic rotation produced droplets of pure water:

“Humidity was amplified in air,
Humidity itself could not move,
Its particles sedimented and turned into water,
That’s how pure and sweet water was created”.
(Nizami, *Iqbalnameh*, 2004: 101).

When water too became lentic, the element of earth was also created in the centre of the universe:

“The lentic nature of water created sediments
And the earth you see was created from that very sediment”
(Nizami, *Iqbalnameh*, 2004: 101).

Thales

Thales makes a speech following Aristotle. He argues that the primary principle the creation is a water similar to rennet and that water in the universe existed before anything else:

“I shall also tell you: the primary principle of the world
Before all, I think, is water.
Out of accelerated movement and commotion
The fire emerged,
Thunder separated fire from the steam,

And from this a humid air emerged.
Water gradually obtained density
And from this density the earth was created".
(Nizami, *Iqbalnameh*, 2004: 102).

Apollonius

Nizami calls Apollonius "Balinas". According to Apollonius, the earth is more important than any other element:

"Admit it, that the earth was created as a talisman,
All other elements proceed from it.
The force of movement has affected it,
When the fire was put out, the smoke emerged.
Stars were created out of its
Shining particles, I think.
All the heavy ones gathered
In the centre in the midst of smoke,
The first among them – is the bright fire.
It is the highest arc of the universe.
The second is the air, which is in motion,
If it does not move, its essence will be hidden.
The third is – water, which brings purity and joy,
It refreshes everything.
The fourth is the earth, which is pressed flat by time,
And dust comes out of its flattened breast."
(Nizami, *Iqbalnameh*, 2004: 102-3)

Socrates

According to Nizami, Socrates gives the first place to water in the creation of the world and names it as the primary principle and the source of all other elements:

“Before the page of the creation was open,
There was only one body and that was the Creator.
One cloud created power and beauty,
Its thunder and rain were useful.
Its rain produced heavens,
While the lightning fashioned the sun, the moon and constellation.
The steam in it sedimented all the substances.
And created this earth!” (Nizami, *Iqbalnameh*, 2004: 103).

Porphyry

Porphyry develops an idea that God first created an elixir. By the grace of the Creator that elixir united with water, i.e. the first among the four elements was water. Following this, part of the water mixed with elixir established itself on high, and the other part down below, in other words, one part of elixir formed the heavens and the other one shaped the earth:

“Elixir turned into water,
While this water split in two.
They remind us of musk and camphor,
Part was a substance and the other part a solid.
The substance began to move,
While the solid remained still.
The moving one turned into a bright sky,
While the still one became earth and ground”.
(Nizami, *Iqbalnameh*, 2004-104)

Hermes

According to Hermes, smoke (air) is the most evident and most dominant element over all of being. It seems that the goal of the

philosopher is to argue for the element of air/ether as being the first element.

“In my opinion these sea-sized heavens
Look like the clouds laid over the mountains.
Above these frightening smokes rests a
Very clean, pure and unblemished light.
This very curtain of smoke covers that light,
Therefore, only the beams of light can be seen
Through the openings of this curtain
The bright light comes occasionally.
The sun, moon and stars – all we see
We have them from that light”
(Nizami, *Iqbalnameh*, 2004: 105)

Plato

Plato in his turn is also interested with identification of the primary element. He contradicts the view that God created one of the elements in the beginning and the rest of them proceeded (“migamo”¹) from it; he defends the idea that each of the elements were created independently without the participation of the others:

“He created each element separately
And did not use one as a means for creating the other”
(Nizami, *Iqbalnameh*, 2004: 105-6)

After the philosophers expressed their views, the Iskandar (Alexander the Great) made a speech. He emphasized the diversity in philosophers’ views:

¹ The term belongs to Iane Petritsi – O. K.

“What are we supposed to explore
Until we explain the mystery of the creation?
You mentioned the papers with writings upon them about heavens,
Yet, all of you have read them differently.
The world was illustrated by that Only One,
Saying more will be in vain!” (Nizami, *Iqbalnameh*, 2004: 106).

Nizami starts talking after the king. In his view, God first created reason, and then everything was embodied through the light of this reason:

“The great Creator, no matter what He created,
Whether tall or short,
He would first create the reason
And enlighten it with His own light”.
(Nizami, *Iqbalnameh*, 2004: 107)

The the four elements as symbols and their symbolic use in poetry

Water and fire as the symbols of sorrow

The symbolic use of water and fire in the bayt below is very well presented. Water is a symbol of tears, and fire is a symbol of inner burning and a flame of woe:

“When the lover let out her sorrow under the shadow,
Her neighbour could not sleep at night.
She was trapped between fire and water,
The beautiful fairy had an enchanted face”
(Nizami, *Layla and Majnun*, 2004: 97).

In addition, Nizami uses two of the four elements, water and earth, in a different bayt, as symbols of wealth and prosperity. Elsewhere, fire is a symbol of sacred light, while fire and earth are symbols of the lover, and wind and earth are the symbols of the loved one. In the conversation between Khosrov and Shirin, Khosrow complains about Shirin's separation from him and asks the reason: Why is she so harsh, indifferent and cruel towards Khosrow? "Why do you run away from the fire like the wind? And that's when I am in front of you like a lowly earth? Why do you mix water with wine and drive me out?" (Nizami *Khosrow and Shirin*, 2004: 244).

Water – symbol of transparency, earth – the symbol of darkness

In the bayt below, water is a symbol of transparency, while earth is the symbol of darkness and humility. Nizami urges people who seek salvation and righteousness to be as transparent and pure as water on the dark earth:

"Turn the heart into clear water on the dry earth,
Attach your heart to the sincere wishes and the divine purpose".
(Nizami, *Treasury of Mysteries*, 2004: 82).

The examples given only propose an incomplete list of the different meanings, comparative analyses and metaphorical systems that Nizami grants to each of the four elements. We will list only a few of them: scattering earth upon one's head as an expression of a great sorrow, being helpless in the face of adversity; **purification by seven waters and earth** according to the scholars of religion, some items that come into contact with dirt should be cleaned with

cleansing agents, and thus, first of all, water and earth are considered. **Dispatching the earth with the wind** as a symbol of destruction, **the wind** as an expression of **nothingness and emptiness**. **Four Elements as a Means of Punishment** – in this verse Nizami promises the Shah in the mouths of his subordinates that even if he punish them either by drowning them in water, throwing them into the fire, or throwing them off the cliff upon the earth, it does not matter, they will not stop obeying him as their master.

“Whenever you step, we shall give up our lives there,
Your orders are the shining crowns on our heads.
Even if you give us to water or fire,
Our mind will still bow before your commands”.
(Nizami, *Sharafnama*, 2004: 227)

For understanding fire in *The Knight in the Panther's Skin*

Fire also holds an important meaning in *The Knight in the Panther's Skin*. In the direct context we encounter it in the episode of Avtandil hunting down a game and cooking it. Rustaveli is preparing us for it when the lover starts talking about Avtandil's worldly needs: **“yet he wished to eat, after the wont of Adam's race; he killed game with his arrow, with arm longer than Rostom's; he alighted on the edge of the reedy ground and kindled a fire with a steel”**; also, when Asmath makes fire in the cave: **“That maiden betook herself to the lighting of a gentle fire with steel”**, and when Avtandil and Tariel **“killed a goat and dragged it after them, they made a fire on the seashore”**.

In other cases, “fire” is an expression of the feeling of love and the intensity of sorrow: “when he saw her, the fires were renewed, his wound smarted more”; “I am consumed by love, unquenchable fire burns me”; “It was melancholy for me to see men, the fire flamed up

still more”; “The fire of yon knight burns me, the flame that consumes him afflicts me”.

Towards an understanding of air in *The Knight in the Panther's Skin*

V. Nozadze writes: “ἀήρ (Greek word), or air, according to Sulkhan-Saba Orbeliani is one of the four elements; born on the first day. It is a mixed substance, both moist and hot; heavier than fire and lighter than earth and water”. He brings another interpretation made by Sulkhan-Saba Orbeliani: “air means grace and elegance; graceful air of elegance is beautiful or a reference to a graceful image” (Nozadze 2005:251).

After this the scholar adds: “It is with this very definition that the word “air” is mentioned in the context of describing Avtandil - “Avt'handil is fair to beholders in his ethereal loveliness” (988). And the second example is - “the voice of their lamentation was like thunder in the air” (1000) (Nozadze 2005:251).

Conclusion

After discussing the examples related to the four elements in the works of Nizami and Rustaveli, we can say that by raising this issue, both poets are properly acquainted with the aesthetic-philosophical principles of the previous and contemporary epochs.

With Nizami, the four elements in the hands of the Supreme Being are, on the one hand, the material for the creation of the universe, and, on the other, each of them - water, earth, fire and air - are sometimes the subjects of comparison, sometimes of metaphor. As V. Nozadze notes, the abundance of examples corresponding to Nizami in comparison with Rustaveli is due to the large space and attention given to the four elements in all the poems. Namely: water is

compared to wine, and wine is compared to the water of paradise; water and fire combine in wine, and so on.

It is true that in Rustaveli's poem the process of "creation" is not presented in as much detail as it is in the case of "Nizami's philosophers" (he only shows the results: "made beings inspired from on high with souls celestial; to us men He has given the world, infinite in variety, we possess it"), He does not mention the "four unions" separately in the introduction either, but even in these condensed references everything is miraculous for the reader who is familiar with Genesis.

It is noteworthy that in the works of both poets, each element sometimes carries positive qualities depending on the context, sometimes even negative ones. Thus, the earth for Nizami is sometimes beautiful, for the kissing of which (veneration) the sky itself bows down, sometimes it is associated with humility, sometimes it symbolizes darkness and eternity. In Rustaveli's works also, it is sometimes sacred, sometimes a grave, etc. The same can be said of fire, water, and air, which are treated similarly by both poets, as we have attempted to show above: sometimes they are sacred, sometimes graves, and so on. The same may also apply to water and air.

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Iskandar and the Water of Life:

A note on Nizami's impact on later manuscript production

As noted in some recent papers by Firuz Abdullaeva,¹ the story of Alexander's search for the Water of Life is one of the most studied episodes in Alexander scholarship. Since the Middle Ages the Romance of Alexander has been in the centre of attention of writers, scholars and the general public. By now Alexander literature is already an industry on its own, as phenomenal, rich and abundant as the subject itself both in the East and the West. Among the first serious European scholars who dedicated a special study to Persian Alexander–Iskandar, the Alexander Romance in Persian literature, and particularly the evolution and metamorphoses of his image during the whole period of the Golden Age of Persian poetry, was Evgeny Bertels,² who gave the most detailed analysis and comparison of several major versions of this story from Bal'ami and Firdausi to Nizami, Amir Khusrav, and Jami.

In one of the latest publications on this subject Haila Manteghi also discusses the Persian versions of the Alexander legend as a whole,

¹ Currently unpublished papers, presented at a workshop at the Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures in Hamburg (3 March 2017), "Alexander in Persian Art: From usurper to saint", and "Alexander as Muslim Iskandar in Persian literature: from usurper to saint and prophet", at the 'Medieval Chronicle' conference in Lisbon (12 July 2017). These presentations, which cover the episode of the Water of Life among other elements of Alexander's vita, were intended for inclusion in R. Stoneman, ed. *A History of Alexander the Great in World Culture*, Cambridge: University Press, forthcoming.

² Е.Э. Бертельс, Роман об Александре, Москва-Ленинград, 1948 (E.E. Bertels, *Alexander Romance*, Moscow-Leningrad, 1948).

and then focuses on a particular story.¹ Similarly, many other studies of Islamic Alexander (Iskandar) are concerned primarily with the Arabic versions of the Romance, and with tracing the complex web of sources and the prototypes of their different elements, including Alexander's search for the Water of Life. Exemplary in this regard is Faustina Doufikar-Aerts's dense and thorough monograph elaborating the Arabic traditions of the Alexander story, with a section on the search for the Source of Life and its variants.² Only brief considerations are given to the Persian retellings of the Alexander legend and scarcely at all to those connected with the Water of Life or to the way it is embedded as an episode in Persian epic or romantic poetry.

The longevity of the idea of the source of life, the quest for immortality and the questions surrounding the transmission of different recensions and witnesses of these texts are discussed by Richard Stoneman,³ among others, harking back to the *Epic of Gilgamesh*. Although Stoneman is naturally aware of the Persian dimensions of the Alexander legend,⁴ his focus is mainly on the Alexander Romance stemming back to Pseudo-Callisthenes and particularly the Arabic aspects of the story – reflected in the Qur'an and elsewhere.

Beyond these important works that treat the Alexander Romance as a whole, are those that focus specifically on the episode

¹ Haila Manteghi, *Alexander the Great in Persian Tradition: History, myth and legend in medieval Iran*, London: I.B. Tauris, 2018, p. 127.

² Faustina Doufikar-Aerts, *Alexander Magnus Arabicus. A survey of the Alexander Tradition through seven centuries from Pseudo-Callisthenes to □ūrī*, Paris, Leuven & Walpole: Peeters, 2018, pp. 171-80.

³ Richard Stoneman, *Alexander the Great. A life in legend*, Newhaven & London: Yale University Press, 2008, pp. 150-54

⁴ *ibid.*, pp. 27-40.

Water of Life, notably the classic work of Israel Friedländer,¹ analysing and comparing all the different versions known to him. As is evident from the title, the role of Khizr (Khidr, or Khadir) is central to much of the discussion, and in fact this is the subject to which this brief study seeks to make a contribution. Aleksandra Szalc also discusses some of the origins of the story for the search for the water of life and proposes to identify connections with Indian mythology,² whereas Patrick Franke elaborates the role of Khizr as the source of poetic inspiration for later writers and specifically for the poet, Nizami of Ganja.³

The twelfth-century poet, Nizami Ganjavi (1140-1203), produced a much more substantial and developed version of the Persian renderings of the Alexander Romance than those by his predecessors – among whom should be mentioned the surviving prose version by Bal’ami and a part of Firdausi’s *Shahnama*, which was incorporated into the Persian Royal chronicle.⁴

Nizami’s *Iskandarnama* is divided into two books: the *Sharafnama* (‘Book of honour’), covering Alexander’s conquests and travels, and the *Iqbalnama* (‘Book of fortune’), which explores Alexander’s philosophical development. Together they form the final

¹ Israel Friedländer, *Die Chadhirlegende und der Alexanderroman. Eine sagesgeschichtliche und literarhistorische Untersuchung*, Leipzig & Berlin, 1913.

² Aleksandra Szalc, “In search of the Water of Life: The Alexander Romance and Indian mythology”, in R. Stoneman, Kyle Erickson and Ian Netton, eds. *The Alexander Romance in Persia and the East*, Groningen: Barkhuis & Groningen University Press, 2012, pp. 327-38.

³ Patrick Franke, “Drinking from the Water of Life – Nizāmī, Khizr and the symbolism of poetic inspiration in later Persianate literature”, in J.C. Bürgel and C. van Ruymbeke, eds. *A Key of the Treasury of the Hakīm. Artistic and humanistic aspects of Nizāmī Ganjavī’s Khamsa*, Leiden: University Press, 2011, pp. 107-25.

⁴ Bal’ami, *Tarikhnama-yi Tabari*, ed. Mohammad Roshan, Tehran: Soroush, 1999, pp. 485-95.

(or possibly the fourth) poem of Nizami's *Khamsa* (Quintet). The episode of Alexander's search for the Water or Source of Life and departure from the land of shades comes near the end of the *Sharafnama*.¹

Manteghi contributes a useful discussion of the Persian dimensions to the story of Alexander in the Land of Darkness in Nizami's *Iskandarnama*, which as she notes, has received many interpretations and analyses, from the cosmological to the sufi-mystical.² She sees the significance of the Water of Life episode to lie in its place in the Alexander narrative at the point of the hero's transition from the temporal life of world-conqueror to the spiritual life of acquiring spiritual wisdom – the start of his transformation from king to prophet, temporal to spiritual kingship.³

The idea of search of the fountain of life in the Persian Alexander Romance is of equal importance with Alexander/Iskandar's search of the meaning of life during his expeditions to the heavens and the bottom of the sea, i.e. the exploration of the whole universe, including his travels by land. What is even more important is that although in Nizami's interpretation Alexander is already not only an

¹ Nizami Ganjavi, *Sharafnama*, ed. E.E. Bertels, Baku, 1947, pp. 474-95. The passage has also been translated (barely comprehensibly) by Captain H. Wilberforce Clarke, *The Sikandar Nāma, E Bara, or the Book of Alexander the Great, written A.D. 1200*, London: W.H. Allen & Co., 1881, pp. 785-818.

² Manteghi, *Alexander the Great in Persian Tradition*, pp. 125-29. The former is elaborated in several articles by Mario Casari: see "Nizami's cosmographic vision and Alexander in search of the Fountain of Life", in J.C. Bürgel and C. van Ruymbeke, eds. *A Key of the Treasury of the Hakīm. Artistic and humanistic aspects of Nizāmī Ganjavī's Khamsa*, Leiden: University Press, 2011, pp. 95-105; Mario Casari, "The King Explorer: A cosmographic approach to the Persian Alexander", in R. Stoneman, Kyle Erickson and Ian Netton, eds. *The Alexander Romance in Persia and the East*, Groningen: Barkhuis & Groningen University Press, 2012, pp. 175-203.

³ This is a theme also developed by Firuza Abdullaeva, see n. 1.

obsessive conqueror of the Earth but even more, a wise ruler and even philosopher, his role in society is subordinate to the one of Khizr, a saint, a Sufi, a shepherd of human souls. That is why it was Khizr, not the King, who is granted the divine mission to discover the Fountain of life, i.e. the meaning of life which he would be able to share with other humans through mystical knowledge. Compared with Khizr, Iskandar, having concluded his journeys exploring all parts of the universe (earth, heavens and ocean), dies immediately after he concludes his last expedition – to the bottom of the sea. Even if he revealed the secret of life, he took it with him to grave. According to Piemontese, this happened because he saw in the bottomless water abyss the secret tunnel dividing our world and hidden world – hell.¹

The survey of Persian literary sources recognises that the earliest surviving account of Alexander's quest is by the epic poet Firdausi in his *Shahnama* (Book of Kings), dating from ca. 1010; the equivalent passage is very much shorter than Nizami's, even including his meeting the talking bird and encounter with Israfil that follow Alexander's emergence from the Land of Darkness.²

¹ A.M. Piemontese, "Sources and art in Amir Khusraw's The Alexandrine Mirror", in F. Lewis and S. Sharma, eds. *Necklace of the Pleiades: studies in Persian literature*, Amsterdam, 2007, pp. 31-45. Firuza Melville, "A Flying King", in Stoneman, Erickson and Netton, eds. *Alexander Romance in Persian and the East*, pp. 405-9, esp. p. 408.

² Firdausi, *Shahnama*, vol. VI, ed. Dj. Khaleghi-Motlagh and M. Omidshafar, New York: Bibliotheca Persica, 2005, pp. 91-96 [hereafter KM]; for a dated translation, see A.G. Warner & E. Warner, vol. VI, London: Keegan Paul, Trench & Trübner, 1912, pp.159-62; cf. trans. Dick Davies, *Shahnameh. The Persian Book of Kings*. With a foreword by Azar Nafisi, London & New York: Penguin Classics, 2007, pp. 511-14. Firdausi's treatment of the Alexander legend is discussed by Haila Manteghi, "Alexander the Great in the Shāhnāme of Ferdowsi", in Stoneman, Erickson and Netton, eds. *The Alexander Romance in Persia and the East*, pp. 161-74; see also eadem, *Alexander the Great in the Persian Tradition*, pp. 74-75, for a brief reference to the search for the Water of Life. In the 14th-century Alexander Romance

It is well known and explicitly stated by Nizami himself, that he was aware of Firdausi's work (along with many other sources) and aimed to elaborate and develop it. The contrast between these passages throws light on Nizami's poetry and the subtlety of his thought. We do not intend to enter into these questions of Nizami's sources and philosophy, already the subject of so much scholarly discussion, some of which is briefly alluded to above and can be pursued at length in their references cited. But it is an additional element of interest that an aspect of Nizami's version of events bled back into some illustrated manuscripts of Firdausi's *Shahnama*, and not only into the paintings but into the text itself; it is this previously un-noted point that is the main subject of this short contribution, and particularly concerning the presence of Khizr.

Iskandar and the search for the Water of Life (*āb-i haivān*)
in the *Shahnama*

In the *Shahnama*, the episode of the Water of Life is very briefly narrated, as mentioned. The role of Khizr is given as Alexander's guide, encountered and recruited in the city in the west, where the sun descends into the mysterious darkness:

انجمن آن نامداران سر	زن رای بد خضر آن اندر ورا
او ی پیمان به سپرده جان و دل	او ی فرمان به پیامد سکندر

(*Iskandarnama*), the episode is treated rather early in the narrative, see e.g. Evangelos Venetis, tr. *The Persian Alexander. The first complete English translation of the Iskandarnāma*, London: IB Tauris, ND, pp. 101-3; it is a short version, more akin to that found narrated by Firdausi.

