

‘ARMENIANNES’ IN INDIRECT TRANSLATION OF BYRON’S *THE PRISONER OF CHILLON* BY HOVHANNES TOUMANIAN

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Abstract: This paper explores the Armenian translation of Lord Byron’s *the Prisoner of Chillon* by All-Armenian Poet Hovhannes Toumanian with Russian serving as an intermediary language. This research is captivating and rather responsible inasmuch as it deals with the literary creations of three most eminent poets of the 19th century – Lord Byron, Vasily Zhukovsky and Hovhannes Toumanian. It is fascinating how poetry has united those three literary figures from culturally different geographical locations and how translation has disunited them. It comes as no surprise that Byron’s fine lyricism could be properly understood and passed on to target readers with such delicacy, nuance, and finesse only by Zhukovsky and Toumanian. The fact that Zhukovsky translated Byron is quite logical since the 19th century Russian literature was greatly influenced by Western literature, especially by Lord Byron. Yet, how come that a poet born and raised in a far-off mountainous region of Armenia with little to no knowledge of English decided to translate one of the masterpieces of a genius poet of “Foggy Albion”? There is one answer: the power of poetry...the power of translation! It is Zhukovsky’s translation that inspired Toumanian to take on the challenging and responsible task of translating *the Prisoner of Chillon*. It should be underlined that the cultural differences could not but be reflected in the Russian and Armenian translated versions. The primary purpose of my research is to shed light on some of the transformations Byron’s poem has undergone in the two-level translation process with a focus on elements of ‘Armenianness’ discernable in Toumanian’s translation.

Keywords: mediated translation; translation transformations; linguistic domestication; Armenianness; Lori dialect

1. Introduction

Lord Byron being one of the brightest stars in the constellation of poets of his time left behind invaluable literary legacy in world literature. When talking of Byron, one should not refer to his literary merits only. It is hard to separate Byron’s political ideologies, freedom-seeking and combative spirit from his literary creations. It is the conglomeration of all these elements that gave birth to the phenomenon of Byron

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echoing far beyond the border of his birth – Foggy Albion. We should not go too far. We can bring multiple examples to prove this. But now we would like to talk about the impact of Byron on world literature, particularly on Russian literature of the 19th century which, spreading its roots, reached the Armenian ‘soil’ setting a new era of development in Armenian literature of the time. It comes as no surprise that such geniuses as Alexander Pushkin and Mikhail Lermontov immediately embraced Byron’s rebellious spirit and freedom-seeking character. Yet, the path was not easy since Byron’s ideologies were not hailed in Russia. Moreover, steps were taken to avert Russians’ attention from the adventurous poet’s liberalist ideologies.

Russian readers were familiar with some of Byron’s works mostly in French or German. However, in 1822, Russian readers had the chance to read *the Prisoner of Chillon* in their mother tongue. Vasily Zhukovsky was the one who took on the challenging task of translating this beautifully crafted poem into Russian thereby laying the foundation of Byronism as a new literary direction in Russian literature. Prior to starting work, Zhukovsky visited the Château de Chillon to see the castle with his own eyes and explore the path Byron had passed while there. In his letter to Grand Duchess Yevgenia Fyodorovna, Zhukovsky writes, “I had the opportunity to travel to the Castle of Chillon by boat. I sailed there reading “The Prisoner of Chillon” and found myself enchanted by Byron’s accurate portrayal of the prison where Bonnivard¹ was held captive” (Zhukovsky 1902: 350).

While translating the poem into Russian, Zhukovsky aimed to preserve the iambic tetrameter couplets. Yet, in the final translated version, the number of lines has grown considerably. He somewhat deviated from the original text by incorporating additional descriptive lines. We believe this usually occurs when the translator finds it infeasible to deliver the author’s message as succinctly as it is in the original. In Zhukovsky’s translation, Byron’s universal ideologies seem to have lost their ‘amplitude.’ Man as a universal entity in Byron’s text seems to have dwindled to someone that could fit the Russian environment because back then Russian society was not prepared to embrace the rebellious and freedom-seeking ideologies that captivated Byron.

