

Research Article

The Importance of Dating Events for Biobibliography (According to Guram Rcheulishvili's Works and Archival Materials)

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A B S T R A C T

In the chronicle of the writer's life and work or bio-bibliography, the annotations are arranged in chronological order and it is extremely important for each piece of information to be dated at least approximately. Dating of the events related to Guram Rcheulishvili, in which of great assistance are digital technologies and the latest textual methods, will contribute much to the creation of a full chronicle of the writer's life and work.

Keywords: Bio-Bibliography, Digital Archive, Textual Scholarship, Georgian Literature

Introduction

Several years ago, a team of scientists began the preparation of electronic biobibliographies of Georgian writers using fundamental textual research. E-books are published as PDF files provided with hyperlinks in which scientific apparatus is placed. In the chronicle of the writer's life and work or bio-bibliography, the annotations are arranged in chronological order and it is extremely important for each piece of information to be dated at least approximately.^{1,5} Proceeding from this, one of the main areas of research in compiling a chronicle is dating and not only of the texts but also the events. Marine Rcheulishvili, a compiler of the six-volume edition of 20th century celebrated Georgian writer Guram Rcheulishvili has dated many of her brother's texts using historical comparative and graphical analysis, but modern digital technologies and corpus-based study open even more opportunities. First of all, we have digitized the archive containing over 1000 items kept in the writer's family and made its cataloguing that will be of great assistance in further research.^{2,3} It is with the use of these digital corpora that the reading of a number of texts, precisising and dating of the already read ones becomes possible.

Materials and Methods

The research was carried out on the basis of the writers completed works published in six volumes and on his digital archive. In most cases we worked on the autographs, scanned with high resolutions which enable us to identify different layers of manuscripts. We used corpus study method, stage layer method of reading manuscripts and a number of micro methods.

Result and Discussion

Dating of the personal letters of a writer means not only determination of this fact itself the time of writing a letter, but also determination of the upper or lower time limit of the entire information rendered in it and sometimes precise dates. The letter sent by Guram Rcheulishvili to his grandmother from Tbilisi to Menji in 1942 has indication only to the year, but one fact mentioned in it makes it possible to determine the date more precisely. The letter ends with the words: "I'm looking forward to June 10 and your arrival." Since June 10th is associated with the future time, naturally, the letter must have been written before that.^{3,7}

From a letter, dated February 14, 1958, sent to his parents from Moscow, we learn that the day before the writer received a telegram from Tbilisi informing that a military card was sent to him.^{3,35} In the writer's six-volume edition, the letter dated February 1956, which was also sent from Moscow to the parents, must be written before February 13, because in it Guram asks his parents to send him the military card, of course he wouldn't do it if he got the telegram of February 13 and if he knew that a military card had already been sent to him.

The publisher dates Guram Rcheulishvili's letter sent to his mother in Khosta by July 1959, from which was seen that he left Tskaltubo on 15th. Hence, the letter must have been written after July 15, 1959. From another letter dated July 1959,^{3,91} in the six-volume edition of writer's works it follows that the writer knows nothing about Andro Tchitchinadze's death and has not yet left Tskhaltubo. Hence, the letter was written before 15 July 1959.

The writer's sister and the publisher of his six-volume edition Marine Rcheulishvili, dates May-June 1956 the letter sent to her by the writer from Odessa,^{3,70} but from the diaries it was seen that Guram Rcheulishvili left Odessa on May 21 because he learned about serious illness of his relative and friend Gigi Abashidze. The diary record directly explains the reason for his sudden departure ten days earlier from Odessa.⁴ Accordingly, this letter sent to the sister must have been written before May 21, 1956.

One of the letters sent by mother, Mariam Nizharadze to her son, reports about Guram's relative and friend Gigi Abashidze: "Gigi has been diagnosed with cancer. It would be nice if you came by the end of the month" [3,134]. Obviously soon after this message, a record dated May 18 appears in Guram Rcheulishvili's diary: "Could it be that Gigi is no longer alive...".^{5,7} From the next day's record of the same diary it is seen that Guram was in Odessa at that time and from the record of May 21 we learn that he was departed from Odessa by ship to return to Tbilisi. It is true, in 1958 before going to Odessa, Guram was in Moscow, but a letter sent to his father on May 4, 1958 shows that he was leaving Moscow that day and from the letter dated May 7 it is seen that he arrived in Odessa the day before. Thus, this letter of his mother is also sent to Odessa.

Marine Rcheulishvili's letter, probably sent to Odessa later than mother's letter also reports about Gigi Abashidze's illness: "Perhaps you have already received mother's letter concerning Gigi".^{3,157} Accordingly, this letter is written later than mother's letter, but we cannot say with certainty before May 15 or later. Therefore, supposedly we date it the middle of May 1958.

In Marine Rcheulishvili's letter, dated March 1958 during the publication of the six-volume edition, there is mentioning of the death of Inesa Andronikashvili's sister, Turandot. "Inesa

Andronikashvili's sister Turandot died.^{3,156} " The same fact is mentioned in the letter of Guram's fellow student and friend Marika Sakvarelidze, dated March 4, 1958. Hence, supposedly Marina Rcheulishvili's letter must be also written after March 4.