*Khizr was his advisor in that [quest], head of all the notables in that assembly; Sikandar came at his bidding, pledged heart and mind to his command.*¹

Alexander tells Khizr to take a signet ring that will illuminate the way and lead ahead, while he will take the other and guide the army to follow on behind. As they draw near, the cry of 'God is Great' rang out.² After one more stage of the journey, Khizr proposed that they should leave all their provisions behind, and on the third day a division appeared on the way: the king (shah) became separated from Khizr (KM, p. 93, v. 1370):

راه دو اندر تاریکی به سدیگر شاه خضر از شد وگم آمد دیدی

Khizr travelled on and 'raised his living head to Saturn', and then, the crux of the story:

بشست وتن سر روشن آب آن بر نجست یزدان پاک دار جز نگه
زود گشت بر و بیاسود و بخورد فزود بر بافرین همی ستایش
رسید روشنایی سوی سکندر ...

[Khizr] washed his head and body in that bright water; he sought no guardian but pure God.

*He ate and rested and returned in haste, increasing his praises for the Creator. Alexander [however] came out [of the darkness] into the light*³

¹ *Shahnama*, KM, vol. VI, p. 92, vv. 1358-59.

² This obtrusive element of Firdausi's text may reflect the account, in some versions, that after immersing himself three times in the source, Khizr each time calls out the name of God – as mentioned by Doufekar-Aerts, *Alexander Magnus*, p. 175.

³ *Shahnama*, KM, p. 93, vv. 1372-74.

In short, Khizr found the source of life and Alexander did not, as was confirmed immediately afterwards by his encounter with the talking birds and the Angel of Death, presaging his imminent demise.

When it comes to the depiction of this episode in the illustrated manuscripts of the *Shahnama*, we find a remarkable disjuncture between text and image. While Alexander is shown departing for the Land of Darkness, with Khizr, reasonably consistently in the examples seen (see Fig. 1),¹ the same is not true of the following scene of the discovery of the Water of Life. On the contrary, there is only painting showing Khizr alone, in the manuscript D 377 in the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts, St Petersburg, a late copy dated 1138/1726, which is nevertheless close to the text (see Fig. 2).² A much earlier example, dated 929/1523, manuscript no. 2245 in the Gulistan Palace Library, Tehran, also shows Khizr alone (see Fig. 3),³ but holding a fish – a subject we shall return to shortly. All the other images so far examined, without exception, depict two figures at the source, both with fiery haloes and not, therefore, including Alexander – who is usually figured, correctly, passing by in the background and missing his way. The earliest clear example of this, in a manuscript dated 843/1440, is in the Khuda Bakhsh Library, Patna, India.⁴ Furthermore, in the majority of paintings, at least from ca. 885/1480 (see Fig. 4),⁵ one or two fishes are depicted in the stream, or in a dish, and probably in earlier examples too where the fish is not clearly discernible.

¹ For example, *Shahnama*, Sackler Gallery, S.1986.272, <https://asia.si.edu/object/S1986.272/>

² *Shahnama*, Institute of Oriental Manuscripts, MS D 377, fol. 337v.

³ *Shahnama*, Gulistan Palace Library, MS 2245, p. 689.

⁴ *Shahnama*, Khuda Bakhsh Library, MS H.L. 3788, fol. 367v.

⁵ *Shahnama*, Chester Beatty Library, Dublin, MS Per. 158, fol. 375r.

The question arises then, who is the extra character and what is the fish doing there – neither being mentioned in Firdausi’s narrative? The answer is straightforward and easily found: these elements are present in Nizami’s telling of the episode in the *Iskandarnama*.

Iskandar and the search for the Water of Life (*āb-i haivān*) in the *Iskandarnama*

Nizami’s version of the quest, though couched in considerably more elaborate language and explanatory comment, initially follows the bare outline of Firdausi’s tale.¹ Alexander recruits Khizr to lead the way and gives him a jewel (*gauhar*) that would glow when in the proximity of water (see Figs. 5-6).² He instructs Khizr to drink when he finds the shining water and return to tell Alexander of its whereabouts. The jewel does indeed help Khizr to see the source and when he does so, he strips off his clothes and bathes.³

چست کند بر جامه و آمد فرود شست پاک چشمه بدان تن و سر

Once he has drunk the water, Khizr becomes aware that Alexander will not do so, and he disappears.

¹ Nizami, *Sharafnama*, ed. Bertels’, pp. 484-85.

² Nizami, *Sharafnama*, Sotheby’s auction, Arts of the Islamic World, 7 October 2015, lot 255, <https://www.sothebys.com/de/auctions/ecatalogue/2015/arts-islamic-world-115223/lot.255.html> - the picture shows Khizr carrying the fish! See also, the Ottoman Turkish depiction of this scene in a different work, Mustafa b. Yusuf Erzurumu’s *Siyar-i Nabi* (‘Life of the Prophet’), which depicts the glowing jewels, in the New York Public Library, <https://nypl.getarchive.net/media/iskandar-and-khizr-on-a-mule-both-holding-shining-globes-that-light-their-way-0f083a>

³ *Sharafnama*, p. 485, v. 31.

one to the sea and one to the desert plain.¹ Alexander, realising he has become lost, wanders around for forty days before emerging from the shades of darkness (□ *ulmāt*) into the light, where he encounters a large bird that questions him, as charmingly depicted in a manuscript dated 902/1497 (see Fig. 7).²

The simple point here is, of course, that the artistic representation of the episode of Alexander's search in Firdausi's version has in fact, followed the text of Nizami's version and also the illustration of Nizami's text, as seen in several examples (see Fig. 8):³ a classic case of painters pursuing an iconographic tradition that has developed independently of the text. Firuza Abdullaeva has called this the 'wandering iconography of wandering stories', which she later coined as 'visual intertextuality', or 'intervisuality',⁴ of which there are several other examples, within the story of Alexander alone.⁵

¹ See also Casari, "Nizāmī's cosmographic vision", pp. 102-104; Franke, "Drinking from the Water of Life", pp. 109-12. It is generally considered that in Muslim tradition the basic allusion to the fish episode derives from Qur'an, XVIII (The Cave), suras 59-63 and later, concerning Dhu'l-Qarnain (that is, Alexander).

² *Shahnama*, Tehran University Library, MS 11555, p. 347.

³ Nizami, *Sharafnama*, Freer Gallery, Washington DC, MS F.1908.282 (1584), see <https://asia.si.edu/object/F1908.282/>; for other examples, see Freer F.1937.24, p. 336 (1480); Salar Jung, Hyderabad, MS 991, fol. 304r (1020/1611); National Library of Russia, St. Petersburg, MS PNS 66, fol. 406r (1058/1648).

⁴ F. Abdullaeva, "Kingly flight: Nimrūd, Kay Kāvūs, Alexander, or why the Angel has the Fish", *Persica* 23, 2009-2010, pp. 1-29 (p. 1).

⁵ Apart from the ascent of Kay Kavus into the heavens, we may also note the story of Alexander at the Ka'ba, as discussed by Marianna Shreve Simpson, "From tourist to pilgrim: Iskandar at the Ka'ba in illustrated *Shahnama* manuscripts", *Iranian Studies* 43, no. 1, February 2010, pp. 127-46, and the illustration of the funeral of Alexander in the *Shahnama*, in which his hand is sometimes depicted protruding from the coffin to show that he left the world as he entered it, with nothing – a detail not in the *Shahnama*, but found in Nizami's *Khamasa*; see e.g. *Shahnama*, Chester Beatty Library, MS Per. 270, fol.

What has yet to be considered is which manner of illustration came first, a question we cannot at present answer from the examples available to us – that is, whether there are illustrations of Khizr and Ilyas in a Nizami manuscript that predate any known example in a *Shahnama* manuscript and could have served as a model.

While this is interesting enough, though not exactly unusual, what has not been noticed previously is that in some *Shahnama* manuscripts, Firdausi's text has also been penetrated by Nizami's version, whether because the scribe sought to justify the depiction that followed, or simply because the presence of Khizr and Ilyas had been so absorbed into the transmission of the story that the scribe(s) incorporated these attractive, painterly details to improve Firdausi's poem.

Though not common, so far several examples have been noticed, all occurring within manuscripts dated between ca. 1485 and the end of the 16th century (see Figs 9–10). The interpolated verses are as follow:¹

بود شاه بر مقرب دو هر که	بود همراه الیاس نیز ورا
درست آمد الیاس نیز همان	بشست تن و سر انگه خضر بشد
نیاز بی بر گرفتند ستایش	باز گستند و آناب از خوردند چو

Ilyas was his companion, for both were attendants on the Shah.

Then Khizr went and washed his head and body; Ilyas too became whole.

83v (1066/1655); Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Munich, MS Cod. Pers. 10, fol. 518r (late 16th c.).

¹ *Shahnama*, Real Biblioteca, Madrid, MS II.3218, fol. 554r (901/1496); Free Library, Philadelphia, MS Lewis O. 52, fol. 499r (996/1588). Found with minor variants also in Metropolitan Museum, New York, MS 13.228.11, fol. 588r (996/1587); MET MS 13.228.14, fol. 571r (ca. 1600); Bibliothèque publique et universitaire, Geneva, MS o. 117, fol. 504r (late 16th century); and in Christie's sale on 26 October 2017, lot 83, fol. 24r (17th century).

*When they had drunk of that water and turned back,
They started praying to Him who lacks nothing [God].*

It will be noticed that the first verse is close to the equivalent verse in Nizami's *Iskandarnama*. The last verse is an adaptation of verse 1373 in the Khaleghi-Motlagh edition (VI, p. 93).

The two earliest examples found so far have only one interpolated verse, different from the above (see Fig. 11):¹

آنزمان خضر همراه الیاس بد وشادمان شاد آب همان او بخورد

*Ilyas was Khizr's companion at that time,
He too drank that water and [was] happy and joyful.*

Once more, an outstanding question remains, whether these interpolated verses ever occur in passages that have not been illustrated; there is, at least, no evidence of this in the copious critical apparatus of Khaleghi-Motlagh and Omidsalar edition of the *Shahnama* (VI, p. 93).

The present paper, then, is a good example of how visual imagery links different texts with the same story and characters and, in the specific case of Nizami, how his embellishment of Firdausi's treatment of the story of Iskandar and the Water of Life in turn influenced both the textual interpretation and its illustration in later manuscripts of the *Shahnama*.

¹ *Shahnama*, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, MS 73.5.590 (ca. 1485), where it is wrongly identified as a folio from Nizami's *Iskandarnama*, with an incorrect title: <https://collections.lacma.org/node/239744>. See also Bodleian Library, Oxford, MS Elliott 325, fol. 396v (899/1494).

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1. 'Iskandar and Khizr on horseback seeking the Fountain of Life', *Shahnameh* by Firdausi, Shiraz, ca. 1590-1600, S1986.272
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<p>کسی نیکو کردان بدین کار دل بیزوان پناهد بر آید کعبان جان و جان و جان برین سکا را چه داره خوش آنجو که بگوشه کسی را بخوردن بخند سر زنده گانی کوهان کشید</p>	<p>حسن گفتن کای مویزد بیزوانی گوروان پرورد کلی زان تو بر کرد و درین پسند ما که کعبان چو از نرسه نضر روستی</p>	<p>دل و جان سپه ده بر جان بسی برستش در کعبان تبار کی اندر تو م با سپاه خوش آمد آمد اگر ز نرسه</p>	<p>سکند همیشه لب مان اگر آب جوان بکعبان دو دهره است بکعبان دگر دهره باشد در اشع راه چو شکری بوی آب کعبان تیمش بدوشان سر زنده سه دیگر تاجی اندر راه بر آن آب من بر نرسه</p>
<p>رسیدن نضر بر آب جوان</p>		<p>بید آمد کعبان نضر کعبان بکعبان</p>	<p>بید آمد کعبان نضر کعبان بکعبان</p>
<p>تسایش بی افون بر فرد ستایش کنان پیش او کعبی رسته که نرسه نشسته ده بر نرسه بهب کعبه در آوند چو جو بی بی دین رای شینی او و آوند اگر جان دول بر نرسه</p>	<p>چو در بر سو در نرسه پس آنجا از نرسه کعبه روی رسته بزان هر طوری کعبه حسن گفتن نرسه ببرست کعبه جهان و نرسه در نرسه</p>	<p>ز دانی چو چشم انوار سکندر بر کرد کعبان نرسه بر کردون بر نرسه نرسه کعبان نرسه نرسه کعبان نرسه نرسه کعبان نرسه نرسه کعبان نرسه</p>	<p>چو نرسه است آب چو نرسه است آب نرسه بر نرسه نرسه بر نرسه نرسه بر نرسه نرسه بر نرسه نرسه بر نرسه</p>

2. 'Khizr at the Fountain of Life', *Shahnama* by Firdausi, 1138/1726, MS D 337, fol. 337v
© Institute of Oriental Manuscripts, St Petersburg.



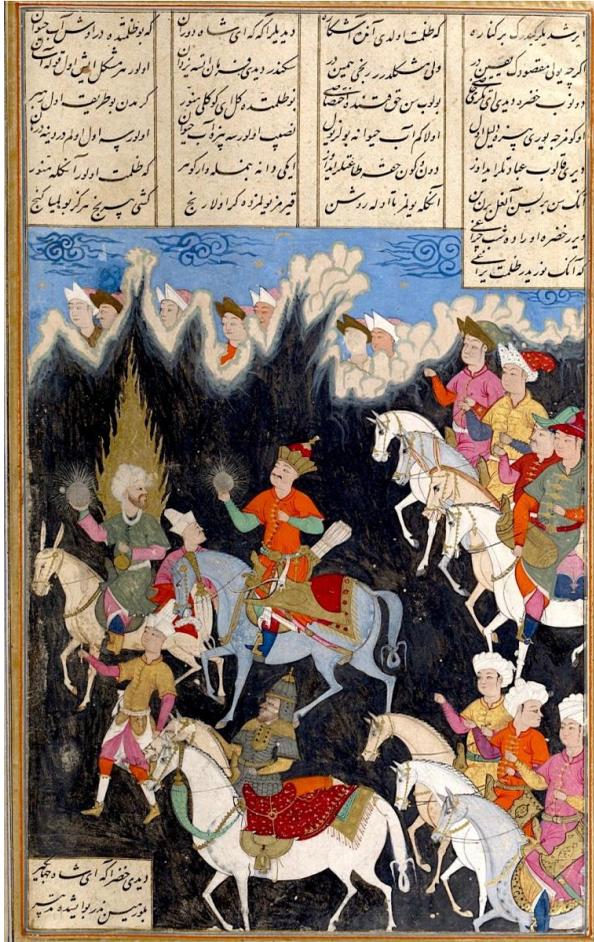
3. 'Khizr at the Fountain of Life', *Shahnama* by Firdausi, 929/1523, MS 2245, p. 689

© Gulistan Palace Library, Tehran. Here, Khizr is depicted alone, but holding the fish.



4. 'Khizr and Ilyas at the fountain of life', *Shahnama* by Firdausi, ca. 885/1480, Per. 158 fol. 375r

© Chester Beatty Library, Dublin. An early appearance of Ilyas together with Khizr at the Fountain of Life, while Iskandar passes by in the dark. The iconography of this painting can be compared with fig. 11, of a similar date.



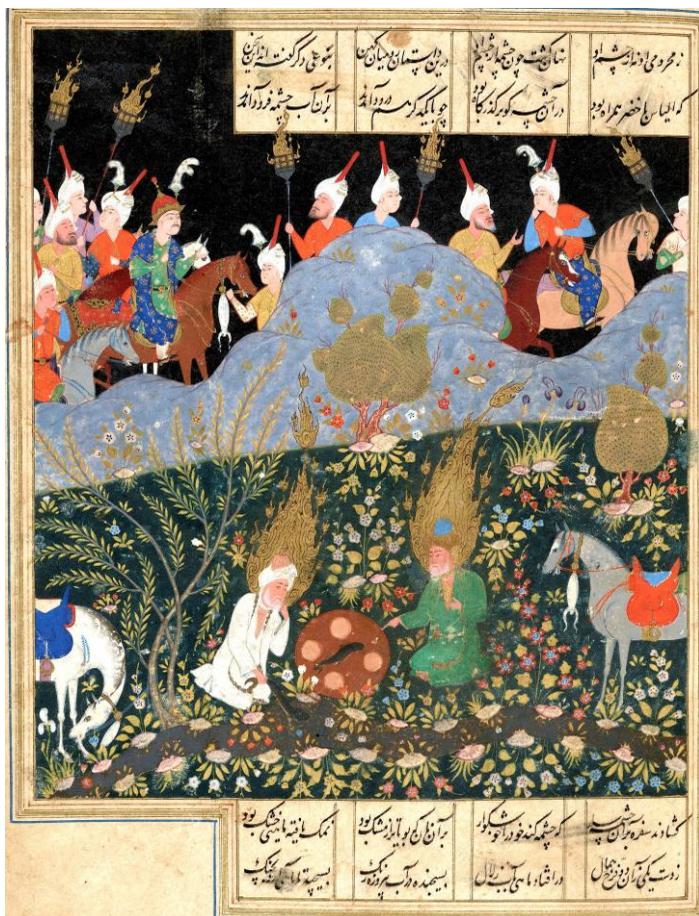
5. 'Iskandar and Khizr on a mule, both holding shining globes that light their way through the gloom, ride towards the Fountain of Life', Siyar-i Nabi ('Life of the Prophet') by Mustafa b. Yusuf Erzurum', written in 1388 for the Mamluk sultan al-Mansur 'Ala' al-Din 'Ali (d. 778/1376). Copied in 1595 by Lutfi Abdullah
 © New York Public Library
<https://nypl.getarchiv.net/media/iskandar-and-khizr-on-a-mule-both-holding-shiningglobes-that-light-their-way-0f083a>



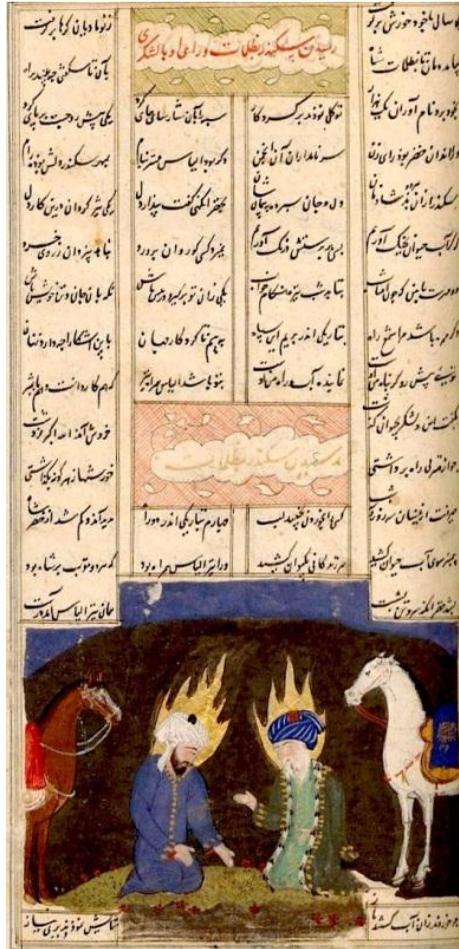
6. 'Iskandar observing Khizr putting a dried fish into the Water of Life', *Sharafnama* by Nizami, attributed to Mu'in Musavvir, Persia, Safavid, 1659, The Arts of the Islamic World, London, 7 October 2015, lot 255 © Sotheby's <https://www.sothebys.com/de/auctions/ecatalogue/2015/arts-islamic-world-115223/lot.255.html>



7. 'Iskandar leaving the darkness and encountering the talking bird', *Shahnama* by Firdausi, MS. 11555, p. 347
 © Tehran University Library. Khizr and Ilyas (not mentioned in the text) are still by the Fountain of Life.



8. 'Khizr and Elias at the Fountain of Life', *Iskandarnama*, Khamsa by Nizami, Shiraz, 1548, calligrapher Murshid al-Shirazi, F1908.282
 © National Museum of Asian Art, Smithsonian The Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Gift of Charles Lang Freer
<https://asia.si.edu/object/F1908.282/>



9. 'Khizr and Ilyas at the fountain of life', *Shahnama* by Firdausi, 901/1496, MS II.3218, fol. 554r
 © Real Biblioteca, Madrid, 885/1480. An early example of the text of the Shahnama with an interpolated passage from Nizami, concerning Ilyas accompanying Khizr.



10. 'Khizr and Ilyas at the Fountain of Life', *Shahnama* by Firdausi, 996/1588, Lewis O.52, fol. 499r © Free Library, Philadelphia: https://openn.library.upenn.edu/Data/0023/lewis_o_052/data/web/9527_0998_web.jpg



11. 'Khizr and Ilyas at the Fountain of Immortality', *Shahnama* by Firdausi, Iran, Shiraz, ca. 1485-95, The Nasli M. Heeramanek Collection, gift of Joan Palevsky, M.73.5.590
 © Los Angeles County Museum of Art,
<https://collections.lacma.org/node/239744>.
 Compare the iconography of this painting with Fig. 4.