In view of this, it should be noted that Zhukovsky’s translation is genuinely successful. This can be justified by the fact that the Russian poetry of the 19th century was already in full bloom and Zhukovsky himself was a seasoned poet at that time. A single sentence is enough to appreciate Zhukovsky’s greatness as a poet. When Pushkin finished his epic fairy-tale “Ruslan and Lyudmila” and handed it over to his teacher for approval, Zhukovsky failed to find appropriate words to appraise his talent. He presented his portrait to Pushkin with the following inscription, “To the victorious pupil from the defeated master” (Serov 2003). In reality, these words speak volumes about the literary environment of the time since hardly can we recall a great poet who has confessed to his student that he has outdone him. It is not by accident that the 19th century is referred to as the “golden era” in Russian literature. Naturally, great minds like Zhukovsky and Pushkin could not but be fascinated by the masterpieces of world literature. Zhukovsky stands as an exemplary embodiment of the translation culture

¹ “The speaker-protagonist of the Prisoner of Chillon is normally Francois Bonnivard, imprisoned for political reasons in Chillon Castle from 1530 to 1536” (Bernhard Jackson 2011: 222).

prevalent in Russia during that era. The scholarly endeavors of Russian authors were influenced by the profound attraction towards translating Western literature, particularly works of English literature. As regards Byron, it is common knowledge that he had a hypnotic impact on his contemporaries. Russian authors were equally drawn to his charismatic allure. Furthermore, Byron's rebellious and liberal ideas played a pivotal role in the shaping of the liberal mindset of Russian society. Byron's impact can be noticed on such great minds of Russian literature as Pushkin and Lermontov inspiring them to pen such chefs-d'oeuvre as the Robber Brothers, the Novice ("Mtsyri"), etc.

In his translation, Zhukovsky successfully portrays the agony, defeat and anguish experienced by Byron's protagonist juxtaposed with themes of hope, resilience and unwavering belief in the ultimate attainment of freedom. These feelings resonated deeply with 19th-century Russian society.

Overall, it can be stated that although Zhukovsky's translation is a success, he seems not to have stayed entirely faithful to the style in which the poem is originally written. There is an explanation for this. In the 19th century, Russian literature and Russian school of translation were so advanced and the poetic traditions in Russia were so deeply rooted that translators could allow themselves to fully transform and "appropriate" the original text.

In reality, the focus of my investigation is not to offer an assessment of Russian poetry but rather to try to identify shared characteristics between English literature, specifically the poetry of renowned poet Byron, and Armenian poetic thought, where the link connecting these two traditions is the Russian language serving as an intermediary. For many years, these bridges have played a significant role in fostering the development of Armenian literature and culture at large. The fact that the greatest Armenian poet Hovhannes Toumanian introduced the Armenian reader to Byron's the Prisoner of Chillon speaks volumes about that. In fact, Toumanian had little to no knowledge of English, although he always desired to read English poetry in the original. Obviously, Toumanian could not translate from the original, hence he set his mind to translate Byron's famous poem from Russian.

It is here that poetic genius "triumphs" over language barriers. This is not Toumanian's first attempt at translating treasures of world literature. Interestingly, being a gifted and seasoned poet, the All-Armenian Poet, a title he earned during his lifetime, Toumanian was so prudent and open-minded that he realized Armenians should not restrict themselves to whatever was created locally, but should be given a chance to expose themselves to the new and develop culturally.

Indeed, genuine talents have always appreciated and drawn inspiration from one another. Toumanian's desire to translate Pushkin was a deliberate choice. Understanding the significance of Pushkin for Armenian readers truly required a perspective akin to Toumanian's. Staying true to his principles of educating the nation, he undertook the challenging task of translating Byron. Only these two examples are enough to understand how important it was for Toumanian to make chefs-d'oeuvre of world literature accessible to the Armenian reader even if he did not speak the language of the original, even if it meant translating them through an intermediary language.

It was the time when the seed of Armenian statehood was just starting to sprout and Toumanian as well as his contemporaries were fully conscious of the necessity to contribute to the formation and progress of Armenia as an independent state and refine spoken Armenian making it a language of literature. Toumanian viewed translation as a powerful medium for deepening and refining the artistic, aesthetic and literary sensibilities of readers. Through his translations, he laid the groundwork for the enrichment of the Armenian language and the formation of literary Armenian.