From the letter sent by Natela Javakhishvili to the relative Guram Rcheulishvili, it is clear that her grandson had just born because she had not yet seen him. Since Tshotne Javakhishvili's son David was born on March 5, 1958, this letter should be written in mid March.^{3,197}

We came across noteworthy information about the writer not only in personal letters sent by him or to him, but also in correspondence between relatives. Unfortunately, many of these letters are undated and their dating became possible only as a result of research. In one letter, Mariam Nizharadze, Guram Rcheulishvili's mother writes to her mother-in-law Aleksandra (Sasha) and relative Natasha Javakhishvili about Guram's prolonged illness.^{6,137} In his memoirs Nugzar Tsereteli also recalls this fact and specifies the time. He writes that in the spring of 1955 Guram was ill for about a month and a half. The opportunity to check this date and dating of one more letter is given in mother's second letter to Aleksandra Javakhishvili,^{7,1} which says that Guram is finally better now and is even going to take an exam on Monday. According to the writer's sister Marine Rcheulishvili, this letter must be written in 1956. Guram Rcheulishvili's archive keeps his student's record books and we decided to check whether any of his exams coincide with Monday 1955 and 1956. It turned out that on April 25, 1955, on Monday, he really passed his first exam that year in special training.^{8,1} In preparation as we see, both letters are dealing with one and the same disease and according to Nugzar Tsereteli's information, it really must have happened in the spring of 1955.^{9,204} Hence, we date the later letter by a period until April 25, 1955 and the earlier one according to which the patient started recovering in the first half of April 1955.

Extremely interesting information about the writer is contained in the letter of the Tsiskari journalist Tsiala Chkheidze to Napo Zakaraya an employee of the State Museum of Georgia, which dates June 13, but the year is not indicated.^{3,178} From the letter it is seen that Guram Rcheulishvili worked with the addressee of the letter. Accordingly, it must have been sent during the years of Guram's work at the Museum in 1959-1960. As far as the letter deals with the publication of Guram's extensive piece of work in the journal Tsiskari and in 1959 none of Rcheulishvili's works was published in the journal, the letter must have been written on June 13, 1960, at the very time when the stories Alavardoba and Irina were being prepared for publication in the Tsiskari.^{10,56}

From one of the undated records written by the writer

before going to the Ktsia with his father and Temo Japaridze, it seems that the story "The Death in the Mountains" was written and not yet rewritten clean, but friends have already read it or heard. As the event described in this text occurred in July 1957 and the story was published in the journal *Tsiskari* in February 1958,^{11,43} the letter should be written in this interval, presumably in August.

In one of the diaries of Guram Rcheulishvili, where the date was indicated only September 27 and the year was not indicated, which illustrated that he and his sister Marine were at the competitive exhibition of the Gorgasali monument. Both of them liked Elguja Amashukeli's model of monument, met the author and shared their impressions. We found out that this competition was held in 1958 and, accordingly, the diary was dated September 27, 1958.

From the diary records, which bear the only date October 2 but the year was also not indicated we learn that Guram attended the football match of "Dinamo" Tbilisi and was impressed with the game of Sergei Meskhi. Another fact mentioned in the record helped us in dating it. That was Guram's meeting with Elguja Amashukeli at the stadium, where he told him about his future plans in particular, about the creation of the monument of Kartlis Deda (Mother of Georgia). Since this monument was already erected in 1958 on the top of the Sololaki hill, this record must have been made by the end of 1958. As we did not know whether the monument was erected before or after October 2, 1958, the diary could have been written either in 1957 or in 1958. The familiarization with the history of the Dynamo football club showed that on October 2, 1957, Dinamo Tbilisi played in Leningrad but Sergei Meskhi did not take part in it. Accordingly, we should talk about the match arranged between Dinamo Tbilisi and Lokomotiv Moscow on October 3, 1958, which was attended by 30,000 spectators and Sergei Meskhi played in it. As for the date assigned on the "October 3" record, sometimes the diary records were so intertwined that it was difficult to determine where the record of one day ends and where the record of the second begins. Accordingly, to this record should be made on October 3, 1958 and all the facts mentioned in it: the game of Meskhi and the meeting with Elguja Amashukeli must have occurred in the same day, the writer simply forgot to indicate the date on the record of October 3.

The information stored in private letters and diaries often helps us in dating literary works. There are two autographs of the story "The Old Man and I" - black and white. At the end of the black autograph there is an inscription 9-10, which is considered an hour of writing in the first volume of the six volume edition of the writer's works. White autograph was dated September 27. In connection with the date of this writing, of special importance is the information stored in the letter to Guram Gegeshidze sent

from Barisakho in the summer of 1957. "On the fourth day in the morning I wrote two stories ...".^{3,27} "Twenty-one" and "The Old Man and I". Based on this, these two stories should be written on the same day. "Twenty One" is dated September 9, 1956. Consequently, it is likely that "9-10" written on the black autograph of the story "The Old Man and I" means not time, but September 9-10 and September 27 is the date of the final processing of this story. Otherwise it is difficult to explain the words written to his friend, that he wrote these two stories in one day.

Judging by the content of the letter sent to Erlom Akhvlediani from Tskaltubo on July 5, 1959, nothing was written by Guram Rcheulishvili in Tskhaltubo ("I am very tired of constant idleness, I want to write a lot but my hands don't let me, "...^{3,89} In the letter of July 10, 1959, sent to his mother in Khosta nothing is mentioned about writing anything while staying in Tskhaltubo. However, in the following letter written after coming back to Tbilisi, from which it is seen that he arrived from Tskhaltubo on July 15, we read: "I wrote two interesting stories in Tskhaltubo in Faulkner's style".^{3,92} As has been justly pointed out by Marine Rcheulishvili these stories should be The White Slaves and Gogan Gaganian. Comparing the information obtained from the letters, it also becomes possible to specify the date of their writing: July 10-15, 1959.

Conclusion

Dating of the events related to Guram Rcheulishvili, in which of great assistance are digital technologies and the latest textual methods, will contribute much to the creation of a full chronicle of the writer's life and work.

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