Ethical Views of Rustaveli and Nizami

Maka Elbakidze
(Georgia)

Rustaveli's Conception of Love and Medieval Literature

Examination of the prologue of *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* reveals that the concept of love as formulated by Rustaveli is very specific and at the same time presents a completely new understanding of love with which the Georgian literature of previous times was unfamiliar. Academic literature rightly notes that the type of love described by Rustaveli is not a mere feeling, but is rather a clearly established public institution, an accepted form of relationship within certain circles, with publicly defined rules and more or less conventional forms of expression (Natadze 1966: 3). Therefore, this version of love is rather patrician – it belongs to the chivalric, aristocratic class and is defined by the clearly established code of mandatory properties (such as “Khaniereba” meaning constancy, humility, the endurance of love and the ability to keep it concealed, burning with passion, fainting and dying from afar, self-sacrifice for the loved one, suffering for love's sake, shedding tears of blood and “roaming the plains”). Service to the beloved is the foundation stone of the romantic relationship between couples, which requires not only a demonstration of military graciousness when fulfilling the commands of the beloved, but also includes praise of the beloved, and adorning her through poetic glorification (love is therefore necessarily linked with poetry¹). At the same time, love is a dignifying and inspiring

¹ The principle of the relationship between love and poetry that is outlined in the prologue of *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* (“*The poet must not spend his toil in vain. One woman should seem to him worthy of love; he must be devoted to that one, he must employ all his art for her, he must praise her, he*”).

feeling, laying a foundation for the formation of the lover as an upright person.¹ True love is also *limited* because it is awakened for one woman only.

As we see, the particular details of Rustaveli's concept of love on the one hand bears the obvious imprint of Eastern culture (the references to the main characters as lovers, [the Georgian word for which, *Mijnuri*,] derives from an Arabic word and means someone who is maddened by love; the motifs of suffering for love's sake expressed through the shedding tears of blood, of having one's heart pierced and wounded, of desiring one's own death, roaming the plains etc.), is on the other hand nourished by the themes of European Courtly love (the noble origin of love, service to the beloved, silence and patience, the power of love to stimulate and incite heroic acts

must set forth the glory of his beloved; he must wish for much else besides, for her alone must his tongue be tuneful") shows considerable similarity with the point of view taking shape in the poetry of the early troubadours and trouvères, according to which the lover is required to praise his beloved in poetic speech. "It is impossible to be a poet and not to love", - declares the 12th-century Provençal poet Bernart de Ventadorn, - "but it is impossible to be genuinely in love without this sentiment giving rise to a fine song in your heart" (Shishmarev 1965: 196). Nizami Ganjavi holds the same view, who emphasizes in his *Layla and Majnun* that love not only clouded Majnun's mind, but also inspired him to create poetry loaded with poetic adornment.

¹ Compare it with Andrey Mikhailov's definition of the knight-lover in European courtly romance: "Young hero (=knight) in search of moral harmony" (Mikhailov 1976; 133). Here we can also give the example of the gradual transformation of the main character in Nizami Ganjavi's *Khosrow and Shirin* under the influence of the power of love. In the beginning of the work, Khosrow certainly loves Shirin, but loves her selfishly - he wants to take everything without giving anything in return. The whole poem is, in fact, a series of disappointments of a woman who is heartbroken by the unworthy behaviour of her lover, but in the finale of the work Shirin wins: she manages to completely transform Khosrow and reach the ideal she created in her dreams (Bertels 1962: 228).

etc.). Yet, the conventional motifs, which are typical for both concepts, are encountered in Rustaveli's work only as readymade formulae, which are given a different interpretation as a result of literary revision.

Arab Sources

Amorous torments, seen as a malady and an affliction, are among the most important conventional motifs that determine both the structural and conceptual features of the *Knight in the Panther's Skin*.

Tinatini is the first among the characters of Rustaveli's *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* to speak about such a malady, when she makes a declaration of love to her beloved, Avtandil: "*The malady which afflicts me, as a plague*" (Rustaveli 1966: 126)¹, but further development of the action makes it clear that the malady of love differs from physical maladies or diseases both in quality and forms of expression. When another character of Rustaveli's romance, Tariel, faints upon seeing his beloved Nestan-Darejan, for the first time, and doctors are summoned to cure him, the latter are unable to conceal their surprise at the unusual state of the sick man. "*What manner of sickness is this?*" they ask and conclude: "*Nothing medicable afflicts him; some melancholy has laid hold of him*" (340). It is clear that the doctors draw this conclusion from their observations of Tariel's condition: "*Sometimes I leaped up like a madman, I uttered idle words*"

¹ In any case we cite the text: Shota Rustaveli. *The Man in the Panther's Skin*. A close rendering from the Georgian by Marjory Scott Wardrop. Tbilisi: "Literatura da Khelovneba", 1966.

(340). This reflects the spiritual problems of the sick man rather than any physical weakness.

In general, the malady of love was known in all times and in all countries, but Arabic medicine paid particular attention to it. Arab doctors regarded the malady of love as a disease caused by love that ended in madness or even death. An Arabic anthology tells a story of an enamoured man, who asks a poet what a man in love has to do. The poet answers that he should conceal his love, tolerate grief, and be humble, obedient, and modest, but if he is unable to endure love, the only desirable path is torment. The enamoured man says that he will obey the poet, but he can no longer continue to live, so he asks him to make his lamentable story known to the person who set his heart on fire. He says he will lie down on the threshold of her home and kill himself, adding that he will be happy if the day of resurrection brings them together again (Humbert 1819: 42).

Presenting the suffering from love as an incurable malady obtained a special literary and aesthetic meaning in the poetry of the Bedouin tribes of Central Arabia in the 7th and 8th centuries, which praised the immaculate, Platonic love between two tragic lovers separated by fortune. Some researchers said the kind of love described in Udhri poetry was a Bedouin version of the fin'Amor (sacred love) of French Troubadours (Filshtinsky 1977: 159). In this respect the most distinguished was the **Udhrah** tribe, which was a nomadic tribe travelling from Medina towards the North around the Wadi al-Qura area. The poets of this tribe wrote verses on a fatal and almost mystic love that could bring only ordeal, with death being the only possible way out of it. Correspondingly, Udhri poetry was full of fatalism, endless melancholy, and impending doom. All these poets had only one beloved woman, who was an ideal. They tried to free themselves of the captivity of sexual desires, give their feelings the force of divine inspiration, and set them forth as an ideal (Filshtinsky 1977: 201-215).

As it was Allah who gave the poet this fatal feeling, it was impossible to get rid of it. The following words of a Bedouin poet are well known: *"I belong to the tribe, whose men die as soon as they fall in love"*. It is clear that the poet implies the Udhri tribe. The poets and men of the tribe believed that love was not only an all-encompassing feeling, but life itself. (Cf. Nizami Ganjavi: *The beauty of life is in sacrificing one's own life, as a lover deems it impossible to be separated from his beloved. Love is neither passion nor malady. It is the reason for man's existence* – Rafili 1947: 65)¹. According to the **Udhri** poets, the souls of lovers are going to meet in the eternal kingdom, where they will find eternal happiness. Therefore, the **Udhri lyrics were permeated with fatalism, endless grief, hopelessness and at the same time with an infinite loyalty to the loved one**. Every poet had only one object of affection, an ideal woman, whose idealization drove these poets to such a condition that the physical woman was relegated to the background, and love attained a rather abstract character, it can even be said that it became a form of religious devotion: "this love was so pure that the **Udhri** love secured its place in Arabic literature as synonymous with Platonic love... It was precisely this tradition that laid the foundation of that literary concept according to which the **Udhri ghazal** was molded, and the poets who followed this tradition were referred to as **Udhri** lovers regardless of their tribal belonging. This term became somewhat generalized and instead of signifying the

¹ The same opinion can be found in the following words by Guillaume IX, Duke of Aquitaine, a troubadour of Provence, who lived on the turn of the 11th and 12th centuries: *"Love brings death and youth"* (Stapleton 1996: 75), the version of *Tristan and Isolde* by Gottfried von Strassburg: *"Isolde, my favourite Isolde, my friend: You are my death, you are my life"* (*The Book of Tristan and Isolde* 1984: 42), and *The Knight in the Panther's Skin*: *"My joy is death, the severance of flesh and soul"* (268).

ethnic origin, it pointed to the specific literary concept that this poets followed” (Gardavadze 2018: 56).

What is the essence of this poetry? – First of all, *death for love’s sake*, which is merged with motifs such as *concealing one’s love*, representing it as a *malady*, which cannot be cured by medication and which takes away mind and strength from human beings and renders them powerless. Love visits the poet unexpectedly, puts him through terrible torment and even drives him, occasionally, into madness. Poets compare the feeling of love with hot firebrands, with flaming fire, heated iron, a trap, into which the helpless prey finally falls. A lover sheds her tears over the separation from the loved one, she kisses the earth that were touched by his feet, walks in places where he enjoyed walking, and loses consciousness.

From the 8th century on, we encounter *Udhri* love stories in every famous philological edition of collected works or anthologies; we find them in either fully or fragmented forms, in different versions, relying on different oral or written sources, and they are increasingly enriched by new poetic or prosaic versions. The most noteworthy among these works is *The Book of Songs* by the famous literary scholar, writer, historian, musicologist and poet of the Abbasid Caliphate, Abu al-Faraj Ali ibn Al-Husayn Al-Khatib Al-Iṣfahānī. The author seems to have employed dozens of the written sources of his predecessor as well as the oral stories of his contemporaries. The existence of such stories filled the gap of epos in Arab literature. All these traditions were included within the frameworks of certain schemes:

1. The poet, at an early age, falls in love with the beautiful young woman from his own tribe; the love arise at first sight and stays with him until death;

2. The enamoured poet dedicates his poems to the object of his affection; in these poems only one woman’s name is mentioned. The

Udhri poets became famous for dedicating their poems to a single woman;

3. Their love is pure and sublime. Therefore, the lover has to “faint from afar”; this is of necessity takes the form of a constant longing, wedded to the “obliviousness” of the loved one, thus placing fortune between the lovers; their separation is a fatal yet inevitable necessity;

4. The lover has to hide his own “suffering”. He has to suffer all his life and endure the pains brought about by love;

5. The parents and family of the loved one turn down the lover’s proposal giving him various reasons when he is asking her hand in marriage;

6. A benefactor will emerge, who wishes well to the poet, usually, he is a nobleman or someone occupying a special status in upper class society; he either himself or via another influential person tries to interfere and help the lover marry his loved one, yet all his attempts are in vain;

7. The relatives of the woman, annoyed by the persistence of the poet, complain to the local governor or even to the Caliph;

8. In order to protect the woman’s dignity, she is given in marriage to somebody else. Fortune and circumstance separate the lovers forever;

9. The poet loses his mind out of his boundless love, he heads off far away from home, flees people, takes refuge in desolate places and constantly remembers his loved one. The malady of love leads him to the verge of death;

10. Both the poet-lover and his loved one die of sorrow for one another¹ (Gardavadze 2018: 125-143).

¹ Many scholars tried to see the above listed motifs in Rustaveli’s *The Knight in the Panther’s Skin*. A professor of Baghdad University, Jaleel Kamal Al Adh-Din identifies directly Rustavelian love with that of the *Udhri* in his article

Nizami's Majnun

The main motifs of the *Udhri* lyrics acquired greater meaning and depth in Sufi poetry. The follower of Sufism could not experience divine love until he was tempted by God through carnal love. Therefore, the Sufis in their sermons used the examples of those *Udhri* lovers who loved their chosen ones selflessly. Among the *Udhri poets* ***the Sufis still accorded a special honour to Majnun, who was named as the ideal lover, and his madness was considered as the symbol of his blessed divine vision*** (Gardavadze 2018: 85-87).

Arabic sources described the person of Majnun differently. Some Arab theoreticians believed he was a historical person, a poet, whose poems have reached us in our time. They think that these poems were created by one of the members of the Umayyad Dynasty who chose to hide his identity. Other scholars think he is a fictional character. According to the traditional reports, the real name of Majnun was Qays ibn Al-Mulawwah and the story of his tragic love was passed on from generation to generation.

“Arabs in the ancient Georgian literary legacy”. In his opinion the suffering of the characters in *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* is similar to the suffering of an Arab who is maddened by love. Even their attitudes to this feeling is similar to that of an Arab. The Arabic background of the whole story further secures his opinion. Yet, it should be mentioned that the comparative analysis between the normative schemes of the Arabic accounts of the *Udhri* poet-lovers and the plot of *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* shows that typologically these are two different schemes and, even though the similarity is evident on the level of particular components, and certain episode lines also coincide with each other, but if the composition of *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* is based upon the motif of “loss-search-finding”, the skeleton of the composition in the other is “falling in love – fatal and eternal separation – dying of love”. Therefore, the similarity between them, as tangible and particular it may be, still remains superficial. (Gardavadze 2018: 152-153).

According to *The Book of Songs* by Abu al-Faraj al-Isfahani, the story of Majnun can be attributed to the end of the 8th C., and his poems to the fine examples of *Udhrī* poetry. Although the adventure of *Layla and Majnun* enjoyed an enormous popularity among people, within the Arabic literary tradition it developed in a somewhat fragmented manner. These romantic adventures were first collected, put in a literary form and presented as a complete piece of work by Nizami – the greatest poet of the East.

This poem by Nizami constitutes an apology of an unearthly love; it is the hymn to that love which is not destined to flourish in this world, and for the victory of which one has to suppress and destroy one's own ego completely. Nizami was already a committed Sufi when he was writing *Layla and Majnun*. He built his other poem *Treasury of Mysteries* on the principles of Sufism, while in *Khosrow and Shirin* he portrayed one of the main characters, Farhad, as one who is madly in love with Shirin (Farhad tells Khosrow: "I can share Shirin's bed only after I shall no longer be alive" (Todua 1974:8)). Yet, in *Layla and Majnun* Nizami chooses an extremely original way: "Nizami utilizes the Sufi concept of love as a symbol, whenever needed. However, he predominantly draws upon the Udhrī doctrine of love. It is the main root, the indispensable source from which he draws the expression of his social, philosophical, Sufi, artistic and aesthetic thoughts. It also helps to solve the problems of time and humans, humans and fate" (Rustamova 2020: 359). Consequently, "the passion of Layla and Majnun, which has not found its fulfilment in this life, is not an unlucky love, but an ideal romance, through which a human being achieves perfection by rejecting his own being, his own ego. (Todua 1974: 8).

The poem shows, in sequence, how Majnun's love gradually turns into all-encompassing passion from which he cannot free himself; only death can be its finale. Here is presented that same

general and principle contour for the development of love which generally characterizes medieval lyrics. The basic steps in the development of love, which are based on the theoretical and philosophical thought and the ethical belief of that time, are presented distinctly and tangibly. The love of Qays grows from the soil of daily life. (Qays and Layla meet each other at school; love sparks in their hearts there. Their classmates are continually gossiping about them, and soon the story of their love “extends to heaven and earth, seized upon by the gossips in the square – the tender secret...revealed” (Nizami: 20)¹, gradually the flame of love arises, (Qays “appeared now here, now there” (22)), intensifies (“Qays was called *Majnun* “When he passed by, people around him shouted: “look, the Madman, Majnun is comig, Majnun!” (22)). Later their love passes beyond earthly understanding, and manifests itself beyond the real. According to Eastern mysticism, an insane person is closer to truth and closer to God than a reasonable one, or than a wise man who is concerned with the troubles of this world. Truth (God) cannot be conceived through one’s mind. It requires a great feeling, which will embed into one’s “I” and conquer it completely. Therefore, this is the stage of love, when this all-encompassing feeling that took over a person has to defeat the cold mind (Javelidze 1972: 105). “Layla – the beloved is the manifestation of God. Here, Majnun sees God in Layla's image and expresses his love for God through her. The character of Layla and the love for her are a metaphor here, and function as a bridge to reach both truth and God” (Rustamova 2020: 359).

¹ In all cases, the following edition is used: Nizami Ganjavi. The Story of Layla and Majnun. Translated from the Persian and edited by Dr. R. Gelpke. English version in collaboration with E. Mattin, G. Hill. London: Bruno Cassirer Ltd: 1966.

https://archive.org/stream/TheStoryOfLaylaAndMajnun/Leyla%20and%20Majnun_djvu.txt

If we imagine these steps (stages) of the development of love in relation to the state of the lover, it will become obvious that falling in love causes contamination by the malady of love, the expressions of which are found in the following symptoms: fainting, loss of consciousness, moaning, sighing, melancholy, paleness, trembling, fear, and the like. Tariel, while telling the story of his falling in love, says: "I saw the maiden (Nestan) and a lance pierced my mind and heart" (332). It is obvious, that the occasional fainting of Tariel when he was recounting his adventure or when he saw Nestan for the first time, and also when he saw the letter of his loved one wrapped in the edge of her veil, were nothing but a representation of a normal condition of a roaming knight (compare it with Qays' falling in love - He tried, but his heart was no longer at one with his reason. If reason asked him to avoid his love, his heart fell ill with longing for her. Away from her, Qays found no peace, yet searching her out was to imperil both (Nizami: 21), or the reaction of Farhad to seeing Shirin and hearing her voice: "When Farhad had to hear her word, his stomach started boiling and he screamed as loudly as he could, he became unconscious and fell down to the earth" (Nizami).¹

¹ Ibn Hazm describes a similar condition in his *The Ring of the Dove: "Love's painful sickness rends that heart"* (Ibn Hazm: 2006). Ovid uses similar terms in Chapter IX of Book II of his *Elegies* when he addresses Cupid: *What joy has a barbed arrow in being blunted on bone? Love's left my bones stripped naked of flesh* (Ovid 1987: 97). Andreas Capellanus proclaims the same thing in Chapter 15 of his *Rules*: *"Every lover regularly turns pale in the presence of his beloved. When a lover suddenly catches sight of his beloved, his heart palpitates"* (Nozadze 1975: 182).

Troubadour poetry

The idea of love and falling in love as a malady was recognized by the European troubadours and Minnesingers of the 11-12th centuries, whose work was very much influenced by the romantic elegies (*Amores*) and *The Art of Love (Ars Amatoria)*¹. They critically transformed Ovid's erotic poetry and dressed it in feudal attire, and also agreed that love was a malady. Such inter-textualism is definitely part of the phenomenon that the literary criticism of the mid 20th century described as Fin'amors (this is how French Troubadours called the love they glorified in their songs). It should be said that this poetry is also characterised with certain elements of erotica, but it rarely resorts to Ovid's sardonic tone and the cautious sexuality felt in its verses, shrouded in the veil of euphemisms, is rarely obvious and picturesque. From the conditionalities of Ovid, Troubadour poetry inherited the approach to love as an omnipotent force able to make a slave out of a man (*That's it: a slender arrow sticks fast in my heart, and cruel Love lives there, in my conquered breast. Shall I give in: to go down fighting might bank the fires? I give in! The burden that's carried with grace is lighter* – Ovid 1987: 54). The courtly lover also had to work and serve his mistress, but if he failed to win her favour, he was supposed to suppress his despair in weeping, suffering, and lamentation. Gottfried von Strassburg regarded both love and malady

¹ Ovid's authority has not been wounded in the slightest by either his exile from Rome or by the battle against his writings. Although all the books by Ovid disappeared from libraries, people still read them and imitated him. In the Middle Ages he was considered as the second poet after Virgil, yet, when speaking about romantic poetry, no one could rival Ovid. Medieval society understood the ideas of his ironical-didactic poetry as much as Roman readers did; his *Ars Amatoria* on the art of love and seduction found a milieu just as receptive in Languedoc of the end of the 11th c. as it had in the 1st century Rome.

as characteristic features of the amorous state. He thought that a person in love simultaneously possessed the sentiments of joy and suffering, being in the state of ordeal and felicity at the same time. Pierre Vidal said that he preferred to be feeble and experience trouble and torments rather than be happy with someone else. Bernart de Ventadorn was of the same opinion: *"This love wounds my heart with a sweet taste, so gently, I die of grief a hundred times a day and a hundred times revive with joy. My pain seems beautiful, this pain is worth more than any pleasure; and since I find this bad so good, how good will be the good when this suffering is done"* (Stapleton 1996: 69-80). One more maxim by Ovid can be read between the lines in the passages quoted above: *We always strive for what's forbidden: want what's denied: so the sick man longs for the water he's refused* (Ovid: 1987: 124).

Madness and Roaming the Wilderness

Getting sick with love is followed by amorous torments, madness and roaming the wilderness¹. The ordeal is so all-encompassing and unbearable that people in love are unable to remain locked within the prescribed boundaries, so they go beyond the limits of the locale and soar closer to the highest point of madness (Majnun

¹ Compare with Farhad, who although is not looking for the lost lover, yet his flight to the wilderness is the result of his hopeless love. Therefore, he becomes like both Majnun and Tariel through his madness and his longing for solitude. However, it is noted in the relevant literature that Farhad expresses his love not by passive weeping and flight into the wilderness, but he fights actively for the acquisition of this love (breaking of rock) (Kuli-Zade 1987:130).

compares his love with a wild bird that violently tears his heart to pieces with its sharp claws).