This research represents a humble endeavor to underline the prominent features of the original text and their rendering into Armenian via Russian. We do not pursue a goal to provide a deep insight into all linguistic aspects of the poem but point to the Armenian flavor Toumanian seems to have infused into Byron's text.

2. Unveiling Linguocultural Shifts: 'Armeniannes' in Toumanian's Rendering of *The Prisoner of Chillon*

As previously noted, the narrative has undergone numerous linguistic and stylistic transformations throughout the translation process.

The Prisoner of Chillon is written in iambic tetrameter couplets. Iambic tetrameter describes a line of verse composed of ten syllables arranged in five metrical feet (iambes), each of which consists of an unstressed syllable followed by a stressed syllable. The line can be rhymed, as in sonnets or heroic couplets (pairs of end-rhymed lines found in epic or narrative poetry), or unrhymed, as in blank verse (Costa in Britannica).

My hair / is grey / but not / with years... (Byron 1816: 3)

As we can see in the first line of the poem, there are four iambs. The stressed syllables are in italics.

At times, Byron breaks the iambic tetrameter to insert two shorter lines in iambic diameter (lines 2 and 3), but then returns to the usual tetrameter as in line 4:

Nor *grew* / it *white*
In a *sing* / le *night*
As men's / have *grown* / with *sud* / den *fears...* (Byron 1816: 3)

In fact, Byron switches back and forth with regard to the rhyme pattern. This interlocking pattern makes the author's deep feelings and emotions more emphatic.

Zhukovsky follows Byron's rhyme pattern. Yet, the Russian translated version somewhat deviates from the original in terms of its size. While maintaining the same number of stanzas, totaling 14, Zhukovsky's rendition of the poem contains an additional 42 lines compared to Byron's original 392-line narrative poem (Zhukovskiy 2008: 490). The translator seems to have intensified the tragedy of the hero by expanding the text and changing the narrative through a more detailed description of nature. As a result, the tragedy contained in the text is enriched with distinct philosophical and psychological elements. Denying Byron's inclination towards

universal generalizations, right from the outset Zhukovsky gives an intimate tone to the story, which testifies to the fact that the translator focuses on the fate of an individual as distinct from Byron whose poem strikes a chord on a universal level – the fight against oppression, the longing for freedom, and the enduring human spirit.

Starting the translation with a line that does not exist in the original – *взгляните на меня; я сед* [vzglyanite na menya; ya sed] ‘Look at me; my hair is gray’ (Zhukovsky 1959: 270), Zhukovsky’s immediately creates an intimate atmosphere soliciting the readers’ empathy and compassion. He also leaves out the romantic comparisons one can encounter in Byron’s text. Numerous similes such as *for he was beautiful as day, when day was beautiful to me as to young eagle’s being free; a polar day which will not see a sunset till summer’s gone*, etc. are completely omitted from the Russian translation.

As regards Toumanian’s translation, it was revised several times. Toumanian’s grasp of the English language was rudimentary at best, hence after completing the translation of the poem from Russian, he sends it to his friend, engineer-chemist Mkhitar Ter-Andreasyan asking him to compare his translation with the original text and provide feedback. He highly values Toumanian’s translation but offers some improvement although he confesses that despite the fact the poem is translated from an intermediary language, it seems to be translated “almost word-for-word...yet, without any deviations, in a natural language” (Toumanian 2020: 776). Toumanian revises the text taking account of his friend’s remarks. The initial rendition of the translation comprised 387 lines and was first published in 1896 in Tbilisi as an independent volume. Throughout the translator’s lifetime, the translated work underwent two subsequent publications, one in Tbilisi in 1903 and another in Baku in 1908. The total number of lines was subsequently reduced by 100, resulting in 311 lines. Forty-six lines were omitted from the middle part of the poem after the ninety-fifth line, four lines from the end of the fifth stanza, the entire sixth stanza and twenty-two lines from the seventh stanza. Overall, the fourteen stanzas originally present in the work were condensed to twelve in the Armenian version. The translated text follows a structure of ten-syllable couplets, with the exception of eight lines containing five syllables each (Toumanian 2020: 777).