A person who is the prisoner of his own feelings and is roaming in the wilderness, cuts off his ties with the world. His worldly existence is limited to his physical presence alone. He is ready to make spiritual contact with the heavenly realm. The clear example of this is Majnun, who after his separation with Layla flees into the wilderness, weeps, cries, avoids people and communicates only with animals. His madness reaches its climax when he asks an elderly beggar to carry him from door to door with a rope tied around his neck. Reaching the Layla's doorstep, he bangs his head on it, covers the gate with kisses, sings the heart-breaking song of love, then he breaks his chains, flees back to the wilderness and finds shelter in the desert once again. This episode symbolizes the fact that the link between Majnun and human society is already broken and his adventure will no longer reach a happy ending (Bertels 1962: 269). From now on love is supposed not to simply make him mad, but also eliminate and destroy his personal identity. Love is going to burn him into ashes. At this stage of the development of love the individual differences between the lovers should be abolished, they need to become a unified individual and become the general "I". This is well documented in the episode when Majnun sees a paper hanging on the wall, where the names of he and Layla are written, and tears off that piece of the paper where Layla's name is written. When Majnun is asked about the reason for such an act, his answer is: "One name is enough for both...One can see the shell, but not the kernel...The name is only the outer shell and I am this shell, I am the veil" (132). Therefore, Majnun's love reaches this level of perfection. His soul merges with Layla's soul and thus they unite. Here Nizami comes very close to the Sufi ideal of "merging". From now on Majnun is no longer Qays, he is only a "shell", in which lives his ideal – and she is even more dazzling and beautiful than the

Layla who exists in everyday reality. It is precisely because of this that he perishes and gives up his place for that ideal image, which lives within him. Majnun goes to Layla's grave, falls down on it and gives up his soul while whispering the name of his beloved:

“Two lovers lie awaiting in this tomb.
Their resurrection from the grave's dark womb.
Faithful is separation, true in love
One tent will hold them in the world above” (213),

This is how Nizami's poem ends. The lovers are merged, yet not in a form anticipated by a modern reader. In the finale of the poem, the tragic death of the main characters is the final stage of the development of love in Eastern literature – lovers leave this world, their souls are certainly going to meet in the kingdom of absolute beauty. This was the medieval Eastern understanding of the essence of love and the way of its perfection: “love emerges on a real soil on earth, then it gradually distances itself from human life and becomes abstract in the ideal realm, while finally it elevates itself to the level of discerning absolute beauty” (Javelidze 1972: 108-109).

The motif of roaming in the wilderness is the key not only in the Eastern but also in Medieval Western European, as well as in the Georgian secular literature of the classical period. Tamar's historian, the author of *The Histories and Praises of a Crowned Monarch* considers this motif to be the inevitable feature of a perfect lover. According to the Georgian translator of *Visramiani*, roaming in the wilderness is a duty of lovers, as they cannot possibly prove the degree of their feeling without it. In case of eulogists, this motif is reduced to the function of a trope, yet it also appears in the image of freedom from conventionalism (the episode of a travelling poet) (Natadze 1965: 81-84). As about *The Knight in the Panther's Skin*, here fleeing from men and merging with the “wild” environment have three major

functional meanings: 1. It is linked with love and identified with “roaming the wilderness” – “If the lover weeps for his beloved, tears are his due. Wandering and solitude befit him, and must be esteemed as roaming (31); “Since a true lover is destined to suffer alone, I leave you, to roam like a madman weeping my heart out in anguish. Lovers must boldly go forth and seek brave quests for their loved ones. (775). Correspondingly, for a desperate and maddened lover the forest, a wild environment, represents a kind of refuge where he can live in solitude plunging into his thoughts – “Maddened I roam in the forests, worn out and faint from weeping” (638); 2. As in chivalric romances the forest (the antithetic environment of the court) appears as that lineal space on which the knight-errant’s “path” on his quest for adventures progresses and in the depth of which the process of forming his personality is to be fulfilled. The notion of the “roam” which corresponds to the word [gachra] in the “Knight in the Panther’s Skin” is connected either with the fulfillment of a lover’s errand (“When a lover would roam the fields, alone he must wander”) (161) or danger (“Better is it to roam forth to seek her”) (568). Both in the first and second case a strange space which is neutral, uninhabited and homeless (“He arrived in a certain dreadful country, exceeding rough,/ For a month he saw no man, no son of Adam” (182)) acquires a significant symbolic connotation because it is just here that the story of the knight’s quest is to be developed. 3. Just as in European chivalric romances, the forest is a space between centers of civilization (the court /fortress) and its function is to show vividly the contrast which is necessary for differentiation of the structural unit of the “quest” or adventure from those other structural units such as the feast, hospitality, etc..

Like Majnun, Tariel "roams the wilderness" after he loses Nestan, but this state is not yet the madness that would motivate the knight to turn his back against human society and race among the wild

beasts. Despite the misfortune that befell him, he is still able to suppress the painful emotions that torment him, mobilise his forces, and bear the difficulties of his life without batting an eyelid: "*I said to myself: 'Die not! To lie idle is of no avail; better it is to roam forth to seek her, to run and wander in the fields'*" (568). On making this decision, Tariel "quickly mounts his horse" and, together with 160 fighters, departs to search for his lost beloved. He crosses seas and fields, reaches all four sides of the world, but in vain. However, the knight nevertheless stubbornly continues to search for her and only after another attempt to roam the whole world proves to be futile, he loses hope and leaves the "community of men", starts wandering in the fields, and clad in the panther's skin, finds shelter in a remote cave. From now on, Tariel is driven by only one desire – to leave this world as soon as possible, so that he could unite with his separated beloved at least in the other world – with the woman, who was the meaning of his life and who, he thinks, is now dead. The difference between Tariel's and Majnun's madness and quest for death is that it is enough for Tariel to see Nestan's letter wrapped up in her veil, to believe that his lover is alive; the lost hope revives in the person, who "loses consciousness" from unexpected joy and receives the impetus to live and act. From that moment, Tariel relies again on his courage and power in reaching his goal. A delay is equal to death for him, so his madness and craziness are temporarily suppressed, giving place to "reason" and cold calculation. "Smiling and joyful", he is ready to start a perilous journey full of troubles.

The aforementioned does not mean that Tariel is no longer "mad". His madness is due to the loss of the woman he loves and is going to end only after he finds her. Madness follows the track of "reason" for some time, just as it did when he learned about the loss of Nestan. The motif of roaming the wilderness is also significantly weakened here, as the locale where the knight has to act becomes

limited and "circular" again¹. Together with his sworn brothers, Tariel heads to the fortress of Kajeti in order to regain Nestan and, together with her, the love and spiritual peace he lost. The knight, who returns victorious from Kajeti becomes invincible again. After he unites with the woman he loves, his madness disappears and the motif of roaming the wilderness is no longer necessary. "The psychological motivation, which is the main line in the poem, is superior to conventionality found in Tariel's madness" (Natadze 1966: 135).

Roaming the wilderness as a conventional motif can also be encountered in *Yvain, the Knight of the Lion* by the medieval French author Chretien de Troyes. In this romance, the knight becomes mad after he breaks his word and is deprived of the magic ring of his wife, which means that he is deprived of the right to return to the person he loves and the right to love her. The knight, who is horrified by this disaster, has only one way out - to find shelter in a wild forest, because being angered and on the verge of madness, is unable to tolerate the world of people with its order, tedious everyday life, and its strictly defined etiquette. The only aim of the mad knight is to isolate himself as soon as possible from the world that knew him as an unrivalled and invincible knight and remain in oblivion in uninhabited areas. The mad Yvain, who has lost the image of manhood, wanders in forested gorges and lies on the damp soil to sleep. The artistic image of a mad knight, particularly some features of his portrait, is quite similar to those of Nizami's Majnun on the one hand and Rustaveli's Tariel on

¹ In European chivalric romances the understanding of space is related to distinct characters, their behaviours and attitudes. A character with clearly defined goal (for example Avtandil) always moves within the "closed circle", while the space of Tariel roaming in the wilderness (in spite of the character's static nature) is boundless and infinite (see Elbakidze, M., *Some Aspects of The Knight in the Panther's Skin in Typological Relation with the Medieval French Chivalric Romance*, Tbilisi, "Petit" 2007, pp. 35-40).

the other, Yet Chrétien de Troyes sees the development and resolution of this motif rather differently from both Nizami and Rustaveli.

Although the hero becomes mad immediately after he loses the woman he loves, madness ends much earlier than when he finally regains her. "Madness" and "craziness" are "artificially" interrupted here due to the interference of a magic force (with the help of Morgana the Fay's miraculous balm), which can be explained by the genre specificity of the Courtly romance. Ritualised love (Yvain has to endure silently reprimands from the woman he loves without even trying to justify his behaviour), a large number of fantastic elements (magic ring, miraculous balm), and the need to obey the code of chivalry (Yvain is unable to return to his wife until he fulfils the obligation of a knight and participates in fights and tournaments to regain her favour) present this motif with different nuances and make it different from Tariel's and Majnun's madness and craziness.

Desire to Die

Amorous torments, a malady that reaches its culmination in the escape from the "community of men", are accompanied by the desire to die, which sometimes indeed has a lethal outcome. It is known that Sufi poets regarded death from love as luck¹. One Arab poet wrote: *Rest in love is fatigue; its beginning is malady; and its end is death. However, death from love is life. The person, who dies from love, is unable to live in love. This is love of God and death for God...* (Nozadze 1975: 187). Arabic poetry compares love with hot embers, raging fire, red-hot iron, and a trap that catches an unlucky victim. In addition, love comes to people unexpectedly, using thousands of

¹ Cf. *No love is worth this - away, Cupid's quiver! - so that death has often been my greatest wish* – Ovid 1987: 90.

methods to torment them and often leading them to madness (Filshinsky 1977: 163).

European researchers note that adventures in medieval chivalric romances are regarded as the axes of these romances. They imply commitment, ordeal, and endurance (which Ovid calls *tormentum* and Andreas Capellanus *cotidiana tormenta*). On the one hand, this involves sacrificing one's life to love and on the other, entail a person's moral improvement and the completion of the process of his spiritual harmonisation. A long and exhausting journey with the sentiment that death lies in ambush everywhere, leads Erec, the hero of *Erec and Enide* by Chretien de Troyes, to internal transformation and helps him to find his own ego and overcome the crisis. Correspondingly, the wife of the knight, Enide, becomes convinced that her husband's love is genuine and beyond any doubt. Almost the same is the sense of Avtandil's words: "*Mischance pursues the lover, embitters life for him. Love is necessary, as it brings him closer to death*" (895). The passages make it clear that love brings ordeal, creates difficulties and problems, gives rise to grief and sadness, and draws us closer to death. Let us recall what Tariel says: "*Death is joy for me, the parting of flesh and soul*" (268). At the same time, love is the best way for perceiving oneself cognitively, coping with tormenting emotions, and strengthening determination (In this regard, the words Nestan-Darejan addressed to Tariel are very noteworthy: "*Pitiful fainting and dying, what love dost thou think this! / It is better to exhibit to the beloved deeds of heroism!*" (364). If love is accompanied by an adventure, the adventure and ensuing problems are a test for the lover. Life makes the lover aggrieved, but it finally brings him joy. This is what Avtandil tries to convince the mad Tariel of, although Avtandil himself has become desperate on many occasions due to parting with Tinatin. Thus, death is desirable for Avtandil in order to express the deep feelings and poignant emotions caused by the love "planted" by

Tinatin. Like Tariel, he too regards death as something joyful (parting with the beloved woman is as unbearable to him as it is to Tariel, because it is not known how long it may last), as love and death have a common border. However, this kind of death is nevertheless unacceptable to Avtandil. The knight thinks that the desire to commit suicide is a satanic desire. Therefore, he orders his heart to be pliable (Nozadze 1975: 191).

The beloved woman can cure the malady caused by love (although many believe that amorous torments are incurable or only death can cure them). If the lover of a chivalric romance fails to win the favour of the beloved woman, he can find relief only in death (Tristan). In this case, death is his only medicine, as there is no other medicine or doctor to ensure relief from his woes. Following Ovid, European Troubadours and Minnesingers insist that even the god of love, Cupid, is unable to cure a lover. On the other hand, *"If a lover suffers from the malady - plague - of love, another lover, mostly from among his friends, should share the former's trouble and help him suppress poignant emotions"* (Nozadze 1975: 227-228), as a person driven mad by love is unable to reason calmly or manage his own emotions. Therefore, he cannot cope with the malady of love without a doctor.

As the "plague" of love brings ordeal and passion, man has either to tolerate it or fight against it. It is here that the will and spiritual firmness of a person becomes visible. Avtandil says: *"A man must not bend before misfortune, but meet it like a man"* (153). It follows that ordeal also has its dialectic: It will not always be there, but will be replaced by joy. Ordeal cannot exist forever. It must be overcome by joy. It is for this purpose that man must be courageous and "firm in trouble". Thus, the philosophy of ordeal is optimistic in *The Knight in the Panther's Skin*. Man must resist ordeal and combat it, which is the

path upon which a personality can attain perfection (Nozadze 1975: 229).

Chretien de Troyes says: *My trouble differs from the trouble of all others. My trouble is what I want. I do not know what to complain about, because my trouble is due to my will. It is my will that has turned into my trouble. However, it is agreeable for me to follow my will and be tormented in such an agreeable manner.* Of course, these words are about love, which is presented here as trouble and malady that are agreeable for man. Love is a malady that causes pain, but the pain of love is agreeable and joyful. The person in love relies on his will when creating this. Strong will is attracted by the pain, not by love itself (Nozadze 1975: 230). The 13th-century French poet, Guiraut Riquier also noted that love is a serious act, which is always accompanied by pain. However, melancholy caused by torments is not eternal. It will definitely be followed by a positive result, which may be poetic inspiration (Shishmarev 1965: 207).

In *The Knight in the Panther's Skin*, the pains, ordeals, torments, fires, burnings, and faintings of love are a result of unattained love. There is no one in *The Knight in the Panther's Skin*, who would voluntarily want to be in trouble because of love or to be tormented and tortured. On the contrary, the will of every hero becomes visible in their struggle for obtaining love and, if love is a malady, every hero tries to recover from it and escape the malady (Nozadze 1975: 230).

Thus, we can see that enduring pain in amorous relations is equally regarded as obligatory in *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* and in oriental and courtly poetries. However, in oriental and Troubadour poetries, pain is mostly regarded as a poetic decoration (the approach will later be overcome in French chivalric romances), and it is defeated and replaced by joy in *The Knight in the Panther's Skin*. Love is victorious. Rustaveli closely links amorous torments and joys of love.

They are not separated. The poet concentrates not on the strength of pain and death (Cf. *Tristan and Isolde*, *Vis O Ramin*, *Layla and Majnun*, and so forth), but on overcoming painful emotions and the ability to cope with them, which leads to the perfection of the lover and the perception of high ideals in this world.

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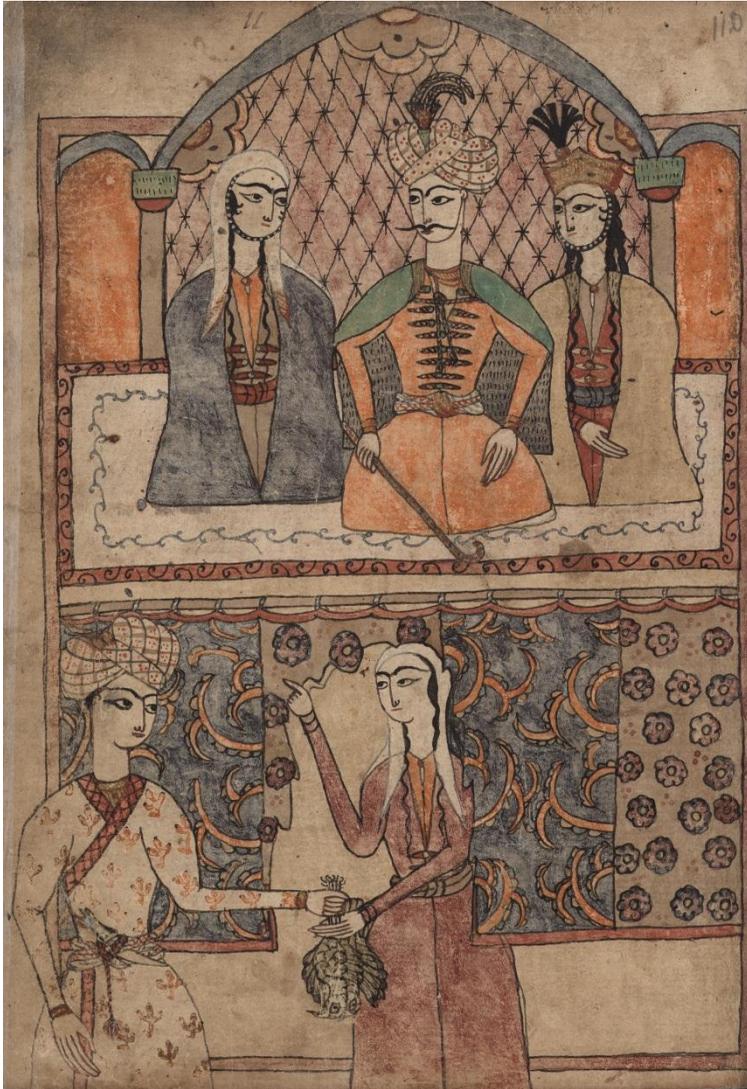
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**„The Knight in the Panther’s Skin“ .
Tavakarashvili MS. 1646. H 599-110
(Korneli Kekelidze National Centre of Manuscripts)**



„The Knight in the Panther's Skin“.
Tavakarashvili MS. 1646. H 599-076
(Korneli Kekelidze National Centre of Manuscripts)

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Rustvelian Friendship

The friendship presented and portrayed in *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* is one of the main and important motifs of the poem. Many opinions have been expressed over this issue in the academic literature (N. Marr, V. Nozadze, I. Javakhishvili, K. Kekelidze, A. Baramidze, E. Khintibidze, etc.).

A group of scholars (N. Marr, I. Javakhishvili, Z. Avalishvili, V. Goltsev) thought that friendship and blood brotherhood, rather than love, were the central themes in *The Knight in the Panther's Skin*. The argument supporting this view was that the poem paid great attention to the relationship between the three brothers-in-law (Avtandil, Tariel, and Phridon), also to the description of self-sacrificial deeds, and to the abundance of discussions about friendship and blood brotherhood in general. Most often special attention is paid to the strophe (294)¹, in which “Avtandil considers Jacinth-Tariel, as superior to the beautiful, enamel-Tinatin”. These views are not shared in Rustvelology. Love is widely considered the main motif of *The Knight in the Panther's Skin*.

In the prologue of the poem only two verses are devoted to fraternity and friendship (“Three starlike heroes went to serve one another” and “In praise of threefold hue, the verse must needs fall short”), according to which the reader learns that the poem will describe and praise the friendship of the three heroes. In the poem

¹ **Translator's note:** The numbering of the verses follows the English edition of *The Knight in the Panther's Skin*, Translated by Marjory Scott Wardrop, London, 1912.

itself, a kind of code of love is presented, which is stated in the words of Avtandil. It reflects the worldview of all eras and all human beings:

“Three are the ways of showing friendship by a friend:
First, the wish for nearness, impatience of distance;
Then giving and not grudging, unweariedness in liberality;
And attention and aid, roaming in the fields to help him” (759).

In this strophe, the three main defining qualities of friendship are listed - constant closeness to one's companions, meaning friends standing together in times of trouble and misery, sharing a physical and spiritual journey on the path of life. The poet incorporates the first characteristic of love into the words and deeds of the heroes of the poem, thus providing the readers with more than a schematic instruction. Moreover, it will reveal the current changes in the most difficult inner world of the heroes, put them at the crossroads between their hearts and minds, show them the selfless pursuit of personal goals, and pave the way for living with genuine values.

First of all, we should emphasize Rustaveli's way of presenting and explaining the conception and foundation of the friendship between the heroes of his poem. V. Nozadze in his *Metaphorical System of Lovers in The Knight in the Panther's Skin* pointed out the sudden emergence and gradual development of liking and loving one another in the works of the poets of different epochs: “being pleased is the first step in *The Knight in the Panther's Skin*, followed by friendship, which later becomes genuine” (Nozadze 1975: 172).

The episode of the meeting of Avtandil and Tariel wherein they become acquainted, is important in this respect. Before confronting the knights, Asmath, as can be seen from her words, tries to prepare the ground for their acquaintance. She tells the young Arab:

“When he comes I shall plead with him; it may be I shall be able to do something.

I shall make you known to each other; I shall make him love thee” (256, 2-3).

We learn from Asmath’s conversation with the heroes that the acquaintance between the heroes and their being fond of one another is central. In this episode, Rustaveli points out their equality while describing their beauty. In particular, he compares them with the seven celestial orbs – “they were like the seven planets; to what else shall I liken them?” (278, 4).

The description of the meeting of heroes in a way continues to show the inner beauty of the knights:

“They kissed each other; they were not bashful at being strangers;

They opened the rose, from their lips their white teeth shone transparent. They Embraced each other's neck, together they wept;

Their jacinth, which was worth rubies, they turned into amber” (276).

This picture of a gathering of heroes is distinguished by their amazing love and openness. Here, “alienation” steps back - the heroes who experience each other’s beauty greet each other like friends, which culminates in their “understanding” of each other - they open the doors of each other’s hearts unreservedly: “but for heart's sake he had exchanged heart for heart” (675, 4).

Rustaveli describes the spiritual connection between Tariel and Avtandil embellished by their friendly love in this way:

“Hereupon they swore, the frank- friends,

Those jacinths of amber hue, wise-worded (but) mad-minded.

They loved each other; forever would affection's flame burn their hearts. That Night the fair comrades spent together” (650).