Other than that, as the title of the research implies, Toumanian’s translation is imbued with distinct ‘Armenianness,’ a characteristic trait evident in almost all of Toumanian’s translation endeavors. The All-Armenian Poet’s language is abundant in colloquialisms and dialectisms² alongside syntactical and grammatical structures typical of the Lori and Tbilisi³ vernaculars:

² Here we use the term “dialectism” to refer to a word, phrase or lexical feature characteristic of a particular dialect.

³ Toumanian harbored a profound affection for Georgia, the capital city of which, Tbilisi became his second home and final resting place, while his heart is buried in his cherished birthplace - his beloved Dsegh.

English	Russian	Armenian
To whom the goodly earth and air Are bann'd, and barr'd—forbidden fare; But this was for my father's faith I suffer'd chains and courted death; That father perish'd at the stake For tenets he would not forsake; And for the same his lineal race In darkness found a dwelling place... (Byron 1816: 4)	Лишенный сладостного дня, Дыша без воздуха, в цепях, Я медленно дряхлел и чах, И жизнь казалась без конца. Удел несчастного отца — За веру смерть и стыд цепей — Уделом стал и сыновей. (Zhukovsky 1959: 270)	Զրրկված արևից, աշխարհից, օդից: Իմ հայրը այրվեց խարույկի վրա, Չուզեց իր պաշտած հավասն ուրանա, Իրեն որդիքն էլ նույն բանի համար Օթևան գրտան բանտուվը խավար... (Toumanian 1985: 323)

Notably, we can see an abundant use of nouns typical of the Lori vernacular such as *աշխարք* [ašxarq] ‘world,’ where the suffix *-ք* [q] is attached to the root word *աշխարհ* [ašxarh] resulting in the drop-off of the last unaspirated consonant *-h* [h]. The suffix *-ք* [q] stems from Old Armenian and can be observed in such words as *գիրք* [girq] ‘book,’ *եզերք* [yezerc] ‘edges,’ *նոք* [votq] ‘leg’ (Zakaryan & Avetisyan 2007). In Old Armenian, plural nouns are formed by adding the suffix *-ք* [q] to the end of the root word too. In this context, Toumanian has employed the archaic plural form of the noun *որդի* [vordi] ‘son’ - *որդիք* [vordiq] in accordance with Old Armenian morphology. This form co-occurs with the pronoun *իրեն* [iren] ‘to him’ placed in the dative case to perform the function of the possessive pronoun *իր* [ir] ‘his,’ which is a grammatical form typical of the Lori dialect.

Zhukovski’s translation of the snippet appears to adhere more closely to the original structure and word choices. Zhukovski has broken down the sentence *I suffer’d chains and courted death* into separate parts, expressing the same meaning in an altered fashion through two distinct sentences: (1) *Дыша без воздуха, в цепях* [Diša bez vozduxa, v tsepjax] ‘Breathing without air, in chains’ and (2) *Я медленно дряхлел и чах* [Ya medlenno dryaxlel i čax] ‘I slowly grew decrepit and wasted away,’ respectively. Additionally, Zhukovski has introduced a completely new sentence: *И жизнь казалась без конца* [I žizn’ kazalas’ bez kontsa] ‘And life seemed endless,’ which contributes to maintaining the rhyme scheme while also intensifying the sentiment. These sentences are absent in Toumanian’s translation, although this omission does not impede the comprehension of the message Byron seeks to convey.

Toumanian seems to have intensified the picture by deciphering the metaphoric expressions employed in English, e.g. *perished at the stake* where the idiomatic expression *at the stake* implying ‘burning someone tied to a post’ is translated into Armenian as *այրվեց խարույկի վրա* [ayrvets xaruyki vra] ‘was burnt on fire.’