Here the poet combines very important artistic images, emphasizing not only the inner nature and the way of life of the characters, but also their similarities and equality. Rustaveli’s

expression of the feelings of friendship in this single strophe is a manifestation of the greatest humanism. This love is the basis for “clothing” the earthly beauty with the divine, which is manifested in the beautiful union of “fair comrades”. Rustaveli presents the acquaintance of Tariel and Phridon in a different circumstance, however, in this case also “being pleased” by one another is the starting point of their relationship. Tariel, exhausted by his search for Nestan, sees a knight walking on the seashore screaming, holding a sword in his hand and bleeding, looking hostile towards his enemy. Tariel, seeing this, forgets about his own misfortunes. The words of Tariel - “Stay, hearken to me! I too wish to know thine affair!” (578, 3) make Phridon look at the knight, whose image “pleases” him greatly, and makes him stop walking: “He looked at me, I pleased him, he checked his course” (578, 4). Tariel’s feeling of beauty engendered Phridon’s absolute trust and was followed by a heartfelt conversation with him. One circumstance attracts attention here, namely, Tariel describes Phridon’s feelings to Avtandil (“I pleased him”, “checked his course”), that is to say, Tariel understood from the expression of Phridon’s face and from his behaviour what was the impression he made upon him. It is similar to the feelings of the heroes, the uniformity of their perception and comprehension, which Rustaveli presented to us with his specific vision. Such an attitude of Phridon was met by a corresponding feeling on the part of Tariel - “I marvelled at the tender beauty of the knight” (580, 4). This mutual access provoked a sweet filial feeling between them - “fonder than father and son”.

This first acquaintance of the heroes was followed by their friendly love and brotherly commitment, which is shown in the words of Tariel after he has heard Phridon’s story - “That youth won me to like him; my heart went out toward him” (592, 1); for Phridon closeness with Tariel causes a feeling of voluntary “enslavement” and the desire to be with him and serve him to the end of his life – “To the

day of my death my life will be devoted to thy service!” (593, 4). It is true that Phridon did not understand anything about Tariel at that time, but he trusted him with his heart and mind, to which the hero responded with calmness. This for him was already a great “happiness”. About this Rustaveli says in one place: “great comfort it is to speak of troubles when a man has the opportunity” (904, 4).

The accuracy of the heroes' first experience of spiritual intimacy is furthermore proved by their actions. Tariel likes Phridon's outstanding bravery in fighting against his cousins: “P'hridon's bravery and agility pleased me then” (599, 3). In their turn, the inhabitants of Phridon's kingdom experience the same as does their king, they also perceive (are pleased by) the beauty of Tariel, which we hear in the words of Amirbar - “Again I pleased; I his new friend seemed fair to him” (595, 1). Later in completely different circumstances, Rustaveli provides an explanation for this fact, which is confirmed by biblical words: “Every like gives birth to like; this is a saying of the sages” (1299, 4). Rustaveli, as it seems, considers mutual understanding as one of the inevitable conditions for friendship. This becomes obvious from Tariel's words, when he reveals his identity and his story to Phridon: “and since I know thee what more do I want?” (617, 4). Their relationship, which started from a mere “being pleased”, becomes the crowned in the glory of true fellowship.

Another episode of meeting is described in the poem. After saying goodbye to his brother Tariel, Avtandil fled to the kingdom of Phridon. Phridon learned that Tariel's brother-in-law had come with him. In describing the meeting of Phridon and Avtandil, Rustaveli also emphasizes the frankness and “being pleased” of the characters in spite of their being strangers:

“They embraced; they were not shy for being strangers.

The knight seems peerless to P'hridon, and P'hridon pleases the knight” (988, 1-2).

Rustaveli does not violate the necessary condition for love even in this case; Avtandil “knows” Phridon from Tariel, he knows his incomparable bravery. That is why Rustaveli dedicates the arena to an Arab knight, and Avtandil also approaches the king of Mulghazanzar and modestly informs him about Tariel’s tendency to call him “brother”, while he is only worthy of his servitude: “‘Thou art my brother’, quoth he, though I am scarce worthy to be his slave” (970, 4). Rustaveli ends the description of the episodes where “three praiseworthy heroes” understand each other and become friends, with the meeting of Avtandil and Phridon.

Thus, Rustaveli presents the meeting of the three characters in different situations, yet, the main precondition for their coming together is an aesthetic feeling – “being pleased”. It should be noted that Rustaveli prepares a certain basis for the “peerless pleasing” at the first meeting of Tariel and Avtandil; both heroes are looking forward to this meeting. Even in the case of the meeting between Avtandil and Phridon, there is some reason for eagerness, because the Arab commander-in-chief is well aware of Phridon’s identity and his generosity, and also attaches great importance to the fact that Tariel calls him “brother”. Tariel and Phridon’s first acquaintance is based on “being pleased” along with the manifestation of humanism (helping a knight in need). Rustaveli considers “understanding” to be a necessary condition for the friendship between the heroes after they “are pleased” with one another, and this principle is offered in different ways during the meeting of all three characters. Rustaveli, by describing different meetings of the protagonists, emphasizes the fact that time, place and circumstance do not significantly determine friendship. The crucial thing here is the personal magnificence of the heroes, their spiritual beauty, their benevolence, which paves the way from the impulse of self-knowledge to the understanding of others, and builds a bridge of love between the hearts of people.

Rustaveli does not limit his presentation to the meeting of the heroes and their becoming friends amid sorrow and distress. The principle, joyful narrative of uniting the friends still awaits the reader. Here, too, Rustaveli portrays a different version of a meeting of heroes, permeated with the warmth and love of the “three suns” – *i.e.* three brothers. The reader is also anticipating the desired meeting with such a feeling, and the expectation is met. The poet directs the actions of the virtuous knights with a friendly smile and with love (Tariel and Avtandil invade Phridon's flock as a jest); then he depicts the meeting of the heroes through a metaphorical description of an unusual gathering of celestial orbs, placing the “stars” of the sky on the ground and describing the brilliance and beauty of the heroes by portraying an extraordinary meeting of two suns and a moon: “It seemed as if two suns and a moon were united there” (1358, 3).

The fact that the prerequisite for the love of the characters of the poem is “being pleased” and “understanding” is demonstrated by the relationship between Nestan and Tinatin, especially in the description of the episode of their separation. Nestan addresses Tinatin, suggesting that it would have been better if they had never been acquainted - “Would that I had never come to know thee!” (1547, 1). Thus, for mutual love, merely “being pleased” is not enough, the most important thing is “understanding”, which connects the characters forever and “captivates” them in the chains of love.

According to the poem, Tariel and Avtandil consider the “help” for each other (sympathy), compassion and devotion, despite their “being strangers” (which surprises even them) “How is it that thou, a stranger, so lovest me, a stranger?” (668, 1), or “To me, a stranger, he pleasantly narrated his wondrous and pleasing (story)” (979, 1), to be a duty and performed with love, which is aggravated by their common spiritual condition – love, mad loving, and selfless friendship: “But such is the law: lover pities lover” (293, 3), “I burn (for him) because,

like me, unendurable fire consumes him” (679, 3), “I, mad, cannot abandon him mad” (718, 3). A general view is highlighted in the poem, according to which being maddened by love is not the only reason why people help one another (this is just one aspect of the issue); “breaking an oath” and betraying one another is unacceptable for people living with moral values (“A wise man cannot abandon his beloved friend” (770, 2). The great humanism, which defines the essence of the poem, and which is the foundation for chivalric ethics, is a starting point here.

Thus, Rustaveli considers the spiritual and physical union of people to be the main precondition of the voluntary “enslavement” and forming of a fellowship between the heroes on the basis of “being pleased” and “understanding” and, as in the case of lovers, it is also permeated by the idea of the union of beautiful souls, friendship and brotherhood.

Rustaveli preaches a general love for one's neighbour and the search for and acquisition of friendship: “Who seeks not a friend is his own foe!” (834, 2). In this regard, one considers a neighbour to be the way to self-awareness, the acquisition of spiritual wealth, morality, and the pursuit of the “supernatural order”, *i.e.* it is a search for God: “For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them” (Matthew 18:20).

For Rustaveli, true brotherhood requires a spiritual vigilance, it means to be Christ's soldier, it is “the way and the bridge” for those who strive for the attainment of spiritual harmony.

The *Knight in the Panther's Skin* presents examples of sisterhood between the king's daughters, as well as the examples of male and female siblings with extremely strong feelings. Tariel calls Asmath a “sister” and tells her that has no one except her to help him: “Save thee, sister, I have no human being anywhere” (269, 4) (see also: 268, 1; 486, 1; 878, 4; 879, 1).

It is mentioned in the academic literature that Rustaveli by showing the relationship between Tariel and Asmath created a unique example of brotherly and sisterly love previously unknown to world literature.

Avtandil also calls Asmath her “sister” (252, 1; 652, 4; 716, 4). In her turn, Asmath also offers her sisterly affection to the Arab knight: “now thou hast found in me a friend more sisterly than a sister” (248, 4) and fulfils this duty indispensably. It should be noted that neither Tariel, nor Avtandil address by name the “woman in black”, but they always call her “sister”. They occasionally mention the name of Asmath and even that occurs only when they are telling a story. A similar tendency is observed in the relationship between the three blood brothers, they do not address one another with their names, and their main term of address is “brother”. There are only a very few examples of referring to people by name, and mostly it happens when they shout at them from a distance (228, 3; 333, 2; 851, 2). The question is, should we think that Rustaveli is avoiding an unnecessary familiarity towards his characters? It seems like he prefers to use “brother” or “blood brotherhood” as an expression of a greater love.

Phatman is another female character in the poem whom Tariel calls “sister” (1419, 1-2), a passionate supporter of Nestan. Rustaveli especially emphasizes the “sisterhood” between Tinatin and Nestan as exemplary. The poet notes at their parting: “Parting each from other, both maidens, the adopted sisters, sworn with the oath of sisterhood, trusting in each other’s word” (1544, 1-2). Unlike the blood brothers, the feeling of “being pleased” is not found when women meet one another. Their “being like sisters” is a great wish of Tariel himself, since in his opinion the wives of blood brothers necessarily ought to become sisters: “thy husband is my brother, I desire too that you be my sister” (1547, 3) - he tells Tariel to Tinatin. At the end of the poem, Rustaveli describes their separation with tragic overtones (1541, 1543,

1548). Such love, friendship, and the sincerity of feelings are exceptionally allotted to equals and belong to the realm of higher ideals. Rustaveli also lifts their separation to the cosmic level and compares it symbolically to the meeting and parting of the moon and the morning star (1545).

According to P. Ingorokva, the main object of Rustaveli's admiration is "the symphony of love and friendship, which is laid out in the poem in all the colours of the rainbow: The friendship between men – Tariel, Avtandil and Phridon imbues us with a great feeling; it portrays brotherhood not only between humans, but also between peoples; the female friendship between Nestan and Asmath, Nestan and Phatman, which is not impeded by their membership of different social classes; and friendship between a woman and a man, such as Tariel and Asmath, which is truly the most beautiful page in world poetry, inspired by the gentlest and the most benevolent feeling" (Ingorokva 1937: XXXVIII-XXXIX).

It is mentioned many times that Rustaveli's theoretical reasoning on love in the prologue of the poem is expressed in the words and behaviour of the main characters throughout the rest of the poem. It is interesting how the three basic provisions in terms of the code of friendship are revealed in the relationships between the characters and their way of life. Let us examine the first theory of friendship: "**The wish for nearness, impatience of distance**" (758, 2). The discussion of the text of the poem reveals two aspects: 1. The characters confide in each other and do not hesitate to acknowledge the difficulty of enduring the suffering imposed on them by the distance between them; 2. The protagonist expresses his concern in front of others over the separation from his lover. Considering the format of the paper, we will discuss each of these points with only a couple of examples.

The episode of the first divorce of Tariel and Avtandil is permeated with the greatest sensitivity. Shocked by Avtandil's love and devotion, Tariel wonders how the "stranger" came to love another stranger, and compares the difficulty of his parting with a young Arab to the separation of a nightingale from a rose (648: 1-2). He himself is experiencing the severity of the separation and, hopes to see him again by the mercy of God.

Rustaveli, with his amazing tenderness and reaching the most complex labyrinths of the soul, expands his narrative and does not limit the separation of the "bosom-friends" to one strophe only, as if he himself also finds it difficult to face their farewell.

"Hereupon they swore, the frank friends, those jacinths of amber hue,
Wise-worded (but) mad-minded. They loved each other;
For ever would affection's flame burn their hearts.
That night the fair comrades spent together. (650).

It seems like this strophe contains everything: references to the physical ("those jacinths of amber hue") and spiritual ("Wise-worded (but) mad-minded") attributes of the heroes, their love and their wish to secure their friendship with an oath, and the beauty of their relationship. Rustaveli also emphasizes their similarity by giving an apt description of them: he points to the similarity of their hearts and minds, their wise words and maddened consciousness. Their friendship, their being "fair comrades" is sincere.

Rustaveli dedicates another strophe to the parting of Tariel and Avtandil:

"Avt'handil wept with him; fast fell the tears.
When day dawned he went forth, kissed him and parted from
him.

Tariel was so grieved that he knew not what to do" (651, 1-3).

The feelings of leaving Avtandil also reflect a distressing and unbearable pain (654).

Rustaveli describes the scene of the parting of the protagonists with an amazing frankness; “weeping and shedding tears” looks natural coming from them. The most interesting element in this strophe is the way Tariel’s feelings are conveyed, in particular, it is difficult for the protagonist himself to perceive how much it distresses him to part with Avtandil. This is also another manifestation of the inner worlds of the “bosom-friends”.

Rustaveli does not neglect the second separation of the heroes either; he makes the protagonists feel the pain of it as if he is doubling their sufferings, shortening the days of their lives and expects empathy on part of the reader:

“Readers of these verses, your eyes also are shedding tears!
What, alas! shall heart do without heart, if heart part from heart!
Absence and parting from a friend are the slayers of a man.
Who, indeed, knows not, understands not, how hard is that day!”
(922).

Rustaveli is deeply convinced that his readers “shed their tears” together with the protagonists, they “melt away” when hearing their conversations, since the separation of a heart from another heart is “murderous” in the eyes of every human being. The poet, pauses at those moments *when* the main characters meet or part from one another and dedicates many strophes to such episodes (923, 925, 929), thus treating them quite distinctly from other events and stories within the poem, The poet describes each of their actions, their gestures, movements, and even allows us to hear their voices permeated with pain:

“With tears and face-scratching and tearing of hair they parted;
One goes up, the other goes down; roadless they ride by bridle-paths;
Through the rushes; as long as they saw each other, with drawn faces
they shouted;
looking upon their frowns the sun would frown too” (930).

Rustaveli not only makes the reader experience these spiritual turmoils, but also extends the pain of the love between the characters to the whole world – even the sun becomes sad when looking upon them. The same is applied to Avtandil’s loud cry to the skies after he parted with Tariel, which culminated in Rustaveli’s wisdom: “Men are not all equal; there is a great (difference) between man and man” (932, 4). According to the poet, such a love, brotherhood and friendship is not accessible to all humans, since there is an enormous difference between their characters, minds and hearts, and so their actions and intentions have different depths.

Rustaveli gives a relatively lighter and shorter description to the episode of parting between Avtandil and Phridon (994, 996, 1003 etc.). Here too, approaching death, a feeling of suffering and the shedding tears are discussed. The farewell of Tariel and Phridon is also linked to an acute suffering (627), and appears as the parting of a “foster-parent and child” (631). Contrary to the description of the “murderous” episodes of the parting of the heroes, Rustaveli conveys their meetings with the greatest joy, “reaching the heavens”, describing every single feature of the heroes’ gestures, movements, sounds, and even the tone of voice. Rustaveli presents the meeting of Tariel and Avtandil (1334-1336) with particularly excessive emotionalism and detailed portrayal: “He looked at him, recognized him, started, ran towards him, bounded” (1310, 4), while Avtandil’s “There was the sugary sound of the rose frequently opening” (1311, 4). Rustaveli describes the attraction of the brothers towards one another as superior to the

movement of the heavenly chariots, in order to make the feeling of love, longing, joy of being together more tangible.

Thus, in *The Knight in the Panther's Skin*, the episodes depicting the feeling of closeness and distance expressed by the characters during their meetings and farewells are conveyed with great emotional expression, a feeling of pain and a shedding of tears caused by an unbearable life and deadly suffering. Such deep sensitivity of the heroes is an indicator of their youthful spiritual vigour and at the same time is an expression of the fact that those with the greatest physical strength are often overly sensitive and soft-hearted.

At the end of the poem, the separation of the victorious and magnificent heroes is presented in a relatively insipid manner. There is less emotion on the part of the protagonists, which is totally contrary to Rustaveli's artistic style. The reader expects in this episode the intensity of the heroes' feelings, tears, and sadness as usual, yet, in this case he is bound to be disappointed. The question arises: is it possible that along with other issues, the mentioned circumstance referred to may also be indicating the possibility that "the story of the Indians and Khatavians" could be a sequel to the poem?

As already mentioned, the issue has another aspect, in particular, the protagonist reveals verbally, before the other characters, his own pain over parting with his friend. Such episodes are found throughout the poem, and are mainly related to Avtandil. The hero does not hide his feelings from people of different social backgrounds, and he is completely sincere in his distress and concern.

Phridon's sorrow over his separation from Tariel is also unbearable and therefore his continued existence is perceived as a despising of his own life. Yet, Rustaveli calls Phridon's weeping "beautiful". G. Nadiradze notes regarding these strophes that the "feeling of friendship is not only portrayed artistically here, but it is also approached aesthetically" (Nadiradze 1958: 217).

One detail attracts our attention in connection with Phridon, namely, we learn from his words that Tariel had not seen him for seven years (985). Here, to some extent, one tendency of Rustaveli's lover is violated – “the wish for nearness, impatience of distance”. Tariel, who walked with the beasts and found himself approaching death, in our opinion, was less required to follow this rule. Yet, Phridon, as a blood brother, was obliged to take care of Tariel and lose his mind for his sake. Avtandil is the builder of a broken bridge between the two of them. Rustaveli tells us in this episode that the true brotherhood and friendship ought not to be lost, the broken unity ought to be restored by any means, as was fulfilled in the end: “those three are covered by the seven planets with a column of light” (1385, 2).

All the above mentioned proves that Rustaveli considers the “the wish for nearness, impatience of distance” as the first rule of a friend demonstrating his kinship. This principle is exhibited throughout the poem with all possible nuances in the words and actions of the heroes and in the sincere experience of their joy and sorrow, which shows to the reader the goodness of friendship and its beauty and significance as well as the difficulty of being without a friend, and the unendurable nature of the separation. In general, Rustaveli shows the rule of virtuous life (“love as a way and a bridge”), teaches us to long towards the harmonious action of the heart and mind and entrusts the reader with drawing the right conclusions.

The second necessary rule for Rustvelian friendship is “giving and not grudging, unweariedness in liberality”: the knights follow this rule and keep it intact. First, we must remember Tariel's incomparable black horse, which Phridon gave to him as a keepsake, which is mentioned more than once and is mentioned humorously in the episode of the conquering of Kadji castle (1391).

There are plenty of episodes in the poem showing the generosity of the heroes and their open-handedness, their appropriate hospitality and generosity in giving gifts. The giving of the gifts is the main theme of the episode of Tariel's and Nestan's wedding, organized by Phridon. Overflowing generosity is a distinguishing feature of Tariel himself, who, after conquering Kadjeti, gives to Phatman all the wealth preserved there, while he gives Phridon the treasure kept in the cave and gives one seventh of his Kingdom to Asmath. Thus, Rustaveli, in the images of his characters, highlights their boundless generosity along with their extreme devotion to one another; they always give away gifts; they are delighted to give presents to others and it is interesting that the ones, who receive the gifts, take them with great dignity, love and gratitude. Avtandil is the only one in the poem, who has not granted any gifts to his blood brothers. Rustaveli, in this case clearly points to the idea that the "wise heart" given away generously by the "sweet knight" along with his tireless efforts for the happiness of his friends and brothers, his spiritual bravery and his struggle for the victory of the good over evil, is not required therefore to bestow an additional material gift. Avtandil himself is the treasure of the lives of his friends. This idea is evidenced by one particular episode in the poem: let us remember Tariel's address to Rostevan in Arabia on the return of the victorious heroes:

"We have no offerings, as P'hridon and his knights can testify;
The only gift I have brought you is your Avt'handil" (1482, 3-4).

In addition, truly, Avtandil's victorious return from his journey together with the stranger knight and his lover was a gift itself not only to Rostevan, but also for Tinatin. Therefore, Avtandil, who is the "healer for the intelligent" and "the cure of sorrow" was "a knight of

the world, in quality a gem and a faultless ruby” (675, 3) for his adopted brothers as well as for the whole world.

The third necessary rule of the Rustvelian friendship is “Attention and aid, roaming in the fields to help him”.

This action characteristic of a friend is presented in large scale and with all-encompassing meaning in the poem.

According to the text, the words “maddening” and “roaming in the wilderness” are first used by Avtandil about the stranger knight, who, although is not yet his friend, nevertheless needs his help. Humanism is the basis of the duty of the commander-in-chief, the lover and a knight, who is roaming in the wilderness at the order of Tinatin. Asmath also calls Avtandil a “mad” knight, who has sacrificed himself for the sake of helping Tariel. Tariel is also surprised by Avtandil’s “fiery heart” and through the pitying of one lover by another; he explains the wish of the Arab knight to meet his loved one before he dies. In his turn, Tariel denies his own self for the same reason and with the wish for the lovers to be united and tells him his story at the expense of his own life:

“He said to the knight: 'Whatever man takes to himself a brother ay, or
a sister

Must have no care of death and trouble for their sake.