Also interesting is the use of the vowel *-ը* [ə] (schwa) in such words as *զրրկված* [zərkvats] ‘deprived,’ *գրտան* [gətan] ‘found,’ *սկսան* [skəsan] ‘began,’ etc. Tumanyan’s consistent use of the unstressed vowel *-ը* [ə] is visible throughout the Armenian text, a crucial element for accurately grasping the rhythm of the verse. It is

not typical of modern Armenian orthography and emerges exceptionally during syllabification.

Frequently, we encounter the use of the definite article *-ը [ə]* ‘the’ – *բանտումը [bantumə]* ‘in the prison’ in instances where its usage may not be strictly necessary. However, Toumanian employs it for phonetic purposes, ensuring the flawless rhyme scheme of the poem. These phonetic subtleties are unique to Toumanian’s pen and serve as his signature hallmark. The All-Armenian Poet has unmatched talent for creating perfect rhyming by placing words in a certain grammatical case, e.g. *աբևից [arevits]* “deprived ‘of the sun,’ *աշխարհից [aşxarqits]* ‘of the earth,’ *օդից [odits]* ‘of air’” where all words in a single sentence are placed in the ablative case. At times, this occurs through the addition of words from the same semantic field with an eye to creating a perfect rhyme scheme.

An intriguing aspect of Toumanian’s literary style is that he blends colloquial expressions with elevated lexicon - a phenomenon that upon initial scrutiny may appear unremarkable yet ultimately creates a lexical dissonance.

English	Russian	Armenian
<p>One in fire, and two in field, Their belief with blood have seal'd, Dying as their father died, For the God their foes denied;— Three were in a dungeon cast, Of whom this wreck is left the last. There are seven pillars of Gothic mould, In Chillon's dungeons deep and old, There are seven columns, massy and grey, Dim with a dull imprison'd ray, (Byron 1816: 4)</p>	<p>Два брата, падшие во пре, Отдав на жертву честь и кровь, Спасли души своей любовь. Три заживо схоронены На дне тюремной глубины — И двух сожрала глубина; Лишь я, развалина одна, Себе на горе уцелел, Чтоб их оплакивать удел. На лоне вод стоит Шильон; Там, в подземелье, семь колонн Покрыты влажным мохом лет. На них печальный брезжит свет Луч, ненароком с вышины Упавший в трещину стены И заронившийся во мглу... (Zhukovsky 1959: 270)</p>	<p><i>Մինը</i> կրրակում, երկուսը կրովում Կընքեցին իրենց հավասն արյունով, Իրենց հոր նըման մեռան անկոտորում Թըշնամու մերժած աստծու անունով: Վերջին երեքը բանսն էին <i>ձըզված</i>, Որոնցից էս էմ մընացել <i>հիմի</i>, Հիվանդ բեկորըս մեր <i>անբախտ տոհմի</i>: Այնտեղ, հին ու խոր բանտում Շիլլոնի Յոթը հատ սյուներ գոթական ձևի, Յոթը հա ստ սյուներ, ծանր ու գորշագույն, Երևում են թույլ մի շողով տըժգույն... (Toumanian 1985: 323)</p>

First of all, it should be noted that despite the fact the poem has been translated indirectly via Russian, it remains in full harmony with the original lexically and syntactically. This can be attributed to that fact that the text of the poem has been meticulously revised and refined by Toumanian’s friend to ensure fidelity to the original text.

In the original English version, one of the brothers perishes in a fire, while the other two meet their end on the battlefield. However, in the Russian translation, all three brothers seem to die in a combat (no mention of the first one dying in a fire). Conversely, the Armenian translation closely mirrors the English original with all brothers losing their lives in similar circumstances. It is worth noting that while the metonymy employed in English (*in the field*) is lost in Armenian (*կռվում* [*krvum*] ‘in a combat’), the essence of the story remains consistent. Similarly, the word *кровь* [*krov*] ‘blood’ has been added in the Russian version and the word *belief* has been replaced by *честь* [*čest’*] ‘dignity.’ This is done so as to somewhat preserve the author’s lexicon whereas in the original it is used to form an idiomatic expression - *seal with blood* which denotes a sense of sacrifice conveyed in Russian without any stylistic overtones. The sentiment is further intensified by adding an entirely new sentence: *Спасли души своей любовь* [*Spasli duši svojej lyubov*] ‘Saved the love of their souls,’ which is presumably done to compensate for the loss of the ensuing two sentences. Notably, the Armenian translation successfully preserves the essence of the sentence without any significant lexical or stylistic losses.

Remarkably, numerous lexical and syntactical alterations discernible in the Russian translation are most likely aimed at making the text comprehensible to Russian readers. The style in which the Russian text is crafted seems to mirror the poetic conventions of the era in Russia. In spite of all this, the author’s message is fully imparted. Also, captivating is the addition made by Toumanian - *անբախտ անհիւ* [*anbaxt tohm*] ‘unlucky lineage’ when referring to the fact that the protagonist of the poem is “the wreck...left the last.” At first glance, this might seem arbitrary, yet a more careful look reveals semantic subtleties inherent in this single expression. The sentence *Հիվանդ բեկորքս մեր անբախտ անհիւ* [*hivand bekoras mer anbaxt tohmi*] ‘this sickly wreck of our unlucky lineage’ rings a bell in the ears of Armenian readers – the memory of seemingly endless sufferings sustained by the Armenian nation. Also noteworthy is the use of the resultative participle *ձգված* [*dzgvats*] ‘cast,’ which represents the Western Armenian variant of *զգված* [*gtsvats*] ‘thrown’ (Sargsyan 1991: 2013).

In this short snippet, we can notice several peculiarities characteristic of the Lori dialect. For instance, the numeral *մինը* [*minə*] and the time adverb *հիւս* [*himi*] represent dialectal variants of *մեկ* [*mek*] ‘one’ and *հիւս* [*hima*] ‘now’ (which, in turn, denotes a colloquial usage of the word *այժմ*) respectively. This is fascinating inasmuch as Byron’s elevated flowery style is in stark contrast to Toumanian’s Lori dialect. However, side by side these dialectal words we can observe highly elaborate ones such as *անկոտրում* [*ankotrum*] ‘unbreakable,’ *գորշագույն* [*gorshaguyn*] ‘gray,’ *սրժգույն* [*təzguyn*] ‘pallid,’ which perform a specific stylistic function. They aim to elevate the style of the text to match with Byron’s, yet we reckon that the dialectisms scattered here and there somewhat stain the image, in spite of giving a special flavor peculiar to Toumanian’s literary style and ensuring fluency in the Armenian language.

English	Russian	Armenian
And thus together—yet apart, Fetter'd in hand, but join'd in heart, 'Twas still some solace in the dearth Of the pure elements of earth, To hearken to each other's speech, (Byron 1816: 6)	Была услада нам в одном: Друг другу голос подавать, Друг другу сердце пробуждать Иль былью славной старины, Иль звучной песнею войны... (Zhukovsky 1959: 271)	Այսպէս միասին, բայց ջոկ- ջոկ կապած, Աշխարքի ամեն բարիքից զըրկված, Մի մըխիթարանք միայն ունէինք, Որ իրար ձայներ իմանում էինք: (Toumanian 1985: 324)

Elements of ‘Armenianness’ can also be traced in the excerpt provided above where despite the fact that Toumanian thoroughly conveys all semantic peculiarities of the original text, he utilizes a Tbilisi dialectal variant of the adverb *apart* – ջոկ-ջոկ⁴ [*ʃok-ʃok*] ‘one by one,’ which can also be found in many of Toumanian’s poems and translations (Hansel and Gretel, the Invisible Kingdom, etc.). Another peculiar feature is the use of the word բարիք [*bariq*] ‘produce⁵,’ an “indirect” addition by Toumanian aimed at ‘augmenting’ the feeling and maintaining the rhyming scheme, which holds a specific connotative meaning in Armenian. We call the addition “indirect” because it seems to have initially emerged in the Russian translation as a substitute for the word *solace* in the English original. In Armenian culture, բարիք is used in reference to material comforts and wealth and can be found various metaphoric expressions that reflect the Armenian mindset. One such expression բերք ու բարիք [*berk u bariq*] ‘yield and delight,’ symbolizes abundance and prosperity as the poor yield during the winter season foretells hardships for villagers throughout the year, highlighting the interconnectedness of agricultural prosperity with the well-being of the community. In contrast, the Russian word *услада* [*uslada*] ‘delight, joy’ has deeper connotations, which extend beyond the tangible, encompassing spiritual fulfillment and joy as in *услада дней моих* (Yevgenevna 1984: 518).