How should God save the one if He cause not the other to perish?

Listen, and I shall tell thee (my story) whatever befall me” (296).

It is here that the principle emerges which forms the defining point of Rustvelian friendship and fellowship – in addition to “helping” and “roaming the fields”, it is also necessary to sacrifice one’s own life for the sake of one’s friend and Tariel does so with eagerness: “It seems to me a joy to meet the friend thou hast not met” (485, 3), and this is

most important. If a martyr keenly sacrifices his life for the Lord in hagiography, in *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* the same approach is offered in the relationship between friends and brothers. The foundations for the phenomenon of loving one's neighbour to such an extent are certainly to be found in Christian belief, in Georgian traditions of blood brotherhood, and in the principles of chivalric ethics and humanism.

Avtandil fully understands Tariel's self-sacrifice and, as an expression of gratitude, he does not spare his own life in his efforts towards obtaining happiness for him ("He would not grudge his life for me; what is due must be paid; one must love a generous, ungrudging friend" (715, 3-4). The credo of Avtandil's life is to "repay" the brotherly love and care and to demonstrate the genuine personal virtues of the knight in love:

"A friend should spare himself no trouble for his friend's sake,
He should give heart for heart, love as a road and a bridge.
Then, again, the grief of his beloved should be a great grief to a lover"
(705, 1-3).

Within his definition authentic of friendship, Rustaveli grants a special place to the brothers' commitment to their oaths and their sharing of love and their maddening by love, which is mentioned many times in the poem.

"I cannot break my vow, I mad cannot abandon him mad.
When and where did ever a breaker of oaths prevail!" (718, 3-4).

The willingness to give up one's life for the sake of an adopted brother is the highest manifestation of authentic friendship, the spiritual bravery of the heroes, and an ungrudging love for one's neighbour, which is revealed in the following words of Avtandil:

“I am such an one as will not gather cucumbers in this world as an old
man,
one to whom death for a friend seems a sport and a play” (767, 1-2).

The main points of true friendship, as well as of the general moral life are highlighted in the will of Avtandil: “A wise man cannot abandon his beloved friend” (770, 2), “Falsehood and twofacedness injure the body and then the soul” (770, 4), “I will not do it! What avails me the knowledge of the philosophizing of the philosophers!” (771, 3), “It is a law with men 3 that they should struggle and suffer woes” (776, 3), “Mindfulness of a friend ne'er doeth us harm” (779, 1), “It is better to get glory than all goods!” (780, 4), “Better a glorious death than shameful life!” (781, 4), “A narrow road cannot keep back Death, nor a rocky one” (781, 1), “mistaken, mistaken is he who expects not death momentarily” (782, 2) etc. Rustaveli sings praises to Avtandil who follows these principles unwaveringly:

“How can I tell his peerlessness, valour, and praise him!
He was a man fitting and worthy even of such a deed.
Thus should service be, as much as lies in one's power (?).
When a man is in trouble then needs he brother and kinsman” (754).

S. Chikovani, when discussing the will of Avtandil, notes that “friendship is an indicator of the existence of order in society and one can enter the community only through the comprehension of the feeling of friendship... Friendship is not a mere intimacy of one person with the other, but it is a foundation for the elevation of earthly life and the basis for its divinity. Friendship is the philosophy of Rustaveli's life...” (Chikovani 1983: 30).

Avtandil's will, as something sacred for him, is the proof of true friendship. It is a teaching about general human ideals and principles,

the call for establishing a virtuous life in this world and a movement on the way to God.

Avtandil always provides fraternal help to Tariel who is in need and is maddened by love. When desperate Tariel sat “near unto death” and “had stepped forth from the world”, Avtandil appeared suddenly as his saviour. By his great efforts, it became possible to bring the hero back to life; He undertook the mission of searching for the cure for his wounds. Avtandil is the example of a true friend and of true friendship. By his efforts Phridon and Tariel managed to recover their brotherly union, after which Phridon becomes the pathbreaker for the heroes going to Kadjeti. Through the efforts of the heroes and the devotion of Phridon’s three hundred soldiers, the fortress of evil was destroyed and conquered by the good.

Rustaveli also notes that it is not only in times of suffering, but also in moments of happiness that the heroes care for one another. The illustration of this can be found in Tariel’s concern for Avtandil’s happiness and his desire to help him at his own wedding “As he found the cause of the existence of my life (Nestan), Even so he too shall see the valour of a brother (used) in his favour!” (1456, 3-4). He does not find his happiness complete unless he sees Avtandil in the company of Tinatin. He sends this message to Avtandil “If thou be not united to thy wife I will be no husband to mine” (1448, 4) and executes his decision, he asks Rostevan for Tinatin’s hand in marriage for Avtandil and as a result of this we see the triumphant couple enjoying their seats on the throne of Arabia.

The great “influence” of Tariel is shown in his relationship with Phridon when he gets into trouble. Amirbar fulfils the duty of a true knight, he puts aside for a while his personal concern and sorrow, and helps the king of Mulghanzanzar when he is attacked by his own cousins.

Asmath's influence and help for her masters is completely unique. She is the apostle of love between Tariel and Nestan, and subsequently Tariel's most loyal companion and the sharer of his sorrows, finally becoming his adopted sister.

Therefore, exhibiting the feelings of friendship, helping and caring for one another, sacrificing one's own soul, becoming maddened and roaming the fields – all these are the foundations of the victory of the good, the exaltation of love, and the restoration of a lost harmony. Yet, the foundation of all foundations is love, which is the meaning of the lives of friends, and the starting point guiding their thoughts and actions. The characters of the poem turned love into a way of life and they are willing to even give up their lives for the sake of loyalty to it. They have made death for the sake of their friends into a “play and singing”. That is why Rustaveli says about them in the prologue: “the three starlike heroes went to serve one another” (6) and “In praise of threefold hue, the verse must needs fall short” (17). Allegorically “threefold hue” portrays the highest ideals, in particular, Tariel symbolizes love, Avtandil, faith, and Phridon, hope. Their efforts make it possible to rescue beauty (Nestan), to defeat evil and prove the everlasting nature of the good.

Based upon all the above mentioned, it is possible to say that the three main characteristics that Rustaveli lists as the major points of expression of friendship are fully presented and evaluated in the relationships between the characters and in the philosophy of their lives.

Many views have been expressed in academic literature over the foundations of friendship in *The Knight in the Panther's Skin*. Particularly, it is noted that Rustaveli continues the tradition of Georgian epic folklore (M. Chikovani, V. Nozadze, T. Chkonია, G. Imedashvili, A. Baramidze and others). The other views claim that it follows Plato's teaching (Z. Avalishvili); it is based on Aristotle's

Ethical and aesthetic principles (M. Gogiberidze); the poem reflects the influence of Stoic philosophy (P. Tsintsadze); shows the influences of Georgian traditions, as well as of Christian ethics of “love for one’s neighbour”, chivalric ethics and Aristotle’s philosophy (E. Khintibidze).

The friendship between the characters of *The Knight in the Panther’s Skin* is certainly inspired by the Christian ethics of “love for one’s neighbour”: “You shall love your neighbour as yourself” (Matthew 22:39). The love for God and love for one’s neighbour are interdependent commandments and as the Gospel tells us: “On these two commandments depend all the law and the prophets” (Matthew 22:40). Love for one another has a portion in divine love and it is a “new commandment”, which the Lord gave to His disciples at the Last Supper: “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another” (John 13:34-35). The Lord instructs His disciples regarding the essence of the idea “love for one’s neighbour” and explains its meaning to them: “Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends” (John 15:13; See also: 1 John 2:8-11; 3:10-16, 23; James 2:8; 1 Thess. 4:9). The Will of Avtandil directly names the teaching of the Apostles as the main source for comprehending the love for one’s neighbour: “Thou hast read 3 how the apostles write of love, how they speak of it, how they praise it” (772, 1-2).

The Christian teaching on the love for one’s neighbour is clearly presented in another (and much more than one) episode. Namely, Avtandil while going to meet Tariel for the second time, expresses his attitude and longing for him, paraphrasing the words of the Psalms: “I fled from my home, like a stag seeking water, I seek him” (835, 3). This phrase reappears again in the end of the story about the Indians and

Khatavians when Phridon is saying farewell to Tariel: "I shall thirst for you just like a hart thirsts for flowing streams" (1649, 3-4). Perception of the characters' longing for one another as the love for God is the Rustvelian way of depicting the human being of a new era, expressing the spirit of the Renaissance. It is also worth considering that "neighbour" and "friend" in Rustaveli's poem refer to a benefactor and generally "the ones who love", therefore, the poet uses the words with these meanings ("neighbour" can also be applied to strangers). It is interesting that Rustaveli does not use the word "neighbour" in connection with his principle characters. As it seems, Rustaveli distinguishes between the lexical units expressing friendship according to the level of love shown. The word "brother" for the poet is the supreme form of love. According to Georgian folk customs, the adopted brother was considered as superior to a natural brother and the kinship between these adopted blood brothers was seen as more secure than natural blood relations. This is emphasized in the poem by the expressions such as "a brother by a stronger tie than born brotherhood" or "more sisterly than a sister". After all, the relationship between Tariel and Asmath is a perfect illustration of the Georgian traditional custom of swearing an oath of brotherhood-sisterhood, and the mutual love based upon this oath.

The brotherhood and friendship between the characters of *The Knight in the Panther's Skin*, as is already mentioned, demonstrates a clear link to the institutions of chivalry characteristic of that particular era. The term *mokme* (in old Georgian), which we encounter in historical writings and heroic epics, means the same as "knight" (*raindi* in Georgian). The existence of the institution of knighthood under the conditions of social patronage in 12th C. Georgia proves to be an unquestionable fact from today's perspective. It was precisely the knightly order that served as the main guarantee of the welfare of the country and at the same time, it offered an example of self-sacrifice for

the sake of the country and the king, of love, heroism and personal virtue.

It is noted in Rustvelology that there are a number of literary sources in the treasury of world literature describing exemplary friendship, such as *The Epic of Gilgamesh* (friendship between Gilgamesh and Enkidu); *The Iliad* (friendship between Achilles and Patroclus); *Ramayana* (friendship between Rama, Lakshman and Sugriva, the monkey-king), the 12th c. Byzantine novels (By Chariton Aphrodisias and Niketas Eugenianos); *The Song of Roland* (friendship between Roland and Oliver); *Tristan and Isolde* (friendship between Tristan and Kahedin); *Electra* (friendship between Orestes and Pylades); *Layla and Majnun* (friendship between Majnun and Nawfal) etc. We shall draw our attention to the latter.

An episode from Nizami Ganjavi's poem *Layla and Majnun* addresses the theme of friendship. We shall try to select the appropriate similarities with *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* in this respect. Yet, the difference is great since Nizami's poem, unlike *The Knight in the Panther's Skin*, is dedicated to the Sufi concept of love, which defines the plot and directs every event, story or nuance. Therefore, the ideals of friend and friendship are also evaluated against this background, yet, it is still possible to discuss them from a purely human point of view.

What is common in the ideals of friend and friendship as presented in the poems by Nizami and Rustaveli? Firstly, in both cases Tariel and Majnun, the mad lovers roaming the fields and wandering with wild beasts, are rescued and comforted by "strange and striking" stranger knights. In the case of Tariel it is Avtandil, the Amirbar of Arabia and an incomparable young man, while for Qays it is Nawfal, the distinguished knight, unrivalled in fighting and softhearted in friendship. Nawfal, like Avtandil, does not know Majnun, and in this case too it is Humanism, which defines the words and actions of the

heroes; they both share the misfortunes of the mad-lovers they meet and decide to rescue them from their sufferings even at the expense of their own lives, if so required.

If we look closer, we shall detect a similarity between Avtandil's and Nawfal's approach to the stranger who is drawn close death by his suffering. Let us recall how Avtandil tries to bring Tariel back to consciousness first by wise exhortation, then by putting him on a horse and in the end by talking sweetly to him. Nawfal does similarly, when trying to calm down and "tame" the maddened Majnun by showing him his brotherly love and sharing his suffering, while talking to him:

"Majnun consented. He smoothed the stormy sea
Of his soul and accepted his friends' helping hand.
For the first time in many months, peace returned
To his tortured mind, the marks inflicted by the
Branding iron of his madness began to heal".

(Nizami Ganjavi 1986: 66).

Thus writes Nizami, wishing to convince the reader of the genuineness of such an extraordinary transformation.

Nizami, presenting the carefreeness and beguilement (in reciting poetry) of Majnun who just returned to consciousness, does not leave Nawfal's efforts unacknowledged and immediately distinguishes in him his ability to discern the depths of the inner world in humans and of having an unfailing psychological influence over others.

"Nawfal also helped him to acquire a carefree mind.
God helped him! Whatever he ruined through his madness,
Nawfal has restored it all through his serenity" (Ibid).

Rustaveli also says “briefly” following his “long word” about Avtandil’s similar abilities (let us remember here the story of bringing Tariel back to consciousness), that Avtandil is “a cure for sorrows” and “the healer to the intelligent.” Nawfal, like Avtandil, promises the mad lover that he will arrange for him a meeting with his loved one even if it takes him to sacrifice his own life and do anything under his power. Yet, the enthusiasm of Nawfal’s words significantly exceeds that of the Avtandil’s. Rustaveli, without any exaggeration or hyperbole, places the vow of the Arab commander-in-chief within the limits of moderation, by which he highlights the virtue of simplicity (corresponding to the gospel teaching) of the hero. The difference becomes obvious in the protagonists’ attitude to the knights, who appear to them as saviours. Namely, Majnun, although he thanks Nawfal for his enthusiasm and efforts, nevertheless reminds him that no man will give his daughter to him in his present situation (maddened, disturbed, sick and lonely) and that many people tried to help him, just as Nawfal does now, but all was in vain. He is convinced that he will also abandon him half way through, yet, he is hoping that the young man will not break his oath. In addition, if Nawfal vows his help only deceitfully, then he would have preferred it if he had left him altogether and abandoned him alone in his madness. Nawfal swears an oath in front of the Lord, in order to secure his promise and invokes the apostle of the Lord to certify his oath as a witness. At the same time, Nawfal asks Majnun to calm his madness and not to withdraw from people again, to which Majnun agrees and visit Nawfal.

The situation is different in the case of Rustaveli’s characters. This difference is certainly caused by the unusual nature of the plot and its general message. Yet, it is still possible to draw some parallels. As was discussed earlier, Rustaveli does not describe Avtandil’s vow of loyalty and self-sacrifice that he gave to Tariel in great length. Although Tariel is surprised by such devotion from the Arab knight,

nevertheless, he explains the reason for it: "Such is the law: lover pities lover" (293, 3) and, in his turn, he tells the young man his own story of seeking his lover at the expense of his life, who came to him as a friend. In the end, the characters swear an oath that they will not betray each other, that Avtandil will definitely come back to see and rescue Tariel, and that Tariel will not forget him and will not withdraw into the wilderness.

In *Layla and Majnun*, Nawfal is in no hurry to help Majnun, for which he is rebuked, for he is not keeping his promise and it ill behoves him to speak empty words. If he truly wants to help his friend, then he ought to act. Majnun is not going to live a day without Layla, and Nawfal will also have to share the responsibility for this. Only after this does Nawfal commence battle against Layla's father in order to obtain Layla's hand in marriage (compare with the episode in *The Knight in the Panther's Skin*, in which Tariel is heading to Arabia and is trying to win Tinatin's hand from Rostevan by sweet words and the power of a sword). Avtandil is categorically against such a thing, for him to raise his hand against his king and patron is a violation of divine law and a great "faithlessness"). Nawfal, who is close to winning the second war with Layla's tribe, agrees to Layla's father's oath and decision (that he could not give his daughter to a madman, or he would have to kill her with his own hands). By doing so, he betrays Majnun and drives him to roam the fields again. It seems that Majnun's suspicions are justified and he leaves the oath-breaking Nawfal with a broken heart.

It is interesting to try to identify the reason for this decision of Nawfal and to examine what makes him break his oath sworn to his friend. It is possible to think that by behaving this way he saved Layla's life, and yet, he knew that this would bring Majnun to the brink of death again. Yet, this argument is not explicit in the text. We learn from Nawfal's comments that he wanted Layla's father to give his

daughter to Majnun wholeheartedly, and according to his will, and that he would not take her away from her father by force. Nawfal's evaluation sounds strange and perplexing, particularly when he says that a man who would marry a woman without her consent would not experience the taste of bread. Why does Nawfal say this? After all, this cannot apply to Layla and Majnun. It seems that for Nawfal, the most important point is that no one should suffer because of him, and therefore, he "gives up on this". Yet, he was distressed by Majnun's rebuke, and was concerned that Majnun might have mistaken his action for guile, so he sent people to Majnun who would tell him that he was still ready to give up his own life for Majnun /Nawfal's sake. These words of Nawfal are also quite difficult to understand. The interpretation and analysis of the episode describing the friendship of the characters in Layla and Majnun generates a diversity of opinions, the evaluation of which is left to the reader. For our part, we can add (based on the opinion expressed many times in academic literature) that the heroes of Rustaveli exhibit a distinct type of friendship and brotherhood. Avtandil, having returned to Arabia, leaves shortly after seeing his loved one. He secretly leaves Rostevan for his adopted brother, and at the cost of passing through numerous obstacles, sufferings, and the unbearable pain caused by the separation of two sons (Nestan and Tariel), he appears as a saviour to the "doctor in sickness". Thanks to Avtandil's selfless efforts and devotion, it becomes possible for him to fulfil the oath sworn to God and to his friend - to find the whereabouts of the missing Nestan and to bring Tariel back to life, and to free Nestan through the love and efforts of the three heroes. Such ("inspiring") friendship, like love, aspires from earth to heaven; it is exalted ("love exalteth us") and is beautiful ("fair comrades").

Although in Nizami's work *Khosrow and Shirin* the friendship between characters is not described directly, but the thoughts about

friendship can be traced in this passage – “friends are great helpers to their friends, we need at least one friend in every situation; only God does not need friends. A friend helps us with many tasks and if there is a need to solve a problem, it is useful to have a friend” (Nizami Ganjavi 2014: 77 (paraphrased)).

As is shown in the fragment above, the role of a friend is distinguished only in the context of a task, and he is given the function of supporter and assistant. Here another very interesting point is made, which states that God is the only one who is in no need of a friend. Such a view contradicts the Christian teaching, according to which the Lord is the best friend to the believers, which (as already mentioned) is confirmed more than once in the original Georgian Hagiographic works.

In *Khosrow and Shirin*, unlike *The Knight in the Panther's Skin*, the lover is called a “friend”, namely, Farhad addresses Shirin this way – “Since I cannot find a friend except you, do not leave me friendless and helpless” (Nizami Ganjavi 2014: 226 (paraphrased)); Khosrow says about Shirin – “Shirin has become my friend and partner” (Ibid: 343); Shirin writes to Khosrow: “I always saw you as my best friend” (Ibid: 287); Khosrow addresses Shirin this way: “It is ill to be so hostile, Oh, my friend” (Ibid: 306) and “I should leave you and find another friend” (Ibid: 307). Accordingly, the romantic relationship with the loved one is called “friendship” – we read about the relationship between Khosrow and Shekar “that silver-bodied finally became friends with her (Khosrow with Shekar – N. G.), she also expressed a full friendship with him” (Ibid: 261 (paraphrased)).

The characters of *Khosrow and Shirin* complain about their lack of a friend and we may read into this complaint that the true friend is a helper and a rescuer in need (Nizami Ganjavi 2014:81) he is supporter and a companion both emotionally and physically, who follows the same breathing pattern as a friend (Ibid: 287) and who will

stand by the side of his friend even in harsh conditions surrounded ‘by rocks and mountains’” (Ibid: 114). The heart of a friend is a board covered with earth and if you touch it you will see the unsullied part” (Nizami Ganjavi 2014: 141 (paraphrased)).

As is shown in this fragment, the heart of the friend is covered, and its “pure part” will be revealed only when you call him in need. Such a view is completely alien to the characters of *The Knight in the Panther’s Skin*. They wholeheartedly and single-mindedly help their friends in any case, in any time and space, and under no circumstances do they spare their own lives for their own sake. According to Rustaveli, closeness, physical proximity, is a necessary condition for friendship, as although the physical distance does not cool the feeling, nevertheless it can keep one from participating in the friend’s life, his suffering and joy. The example of this is Phridon, yet, Rustaveli does not believe in suspended friendship, and restores Phridon’s suspended friendship with Tariel with the help of Avtandil. The general description of friends and friendship appears in the conversations between the characters of the poem and in their letters, namely, Khosrow writes to Shirin and advises her: (paraphrased) “Count that friend to be an indisputable enemy, who keeps looking at you through a keyhole. Friendship is possible only with those who wish you wealth and other goods. If your friend turns into your enemy, then give him to the earth, he will only be defeated by earth!” (Nizami Ganjavi 2014: 304).

The above-cited fragment allows us to conclude that the friend who turns into an enemy should be removed by death “defeated by earth” (Nizami 304). A general view is expressed in *The Knight in the Panther’s Skin*, which claims that “An evil and treacherous man should be pierced with a lance” (161, 4).

At the end of the poem, Nizami, while talking about being and non-being, offers an opinion to the reader about death, saying that

brothers and friends will then behave badly and “they all will turn away from you” (Nizami Ganjavi 2014: 381).