Noteworthy is the use of the phrase ձայներ իմանում էինք [*dzayner imanum einq*] literally ‘knew each other’s voices’ in the Armenian translation. In Byron’s poem, this phrase takes on a poignant significance as it implies the ability to at least hear each other’s voices, indicating that they were still alive. It is worth noting that the word իմանալ [*imanal*] ‘know’ is not documented in any standard Armenian dictionary as having the meaning of ճանաչել [*chanačel*] ‘recognize,’ suggesting that it may be a dialectal form of expression too. The phrase *голос подавать* [*golos podavat*] is a Russian idiom that literally translates to “to give voice” in English. It is used figuratively to mean, “to say something, to speak” to prove you are alive (Teliya 2006).

⁴ The Dialectological Dictionary of the Armenian Language (2001) published by the Institute of Language after H. Acharian also classifies it as belonging to the Javakheti dialect (p. 192).

⁵ In the Explanatory Dictionary of Armenian Language Synonyms by Ashot Sukiasyan, the word բարիք [*bariq*] is elucidated as ‘produce (n.)’ or ‘certain material goods bestowed by God to meet the material needs of man’ (Sukiasyan 2009: 150).

English	Russian	Armenian
And not a word of murmur— not A groan o'er his untimely lot,— A little talk of better days, A little hope my own to raise, For I was sunk in silence— lost In this last loss, of all the most... (Byron 1816: 12)	Он гас, столь кротко- молчалив, Столь безнадежно-терпелив, Столь грустно-томен, нежно-тих. Без слез, лишь помня о своих И обо мне... Увы! он гас... (Zhukovsky 1959: 275)	Եվ ոչ մի տրրտունջ, մի «ա խ» չարավ նա Իրեն վաղաժամ օրհասի վրբա: Մի փոքրր խոսեց մեր լավ օրերից. Մի քիչ ըստովեց, հույսեր տըվավ ինձ, Քանզի ես անհուն վըշտից քարացել, Կորուստիս առջև լուռ էի կացել... (Toumanian 1985: 326)

Furthermore, of linguistic interest are the dialectal variations in Armenian pertaining to grammatical tense formations. Notably, in literary Armenian, the past simple tense of the negated verb *չանել* [*čanel*] ‘not to do’ is formed by substituting the infinitive suffix *-ել* [*el*] with the past indefinite marker *-եց* [*ets*] – *չարեց* [*čarets*] ‘did not do.’ Conversely, within the Lori dialect, the past indefinite tense of most verbs shows a different morphological pattern, characterized by the addition of the suffix *-ավ* [*av*] instead of *-եց* [*ets*] – *չարավ* [*čarav*], also illustrated by another example – *տըվավ* [*təvav*] ‘gave’ in the fourth line of the excerpt shown above. The verb *չարավ* [*čarav*] is employed alongside the interjection *ախ* [*ax*] ‘ouch’ indicating pain or suffering, to form an idiom commonly used in Western Armenian – *ախ անել* [*ax anel*] ‘sign for grief’ (Bediryan 2011: 14). This expression conveys the notion of enduring discomfort or suppressing pain without outwardly expressing it. In Russian, we can discern a case of idiomatic translation too. The Russian verb *гаснуть* [*gasnut’*] capturing the idea of someone’s passing with the connotation of *flickering out* adds a poetic layer to the description.

Similarly, the translation of noun phrase *not a word of murmur* into *столь кротко-молчалив* [*stol’ krotko-molčaliv*] ‘so meekly and quietly’ as an adverbial phrase adds a descriptive element to convey the same meaning in Russian.

In the original, the protagonist’s suffering over his brother’s death is portrayed through the use of metaphor *sunk in silence* which is lost in the Russian translation and been replaced by an idiom in Armenian – *լուռ կենալ* [*lur kenal*] ‘remain silent’ further intensified by the metaphor *անհուն վըշտից քարանալ* [*anhun vštits qaranal*] ‘petrified by endless suffering.’