At the same time the human heart is called a friend, in particular when the friendless Khosrow comforts himself with the idea that his heart is his only friend: “only your heart will keep friendship for you” (Ibid: 267).

The heart in *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* is not only personified, but is one of the main characters, if not the main one, which is proved by the abundance of the use of the lexical unit “heart” and related phraseology. This accent is especially emphasized by the character’s attitude to his own “heart” as his own personality.¹

In *Khosrow and Shirin*, unlike in *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* (where fortune is related to the deceitful and faithless world) fortune is once called a “friend” (Nizami Ganjavi 2014: 307). It is worth noting that fortune in *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* is never described as a friend, while only “good fortune” is mentioned there. Nizami also highlights the friendship between heart and fortune, when he says, in regard of writing the book, that his heart found a supporter in fortune, and therefore allowed fortune to become his adopted brother (Ibid: 35). Nizami calls the reader to acquire a friend and friendship, and complains that he himself is also concerned about this, and wants the reader to share his distress (Ibid: 35); Rustaveli would say this using the following wording: “Who seeks not a friend is his own foe!” (834, 2).

A. Baramidze writes about the frequently expressed opinion in academic literature that compares the friendships of Khosrow and Shapur to that of Tariel and Avtandil: “According to the poem, Shapur

¹ For more details see: N. Gonjilashvili, “The Binary Semantics and Paradigmatic Metaphorical System in *The Knight in the Panther's Skin*, in her book *For Understanding the Literary World of The Knight in the Panther's Skin*, Tbilisi: Biblio, 2017, pp. 179-239.

sometimes is really called Khosrow's friend. In fact, Shapur was Khosrow's admiring servant. Shapur knew the desires of Khosrow's heart and his indecent intentions. Khosrow ordered Shapur: "make Shirin mine whether by force, by trick or by her own will". Shapur dedicated the whole of his life to fulfilling this order. He tried to win Shirin over using the tricks of a sly matchmaker. He did not feel ashamed, nor did he bat an eyelid while offering the daughter of the king of Armenia as a concubine to the Shah of Iran. Shapur as eloquent, deceitful, flattering, and grovelling as he was, was also a coward, faint-hearted, loyal and as tail wagging as a dog and hopeful of getting the leftovers from the table – he was a fair servant to his despot master. Thus was the friendship between the Shah and his doorkeeper or servant. While the friendship between Tariel and Avtandil was secured and magnified by the sublime feeling of love and true friendship between the noble knights from equal social backgrounds" (Baramidze 1966: 272).

The scholars working on Rustaveli (I. Javakhishvili, S. Nutsubidze, A. Baramidze and others) note that Rustaveli not only expresses the spiritual intimacy between particular people by using the image of the three heroes' becoming brothers and friends, but in their image, he symbolically preaches the idea of the friendship between nations. S. Nutsubidze notes about the first meeting of Avtandil and Tariel: "Seven celestial orbs" – this characteristic, itself is an expression of the equality between peoples. Only a special being – the poet genius, who came to earth to praising human beings and whose soul was enlightened by the *ayasma* (Holy Water) of equality and love between peoples, could portray the children of different nations in such a manner" (Nutsubidze 1969: 102).

It has been mentioned in academic literature many times that the friendship like the one described in *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* is not to be traced either in Western or Eastern poetry, while the

idea of the friendship between nations is “one of the unique phenomena of Rustaveli’s social and political ideals” (Sharia 1976: 177), “The friendship and brotherhood depicted in *The Knight in the Panther’s Skin* is different from the friendships of all other societies: it emerged, was raised and matured uniquely on the Georgian soil of *The knight in the Panther’s Skin*” (Nozadze 1975: 137).

The display of the Rustavelian friendship’s typological relations with the works of world literature, as well as the search for the influences of different doctrines is an indicator of the broad scale of the poet’s worldview, his catholicity concerning the field of human thought. All the above mentioned points to the fact that the brotherhood and friendship of the characters is the embodiment of the universal idea, which always manages to embrace cultural differences yet is always distinguished by its unique, Georgian character. The content of the poem, its ideological side and poetics are permeated by the motif and images of brotherhood and friendship.

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Wisdom, Mind, and Prudence

(For the definition of concepts)

Among the immensely rich lexical stock of *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* we encounter the concepts of wisdom (wise man), mind (reason, shrewd, senseless - opposite...).

Wisdom - "Wisdom, wealth, generosity, youth and leisure" (8, 2); "This counsel pleased me, the wisdom of the heart of her" (370, 1); "To her the king gave his child to be taught wisdom" (319,4); "Once more he addressed his heart: "Patience is like the fountainhead of wisdom" (708,2); "Minstrely is, first of all, a branch of wisdom" (19, 1).

Wise Man - "It needs a wise man to praise her, and a very eloquent tongue" (33,4), "Dionosi the wise, Ezros bear me witness in this" (176,1); "Listen to what I say to thee ; I speak to thee as a sage and not as a madman" (645,1); "A wise man cannot abandon his beloved friend" (770,2); "If thou art wise, all the sages agree with this principle" (855,1); "Thou art wise, and (yet) knowest not to choose according to the sayings of the wise" (855,1); "It is necessary to everyone to believe; a wise man has faith in the future" (1028, 4). ...

Acting wisely - "Wise! Who is wise, what is wise, how can a madman act wisely?" (866,1); ("What avails me the knowledge of the philosophizing of the philosophers!" (771, 3)).

Mind - "Grant me strength ! And if I have aid from thee I shall have understanding" (6, 2); "eloquent, intelligent, patient" (8, 3); "whoever looked on her, she bereft him of heart, mind and soul" (33,3) "Heart, mind and thought depend one upon another" (828,1); "her mind is like a dove's" (1162,4;) "Secret thought manifests to thee what

is hidden” (1272,4); “For thy sake will I sacrifice mind, soul, heart” (882,1); “my thought, my soul, my heart” (299,2); “When he is in trouble, then it needs that the intelligent should have his wits!” (1169, 4).

Intelligent - “The prudent should never hasten” (523,1); “Rostan, wise and soft-hearted, wept for him” (146,4); “If a wise man would compass a difficult deed” (212,3); “When he is in trouble, then it needs that the intelligent should have his wits!” (1169, 4). “The intelligent loves the instructor; he pierces the heart of the **senseless**” (884,2).

Prudence - “I praise the prudence of those sages” (347,3)

Prudent - “Then he said: “I marvel at the spleen of a man of sense” (863,1); “Sages cannot comprehend that one Love” (28,1).

The substantial similarities between the concepts of wisdom, mind and prudence are obvious, but it is interesting to what extent Rustaveli¹ defines them in specific contexts, or perhaps uses them in a synonymous sense, as is the case today.

We think these concepts require a retrospective understanding of the medieval reality. Let's see what the dictionary is telling us:

These words are mostly not explained in the glossaries of *The Knight in the Panther's Skin*. In the 1966 edition of the dictionary (edited by Sargis Tsaishvili and published in 1986) the **mind** is explained as thinking, thought, or imagining.

Prudence is not explained at all.

In *the Dictionary of the Old Georgian Language* compiled by Ilia Abuladze (1973) the concepts mentioned are presented synonymously:

¹ Translator's note: Marjory Wardrop's translation of *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* uses different words for the definitions, which may not always agree with the definitions proposed by the author of this article.

Mind – “heart”, intelligence, thought, intention, moral discernment

Intelligence – mind, wisdom, prudence, thinking (Abuladze 1973: 96).

It is noteworthy that Sul Khan-Saba Orbeliani almost equates “wisdom” and “prudence”, but not “mind” and “prudence”. According to him, wisdom is the parent of prudence. Wisdom and treachery are alike, yet wisdom is good, while treachery is not (Orbeliani 1991:116).

Mind - is verbal and visual... it is part of the immortal soul. Mind is the incorporeal vision, it comes in three types: mind – God, mind and human mind (Orbeliani 1991:166).

In his definition of the soul we see **intelligence**: - “human soul – verbal, intelligent being, ethereal and immortal...” (Orbeliani 1993: 115).

Prudence – “ways of wisdom”;

Prudent – one who exercises prudence” (Orbeliani 1993: 405).

Zviad Gamsakhurdia remarks about this definition of Sul Khan-Saba: “It is true that Saba defines wisdom as a parent of prudence, but conversely prudence is not a parent of wisdom. , Also by the definition of Saba, prudence is only a path to wisdom. A wise man has prudence, yet a prudent man may not have wisdom, which is not merely an intellectual ability but the result of spiritual education, of enlightenment with a virtuous mind” (Gamsakhurdia 1984: 104).

We encounter all the above mentioned three concepts – wisdom, mind and prudence in the very prologue of the poem.

Wisdom:

“Minstrelsy is, first of all, a branch of wisdom;

Divinely intelligible to the godlike, very wholesome to them that hearken;

It is pleasant, too, if the listener be a worthy man;

In few words he utters a long discourse: herein lies the excellence of poetry "(19).

The Aristotelian definition of wisdom is interesting. He considered professional knowledge to be wisdom (Aristotle 2003: 134). It is noteworthy that in his *Metaphysics* Aristotle divides the sphere of human knowledge into two parts: one is *techne* (practical ability to do something according to a certain rule) and the other one is *Sophia* (theoretical-contemplative knowledge).

In sacred writings, poetry was already considered a means of presenting divine wisdom. Rustaveli emphasizes its two main functions: cognitive ("wholesome") and aesthetic ("pleasant").

The semantic understanding of wisdom has a centuries-old history.

There are two kinds of knowledge and two kinds of wisdom; One is empirical knowledge obtainable through direct study of the visible world, and on the other hand, there are certain laws that we aspire to but can never reach in the end. This is the highest wisdom.

The highest wisdom is often referred to by the following wording: "the wisdom of God", "wisdom from above"; the external wisdom is marked by terms such as "external wisdom", "the wisdom of man" "the wisdom of this world" "carnal wisdom", "folk wisdom"....

External wisdom in Christianity covered three areas: 1. Ancient pagan wisdom; 2. The contemporary, non-theological wisdom of Christianity, such as the natural sciences, the seven free sciences of the so called Trivium-Quadrivium Sciences; 3. The wisdom of heretics, and more rarely the wisdom of other religions.

In the historical development of thought, the interrelationship of different forms of wisdom developed this way: firstly, the initial merging of wisdoms, then the differentiation of wisdoms "through the denial of external wisdom first, and then by the submission of external

wisdom to the divine wisdom. This was followed by the acknowledgment of the essential need for external wisdom, equalizing the meanings of different wisdoms; later came a submission of divine wisdom to the external one, and finally (in the age of atheism, L.K.) a denial of divine wisdom” (Siradze 1975: 235).

The Life of Gregory of Khandzta makes it obvious that the time of the saint’s youth (8th c.) coincides with the stage in which secular wisdom already submits to the divine. St. Gregory completed his theological education and also studied secular philosophy, yet he adopted from it what was “good” and rejected the useless part.

In the old (pre-Christian) sense, or in the early stages of Christianity, the wise man seems to have referred specifically to the one who had external (secular) wisdom, which explains the words of the apostle: “I will destroy the wisdom of the wise” (1. Cor. 1:19).

Later emerged the concepts of “divine wisdom” and “superior wisdom”.

The highest wisdom is absolute itself. This wisdom is essentially love, for “God is love”. The highest wisdom is hidden, it is mysterious: “The hidden ones of wisdom sing unto thee” (Ps. 75:11); “Teach me wisdom in my secret heart” (Psalm 51:6); “That your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God” (1 Cor. 2:5).

Higher wisdom will be given to all who ask it from God: “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask God, who gives to all men generously and without reproach, and it will be given him” (Epistle of James 1:5), but there is a prerequisite for this - spiritual sanctity (“So I have looked upon thee in the sanctuary, beholding thy power and glory” (Ps. 63:2)).

The nature of the highest wisdom is hidden, and the result of its action needs to be comprehended.

Accordingly, there is a “secret mind”, which is also found in *Knight in the Panther’s Skin*. Nestan-Darejan writes to Taniel from the Kadji castle:

“What, indeed, can the heart, rent by thee, do without thee!
Secret thought manifests to thee what is hidden”. (1272)

According to Nodar Natadze, the “hidden mind” means - the “innermost deepest thought” (Natadze 1992: 421). In fact, it is a message from the depths of the soul.

The poem also describes “some sage, lofty and high-seeing”. King of the Seas Melik-Surkhavi, who knows nothing about Nestan-Darejan’s identity, suggests that he is either a lover or a sage:

“Or she is some sage, lofty and high-seeing;
Joy seems not joy to her, nor sorrow when it is heaped on sorrow,
As a tale she looks on misfortune and happiness alike;
She is elsewhere, elsewhere she soars, her mind is like a dove’s”. (1162)

“Lofty”, “High-seeing” “Wise” in the strophe are all associated with the “mind”, the essential characteristic of which is purity, and this purity is reflected in the biblical character of the dove: “her mind is like a dove’s” (“be wise as serpents and innocent as doves” (Matthew 10:16)).

Holiness is a necessary precondition of love, the more so if we allegorically consider divine love, or the Eastern Sufi style romantic love in it. Rustaveli needs human love to describe divine love (“I must tell of lower frenzies, which befall human beings” (28,3)), as the human love being its imitation and embodiment; therefore he emphasizes the requirement for purity:

“They imitate it when they wanton not, but faint from afar” (28, 4);
“because by non-fruition he loses his wits” (29, 2);
“His fainting, dying, burning, flaming, all are from afar” (12, 3).

The episode of Nizami Ganjavi's poem *Layla and Majnun* is noteworthy, as it discusses the rule of love:

“He commanded the old man thus:
'Perchance should I, of need,
Settle in this forest
Rather would I die than draw
Any closer to my beloved!
I am like a burning candle.
Should I draw closer to her
I shall surely suffer death.'
So is the case of Majnun,
Forasmuch as he is a lover,
As lover he ought to keep
some distance from his beloved”.
(*Layla and Majnun*, p. 321)

The mind is given by God, it is a grace and mercy of God. Rustaveli refers to this in the prologue:

“Now want I tongue, heart and skill for utterance!
Grant me strength! And if I have **aid from thee I shall have understanding**”. (6)

In ecclesiastical writings, mind is closely related to faith, while senselessness reflects the unbelieving consciousness:

In *the life of St. Gregory of Khandzta* we find a very noticeable concept of the “maturity of the mind”. Relatives try to persuade young Gregory to be ordained a priest, who, because he was frightened, thought of his own priesthood as premature due to his youth. His relatives reassure him: Christ gave you a fine maturity of mind” (Giorgi Merchule 1987:528-529).

The same concept of “maturity of the mind” can also be applied to Avtandil, who is wise in spite of his youth. It is worth noting that “the will” is written by his hand.

“Avtandil’s wisdom is innate and does not require old age as such, and the extensive life experience that he has, is, after all, a unified and inseparable exemplary wisdom in the style of *Andrezi*” (Kiknadze: 2001: 10-11).

In sacred writings, the function of the concept of mind and its relation to faith is clearly conditioned by biblical concepts. It is noteworthy that we do not see “prudence” as a lexical unit in the four Gospels.

As we have mentioned, in the old Georgian theological literature, the mind is substantially connected with the conscience, the soul, the awareness of faith. It is inseparable from the good. The one who cannot choose between good and evil and does not know what is good for the soul and what is harmful, cannot be wise. Intelligence can be separated from the good and produce treachery (remember Sulkhan-saba: "Wisdom and treachery are alike: yet, wisdom is good, and treachery is not"), reason cannot separate from the good. Reason is what God has given to man as an icon, and thus he has become like it, because the absolute Reason is God himself.

St. Gregory of Nyssa writes in his work *On the Making of Man* that God has given to humans wisdom and reason, which is the manifestation of man’s resemblance to God, to his beauty ... *Anthropos* is considered as created “in the image and likeness” of God only once God’s *grace-mind* is in Man’s body and guides it. If the mind does not control the body, then Man turns away from the Good (Gregory of Nyssa 1979: 20).

John of Damascus also argues in the same way: the human being has something in common with inanimate objects, is associated with irrational beings, and also has the thinking ability characteristic to

intelligent beings (meaning celestial beings, angels) ”(Damascus 1991: 290).

The mind is the only weapon/tool for a man. As St. Gregory of Nyssa points out man is brought into this temporary world without any means for protection. He has neither the horns nor the claws with which he could defend himself or harm someone else. The main and basic virtue of a person is that he is equipped from within, and this weapon is his mind.

St. Gregory of Nyssa discusses the words of St. Luke: “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind” (Luke 10:27). The heart, soul, and mind are the most important parts of human nature that distinguish it from all other creatures and through which it is possible to know God within the limits of human capacity. The words of St. Luke “Heart, soul and mind” Rustaveli reads as follows: “whoever looked on her, she bereft him of **heart, mind and soul**” (33, 3). There are also slight variations such as: “**Heart, mind and thought** depend one upon another” (828,1).

As noted by St. Gregory of Nyssa, the mind is spiritual, it is the most perfect part of nature. Whatever it penetrates and grasps, is inaccessible to a person deprived of spirituality (spiritual vision). That is why the apostle says: “The unspiritual man does not receive the gifts of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him” (1 Cor. 2: 14).

According to St. Gregory of Nyssa, only a purified mind can see God (St. Gregory Nossell 1979: 95).

Ephraim the Lesser explains in the translations of the psalms what is called “the temple of the Lord”. According to him, it can be a church, heaven, the Mother of God or a purified mind ... (Shanidze 1968: 91.)

Concerning intelligence, St. Anthony the Great writes: “Men are often called intelligent wrongly. Intelligent men are not those who

are erudite in the sayings and books of the wise men of old, but those who have an intelligent soul and can discriminate between good and evil”.

In the sense that intelligence is inseparable from the good, the Christian understanding of the concept coincides with the Aristotelian understanding. In *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle discusses the concepts of mind and wisdom, and considers them as independent categories; “while young men become geometricians and mathematicians and wise in matters like these, it is thought that a young man of practical wisdom cannot be found. The cause is that such wisdom is concerned not only with universals but with particulars, which become familiar from experience” (Aristotle 2003: 136). According to him, the wise person should know what is good and beneficial.

It is noteworthy that Nizami Ganjavi (according to Ambako Chelidze’s Georgian translation) refers to the concept of mind when he speaks of God the Creator of the universe: He is the creator of the heavens, the celestial orbs; He is the teacher of reason and wisdom (*Khosrow and Shirin*, p. 26).

Only by the power of the mind is it possible to overcome the limitations of the passing world and access God. Other ways of comprehension besides the mind are bound to be met by insurmountable obstacles.

The poet thanks the Lord for granting him his talent, wisdom, the “treasure” of the mind: “But I am full of treasure, my mind is overflowing” (“boil heart, boil!”, p. 57). Nizami also reminds his son that knowledge is a deity and asks God to grant him the most important thing for man, the mind (*Khosrow and Shirin*, “Exhortation of His Son Muhammad”, p. 384).

As we have seen, in the above-mentioned discourse, “mind” is in no way replaced by the notion of “prudence” and the lexical units

derived from it. Zviad Gamsakhurdia sharply separates the semantics of the above-mentioned concepts when he discusses the “mind” mentioned in the prologue of *The Knight in the Panther’s Skin* (“Grant me strength ! And if I have aid from thee I shall have understanding” (6, 2)): “We have to take into account the difference that exists, on the one hand, between the intuitive mind and the discursive, logical reasoning (*intellectus*) upon which the prudence is based. Such an understanding of “mind” must also be distinguished from the notion of *ratio* which was formed in the later centuries and on which the word rationalism is based (a worldview based on human ratio as opposed to irrationalism). Thus, *nous* is a divine, intuitive mind” (Gamsakhurdia 1984: 84).

“Prudent” can be found in the very prologue of *The Knight in the Panther’s Skin* and it is mentioned in a very interesting context. Regarding divine love, the poet states:

“Sages cannot comprehend that one Love”. (28.1)

At first glance, we read in the strophe something of the unexpected: if he is prudent, then why can't he comprehend that one love? An explanation of the general opinion of this line is not found in any edition of the poem. The question arises, how should we understand the word “prudent” here? In this verse, the poet speaks of divine love:

“I speak of the highest love divine in its kind.
It is difficult to discourse thereon, ill to tell forth with tongues.
It is heavenly, upraising the soul on pinions.
Whoever strives thereafter must indeed have endurance of many
sorrows”. (20)

“The first love” is a heavenly phenomenon, it is difficult to talk about it. He who dedicates himself to this love has to suffer many trials. This love cannot be understood by “sages”. “Sage” here means

one who has a rational mind or a particular secular (if you will, professional) knowledge for whom divine wisdom or the love for God is inaccessible. To use Aristotle's notions, he has *techne* but not *Sophia*. As we know, comprehension of divine wisdom / love is possible only for a purified mind / heart and not for rational, logical thinking (this is how religion differs from science). Rustaveli uses the Arabic word “mijnuroba”, which means mad in Georgian, to reflect a special, not typical, not ordinary state of consciousness. From the point of view of the majority, what is perceived as madness is, in fact, wisdom in the eyes of God (for example, *Salosi* as a fool for Christ's sake - is defined from the perspective of the majority, while in the eyes of God it is the closest to divine wisdom). Therefore, the faculty responsible for perception of divine love is not prudence (logical, rational thinking) but the mind, or the wise heart.

The mad lover is no longer able to live sensibly like an ordinary person, his pragmatic skills seem to have abandoned him.

“Wise! Who is wise, what is wise, how can a madman act wisely?

Had I my wits such discourse would be fitting!” (866)

- Tariel tells Avtandil, who is trying to convince his friend who is approaching death that his despair is unreasonable, it is better to think rationally, to approach the case, collect himself, and endure suffering (“Avtandil's meeting with Tariel”):

“Thou art wise, and (yet) knowest not to choose according to the sayings of the wise.

Thou weepst in the plain and livest with the beasts; what desire canst thou

thus fulfil?

If thou renounce the world thou canst not attain her for whose sake thou diest.

Why bindest thou a hale head, why openest thou the wound afresh?" (856)

Avtandil succeeds in bringing Tariel out of a hopeless, passive state, while it becomes impossible in the case of Majnun, whom his father calls to come to his senses, to show patience and use the skills he needs for survival:

“Follow those who have been given fortune and wealth,
Never do the things that the rich man has never done!
Patience is bitter in the beginning;
But it becomes pleasant in the end,
Only those glaciers who are patient bring out pearls,
Even a giant will look wretched
Unless he is prudent,
All who lack prudence
Are like legless worms.
Do you know how a fox took away
A bite from the wolf’s mouth?
One called upon his prudence
While the other one relied upon his mouth”.

(*Layla and Majnun*, translated into Georgian by Magali Todua, p.155)

Shirin also speaks about the fact that Love and prudence, as the ability to act pragmatically and rationally, are incompatible: “If a young person has ever travelled on the unicorn of prudence, he has never been in love, by any means!” (*Khosrow and Shirin* p. 201).

The episodes discussed show that wisdom in the world of Rustaveli’s linguistics and worldview, as well as that of Nizami Ganjavi’s, implies both divine and secular knowledge. The semantic understanding of the “mind” is related to the ability for divine vision,

and in some contexts, “prudence” cannot be used as a synonym for this concept as a benchmark for pragmatic, logical thinking.

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„The Knight in the Panther’s Skin“.
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(Korneli Kekelidze National Centre of Manuscripts)

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The Good

“Good hath overcome ill; the essence of (good) is lasting”
Shota Rustaveli

“Do good, shut the door of your heart to all evil,
Do good and you will meet goodness in return on your way!”
Nizami Ganjavi

The concept of goodness has a broad meaning in ancient philosophy. Aristotle calls “external good” wealth, power, glory, prosperity ..., and divides the inner goodness dwelling within the soul into wisdom, virtue and pleasure. In addition, he says, there is a “highest good” that is “the goal for other forms of goodness” (Aristotle 1994: 15).

In Christian theology, goodness is the highest predicate of God. God is absolute goodness. Thus, good is the origin of the world, and evil, according to the teachings of Peter the Iberian (Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite), is defined as a want of goodness, the lowest degree of manifestation of goodness. It is noteworthy that according to this definition, evil is not only a non-being but also a manifestation of powerlessness and deficiency (Peter the Iberian 1961: 57).

St. Gregory of Nyssa's definition of goodness almost agrees with that of Aristotle's, according to which good has but one face, and evil, many. “True goodness is simple and uniform by nature. It has no double and contradictory face, whereas evil is variegated and disguised” (Gregory of Nyssa 1989: 176).

Goodness gives form to everything, while the form of an ugly and ungodly creature is the one who is detached from God's image and

deprived of his likeness. Higher goodness is inseparable from truth, wisdom and beauty. Man's pursuit of divine wisdom implies his pursuit of goodness. "But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, without uncertainty or insincerity" (James 3:17). As for that wisdom that fails to have a positive effect on the human soul, it is useless. Sulkhan-Saba Orbeliani's explanation of wisdom, according to which wisdom is the parent of prudence, is noteworthy. Wisdom and treachery are similar, but wisdom is good, while treachery is not. Revaz Siradze remarks: "This explanation of Saba is related to the Rustavelian understanding of the doctrine of wisdom. The basis of their similarity is a common starting point, this is the Areopagitic doctrine. Following Saba's explanation, wisdom is goodness. Yet, Saba does not specify which wisdom he is talking about; whether it divine or secular, and which wisdom constitutes goodness. Therefore, it turns out that goodness includes all wisdom, no matter in what form and shape it comes" (Siradze 1975: 279).

It is not accidental that the good / goodness in the old Georgian language, in addition to its primary meaning means beautiful, kind, benevolent, generous, and gracious ...

The Knight in the Panther's Skin shows that the good is the foundation of Rustaveli's worldview and his beliefs. Goodness, as an idea and a goal, guides the narrative of the poem and emerges as the main feature uniting all the main characters.

The concepts of the good / goodness / benevolence / kindness are mentioned in the following lines [of the Georgian text – Transl.]:

The Good / Valour - "he rejoiced so at the victory of his foster-son" (82,2); "Their alertness and valour, beautifully drawn up in squadrons" (389,3); "How can I tell of his peerlessness, valour, and praise him!" (754,1); "manifest thy valour and integrity in all things" (760,2); "I marvel how you can think thus of my worth" (1493,3); "The

knight, sweetly and in sweet-sounding Georgian, giving good for good” (692,1).

The Good - “I recognize the shortness of evil, Thy goodness is everlasting” (1411,1); “I swear by your virtue, I cannot flatter you, now this is not just” (549,1); “Good hath overcome ill; the essence of (good) is lasting” (1337,4); “And why should the Creator of good make evil!” (112,4). “May bad be changed into good; warriors sharp of sword will be yours to command” (1652,4); “Evil hath no existence; good things (or, the good) are ever ready for thee!” (1485,4). “who sometimes punishest, sometimes art ready to reward” (790,2).

Kind - “She spoke thus: “The good God knows that I am innocent” (560,3).

Good - “No good deed done to a man can pass away thus (i.e., unrewarded)” (417,1); “grudge no good to the loyal, may they that are false-hearted towards thee be slain” (761,2); “God sends good, He creates no evil” (1468,2); “He shortens the bad to a moment, He renews (? repeats) the good continuously (? for a long time) (1468,3); “A man who is a doer of good loseth not in the end” (1476,2). “No man can turn evil to good; none can be born again of himself” (184,4); “Well hath fallen out the matter planned by me” (1295,2); “Success had been granted to them, it had crowned their endeavours” (1661,3).

The main idea of *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* is the supremacy of the good: “Good hath overcome ill; the essence of (good) is lasting”. The Areopagitic teaching about the essence of goodness and the non-substantiality of evil can be found in several formulations in Rustaveli's poem. Additionally the same idea is conveyed by the following lines: “I recognize the shortness of evil, Thy goodness is everlasting” (1411,4); “And why should the Creator of good make evil!” (112,4); “Evil hath no existence; good things (or, the good) are ever ready for thee!” (1485,4); “God sends good, He creates no evil” (1468,2).

The release of Nestan-Darejan from Kadji Castle represents the picture of the final victory of good over evil after overcoming many trials by the characters, and it has been conveyed by Rustaveli using the appropriate metaphorical system: “They saw: the moon was freed from the serpent to meet the sun” (1396,2). This metaphorical and allegorical image embraces both mythological and Christian layers, the main idea of which is the victory of evil and the supremacy of the good.

It is noteworthy that the belief in goodness is seen as the only divine, all-encompassing truth in Nizami Ganjavi’s work:

“Whatsoever thou seekest,
And whatsoever shouldst befall thee,
Thou shouldst thine own self seek out,
And shouldst thine own self undergo.
Since both good and bad alike,
If may say speak thus,
Come to the good in the end,
For the good is still one!

(Layla and Majnun, p. 110)

It is the Divine goodness that grants dignity to man and illuminates the darkness of the world. This is well seen in Majnun’s prayer to the Lord:

“Thou, by whose goodness,
I, the unworthy, have become renowned for my worthiness,
Look after me! For this passing world
Hath destroyed and trampled me down!
Forsake me not, oh Lord,
For I have fallen into a state of feebleness,
Thou canst recognize who I am;
And I, the crippled one, may gallop again!

Let my sorrow vanish
By thy divine goodness
Let my night see the dawn,
Let my darkness shine with thy light!“ (p. 285).

Traces of Ioane Petritsi’s philosophical thinking can be seen in *The Knight in the Panther’s Skin*. According to his theory, the creation is an icon (image) of its creator, and is similar to him. According to this principle, the world created by God, who is absolute goodness, is also good, and order, integrity, and goodness are significant for it. For Petritsi, the whole existence is a hierarchy of images. Revaz Siradze called this philosophical theory a 'figurative concept of being'. The basis of this concept is biblical. Man (*anthropos*), in the Bible, - as being made in the image of God - is figurative in essence. This figurative perception of being also implies the potential for an aesthetic vision, as it symbolizes the being (of objects, events...).

According to this concept, everything worldly, including time, is figurative. Passing time is an image of eternity; goodness endows it with meaning. Time without goodness is a waste. “This means that the meaning of time, related to any worldly event, human activity, or all of human life, must be measured by how eternity is approached therein; the time spent by man in this world must serve for the establishment of his soul in the heavenly kingdom *i.e.* in eternity. Therefore, time, for worldly activities, is valued according to the goodness it carries. Goodness determines the value of the passing time” (Siradze 2000: 187). This very spirit can be seen in *The Knight in the Panther’s Skin* and especially in Avtandil’s "will", in which the ethical credo of Rustaveli, the meaning of life and death and of the relationships, are most clearly and systematically revealed. According to the “will”, education should lead a person to God (“Therefore are we taught that we may be united with the choir of the heavenly hosts” (771,4). Love

elevates us; the most important thing is kindness, devotion, helping one's neighbour etc., which must ultimately determine the eternal abode of the human soul and its return to the "native land" - Eden.

Goodness is universal. There is nothing higher than that. It is the end itself. Nizami's entire work, his short or long poems, and his didactics, are calls to goodness by condemning vices whether directly or indirectly. Charity will be returned by goodness somewhere along the way, while the treacherous will receive his fate. "Eat ashes, but do not eat the bread of evil!" - these words show that dignity and kindness are important to Nizami above any other type of well-being. An honest, pure-hearted man is not doomed by God; in the end his fate is good, while evil receives a due punishment. This is the main message of his poem *Seven Beauties*.

Like Rustaveli, Nizami also considers lying to be the source of immorality and misfortune.

Rustaveli:

"I venture to remind thee of the teaching of a certain discourse made
by Plato:
Falsehood and two-facedness injure the body and then the soul" (770)

"Since lying is the source of all misfortunes,
why should I abandon my friend, a brother by a stronger tie than born
brotherhood?!" (771)

According to Nizami, lies are the foundations for intolerance and injustice, while truth is eternal.

Death is of particular importance to both writers, or rather, the memory of death, which is a kind of gateway to eternal life and places a special value on life, at the same time forcing people to think about eternal values:

Rustaveli:

“I cannot be false, I cannot do a cowardly deed;
He would shame me when we meet face to face in that eternity
whereto we both shall come” (778)

“Mistaken, mistaken is he who expects not death momentarily;
It which unites us all comes alike by day and by night” (782)

“A narrow road cannot keep back Death, nor a rocky one;
by him all are levelled, weak and stronghearted;
in the end the earth unites in one place youth and greybeard.
Better a glorious death than shameful life!” (781)

Nizami:

“The soul was borrowed as a favour,
As belonging to another,
Tomorrow it must return to its owner
That is why the owner is as “owner” named!
Let not thyself enjoy too richly
Thy sojourn in this world!
Death reigneth over this world,
Since life existeth!
As thou hast here seen it,
Thinkst thou, false thinker
That it shall not reach thee,
“Seizing its chattels, with hook, line and sinker”.

(*Layla and Majnun*, p. 312)

The “world” of *The Knight in the Panther’s Skin* is whole, and integrated. Heaven and earth, spiritual and inanimate are in communion, they speak the same language. Man/*Anthropos* is at the center of this world, obedient to God and pleasing to God, and at the same time he is a fighter for the good. This integrity and unbreakable

connection is reflected in this strophe of *The Knight in the Panther's Skin*:

“When the knight's song was heard, the beasts came to listen;
By reason of the sweetness of his voice even the stones came forth from
the water;
They hearkened, they marveled, when he wept they wept;
He sings sad songs, tears flow like a fount” (947).

Human beings can open their hearts to the heavens and the planets, as their confidants, and share their pain with them (“Leaving of Avtandil for Phridon”).

We see the picture of the integrity of the universe in Nizami's work, when Majnun begs the morning star and Mushtar (Jupiter) for help. All the beasts have turned into his suit, his guardians and servants:

“As if the beasts have also heard,
That this man hath burnt his soul
Every beast wandering around,
Ran to him in obedience.
Be it a lion, or a deer,
Be it a wolf or a fox,
All stood before him so that thou wouldst think
“They await his orders”.
Like Solomon (thou must have heard
About this king)
Majnun was also obeyed
by the whole kingdom of wild beasts.
(*Layla and Majnun*, p. 281)

The greatest good and value for Rustaveli and Nizami in this world is man (*anthropos*), who is both God's image and the crown of

His creation. "She is the joy of the world, she is treasure" (146, 3) – notes Rustaveli regarding Avtandil, who is the beauty and joy of this world; "he is both the reason and goal of its creation. "My saviour is the same as the one who made me a man out of earth" (118, 4) - These words of King Rostevan, along with his profound faith, show that he thinks of himself as Adam, the first man.

We find the same motif in Nizami's poem *Khosrov and Shirin* when the poet addresses God: "You are the first to create from the earth who ..." -.

The harmony and order of the world is embodied in *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* by the image of the Kingdom of Arabia. "The story of the Arabian Court is told by the author himself, who, in the manner of the Creator, creates Arabia as an image of a perfect kingdom... The Arabian Court is the image of a harmonious world, and its king represents the image of God" (Kiknadze 2001: 5).

In Arabia, everything is in order. The earthly hierarchy imitates the heavenly, obedience is first of all, based on love, reverence, and respect. The upper social class is not only master but is also the caregiver, the patron of the subordinate class. Friendship and love are possible between them. It is noteworthy that the upper social circles, the aristocracy, which at the same time must be adopting the status of Knighthood, are required to follow the moral code, to be humane, kind, just, merciful, and bearers of the virtues that characterize their innate aristocratic nature. All these distinguish them from the slaves who, in turn, also have certain (and not merely social) moral obligations.

The literary image of Rostevan, the king of the Arabs, with which the story of the poem begins, is a medieval ideal of the king-patron, as his portrait contains a whole range of physical, moral or ethical categories ("God-fearing", "exalted", "generous", "modest",

“just”, “merciful”, “victorious”, “powerful”...). Rostevan’s image is inspired by the divine origin of the sovereign.

The principle – “What thou givest away is thine; what thou keepest is lost”, which King Rostevan instills in his daughter, is actually a Christian formula for the acquisition of grace, and reminds us of the Gospel thesis – “he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully” (2 Corinthians 9:6).

The king is humane, generous, and in some cases even humble in personal relationships. The fact that the King receives Avtandil happily a his son-in-law, even though he is not of royal descent tells us a great deal. Rostevan appreciates him for his personal virtues: wisdom, courage, generosity, loyalty and other good qualities, so he is happy with this proposal:

“None other can she find like him if she fly up even to heaven”
(1501,4)

“I could not find a better son-in-law than Avt'handil” (1502,4)

Avtandil - “The knight, sweetly and in sweet-sounding Georgian, giving good for good” (692,1). The source of his courage, strength, and balance is his faith in God and obedience to Him. He is not satisfied with fulfilling the task of the lover - finding the stranger - and considers himself obliged to assist the “stranger” who is in trouble, and who has already become a friend; it becomes the goal of his life to save him. “How can I endure the lack of him, or how can life please me!” (774). Nevertheless, on this course of action, the likelihood of fatal consequences is very real: “If Fate, the destroyer of all, destroy me...” (783). “Avtandil serves as the main expression of the ideal of rejoicing at the goodness of others. Love presents no happiness without Avtandil” (Siradze 2000: 314).

The main characters of Rustaveli are the richest and strongest. In many episodes we see their generosity and the unaccountable, boundless gifts that they give to all the people around them. Yet, Tariel, Avtandil and Phridon easily give up their well-being for the sake of values such as love, friendship, helping one's neighbour, etc. ("I am such an one as will not gather cucumbers in this world as an old man, one to whom death for a friend seems a sport and a play" (767)). They act according to those moral principles, without which life would have been worse than death ("Better a glorious death than shameful life!" (781).

It is emphasized in *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* that the human being is a complex phenomenon. Not everyone is equally able to realize his or her main purpose as an image of God in this world, to think about perfecting one's own self. The main concern of such people is limited to earthly concerns, as in the cases of the "corrupt" vizier of Arabia, Usen, a resident of Gulansharo, the pirates, and also Kadjis, mythological beings embodying evil powers and others. ("harmers of all men ..." 1225,3). Rustaveli creates an artistic reality in which evil and sin, whether committed intentionally or unwillingly, coexist with goodness, but in the end goodness triumphs over evil.

For Rustaveli the good and the beautiful are inseparable. Whatever lacks goodness cannot be beautiful.

The deep connection between the problems of ethics and aesthetics was of crucial concern from the ancient era. In *Nicomachean Ethics*, as in the *Great Ethics*, Aristotle argues that the goal of virtue is moral beauty. Goodness and beauty are a single whole for him. The notion of "kalokagathia" belongs to Aristotle, meaning the coexistence of the good and the beautiful. "It would not be a mistake to use the expression *Kalos Kagathos* towards a person who has all the virtues, because when a man is good in every way, he is said to be both beautiful and good" (Aristotle 1994: 67). By the common good

Aristotle meant universally good, and by beautiful, he means generally beautiful, that is, objectively beautiful: “He is good for whom goodness is a common good, and for whom beauty is a general beauty. Behold, such a man is both good and beautiful” (Aristotle 1994: 67). (Aristotle 1994: 67).

The Aristotelian concept of “supreme virtue”, “common good” and “general beauty” are the true goodness and beauty in Christian theology. They refer to each other and are derived from each other. God is the true goodness, the true beauty.

In theological writings, the good is inseparable from beauty. The beauty of a character is determined by his actions. Rustaveli continues this trend. Morality is the key determinant of beauty in the poem. Giorgi Nadiradze emphasizes this circumstance when he notes that for Rustaveli the aesthetic virtue of human feeling and behaviour is based on ethics, since only what is moral is truly beautiful.

The external beauty of the characters, which is conveyed so hyperbolically by Rustaveli, is determined by their worldview and ethical beliefs, and confirmed by their actions and relationships. That is why their artistic images are associated with the symbols of beauty, goodness and strength: sun, lion, rose, light, etc... where morality is deficient, the external image and the character are also “ill-favoured”, are also deficient (1183,1).

The artistic method of describing the characters in the works of Rustaveli and Nizami is similar. Irina Kiladze in her work – “The Poetics of the External Description of Characters According to *The Knight in the Panther’s Skin* and *Khosrow and Shirin*”- tries to show the similarities and differences of poetic speech on the basis of a comparative analysis of artistic language. Both works present the material used to describe the characters. The material is grouped as follows: 1. lover (in general); 2. image; 3. body; 4. eyes; 5. hair; 6. lips and teeth; 7. eyebrows and eyelashes. The researcher concludes that

the artistic images are mostly identical in both poems. However, there is a noticeable difference, which confirms the individual artistic thinking and speech of each poet (Kiladze 1993: 51-64).

The external beauty in Nizami's work, as in Rustaveli, mainly expresses the inner goodness of the character, the spiritual beauty, while the ugliness reflects a vicious nature. It is noteworthy that the woman is a central figure in Nizami's literary work. She is a symbol of beauty, an object of love and worship. Dilara Aliyeva dedicated an extraordinary work to the issue of women. She points out that Nizami's women are prudent, intelligent, and intellectual. "Such women were not even known in world literature before Nizami. Nizami and Rustaveli treat women with the same respect and reverence, and their opinions and views are based on a proper understanding of the role of women both in the family and in society" (Alyeva 1983: 151-155). Clearly, such a view of the role of women is an important aspect of the humanism of these artists in ethical, aesthetic, and social terms.

Among the characters of Nizami Ganjavi are representatives of various social circles: shahs, nobles, ordinary people. Goodness is everybody's responsibility, because: "If you do wrong, you will not escape misfortune" (*Khosrow and Shirin*, p. 396).

The path to human moral perfection is the goal of the future of society and of humanity in general, because man himself is the highest value in this world. Jamal Mustafaev wrote about Nizami's literary work: "Nizami believed that man is the highest, most perfect and most valuable of all beings. Nizami most particularly presented his reflections on this in his poem *Treasury of Mysteries*, devoting a special section to this on the superiority of man over animals. According to the poet-thinker, man surpasses everything living and inanimate due to his intelligence. A human being, said Nizami, is by nature both good and pure; he is at the same time a touchstone, and

gold, and a connoisseur of gold”, therefore a human being should be proud of his high purpose. A person is born not for evil, but for good. Therefore, it is necessary for a person to serve the good, develop good and noble qualities in himself” (Mustafayev 1962: 126).

The same can be said about Rustaveli, who put man at the center of the world, praised his strength, beauty, wisdom and generosity. For both creators, goodness is the reason and purpose of human existence. Rustaveli’s Anthropology is based on the Christian worldview, although the religious difference, as mentioned above, does not prevent the two great creators from agreeing on fundamental issues, where their significance is universal and aims at the moral perfection of man.

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