Similar examples are numerous in Russian and Armenian translated versions of the poem necessitating a much lengthier scrutiny, which, regrettably, we cannot perform in the format of an article. Our ultimate goal was not to conduct a thorough linguistic analysis into the translated and original versions of the poem but to point to the features of ‘Armenianness’ discernable in Toumanian’s indirect translation via Russian and the way it impacts the accurate comprehension and interpretation of Byron’s text.

3. Conclusion

Understanding the cultural, social, and historical context in which the author lived is crucial for producing an accurate translation. The translator must indulge into the world of the author comprehending not just the language but also the nuances of the society and time period in which the work was written. By doing so, the translator can capture the essence of the original text and effectively convey its meaning and style to the target audience. Moreover, being familiar with the author's customs, traditions, and social status allows the translator to interpret the text more accurately. These aspects are often woven into the fabric of the writing influencing the author's choice of words, themes, and narrative techniques. By carefully examining these elements, the translator can ensure that the translated work remains faithful to the original while also making it accessible and relatable to readers in the target language. In essence, a thorough understanding of the author's environment is central for producing a translation that does justice to the original work. It requires a deep appreciation for the cultural and historical context in which the text was written as well as a keen eye for detail and nuance. Only then can the translator effectively bridge the gap between languages and cultures allowing readers to experience the richness and depth of the original text in their own language.

Dandyism associated with Lord Byron was reflective of his larger-than-life persona and his disdain for convention. He embraced individualism and sought to challenge the constraints of his time through his personal style and behavior. Byron's rebellious spirit and nonconformist attitude were mirrored in his writings, where he often explored themes of passion, desire and the pursuit of freedom. In his poetry, Byron frequently portrayed himself as a romantic hero, embodying the ideals of the dandy: self-assured, enigmatic, and unapologetically unconventional.

Overall, Lord Byron's dandy style was more than just a fashion statement. It was a manifestation of his rebellious spirit and his desire to challenge social norms, both in his personal life and in his literary works. His influence on the dandy movement extended beyond his lifetime, shaping the cultural environment of the 19th century and leaving a lasting legacy on fashion, literature and the arts.

We take the view that dandyism associated with Byron and greatly reflected in the poet's writing style should have served as a guideline for the choice of the language for Toumanian. The translator seems to have somewhat steered clear of literary conventions and rendered the text mainly through the kaleidoscope of his cultural perceptions and personal emotions shaped by the environment he lived in. The abundance of words and expressions as well as grammatical and syntactical constructions attributable to vernacular dialects Toumanian employs in the Armenian translation bear testimony to that fact.

On the other hand, Toumanian resorts to linguistic domestication to make the language more comprehensible to the Armenian reader. However, it is essential to tread carefully so as not to overshadow the true essence of the original text. Certain adjustments to help the reader easily 'digest' the text are acceptable but the translator should not go as far as to make it feel as if the translation was a sample of national literature. Maintaining a sense of foreignness in translation is also important as it

enables the reader to experience a glimpse of another culture and perspective. The reader should perceive they are somewhat disconnecting with local culture, local perceptions and are stepping into another, unfamiliar dimension. In that context, it is the translator's duty to "open the window" to the unfamiliar with universal values serving as a bridge between the two dimensions.

It is indeed captivating to observe how translators can imbue their translations with their own cultural and historical perspectives as well as personal stylistic choices. Translating descriptions of suffering can be particularly emotional, especially for cultures with a rich history of hardship like the Armenian people. Toumanian's tendency to intensify suffering in the translation could stem from a desire to convey the full emotional weight of the original text to readers who may not otherwise fully grasp the cultural context.

Fascinatingly, in Toumanian's translation there seems to be a shift in language style after the descriptions of suffering towards a pompous and highly elevated style reminiscent of Byron. It could serve as a deliberate stylistic choice to contrast the heaviness of the preceding lines. Adopting a style akin to Byron's elevated poetic text adds a layer of grandeur to the text enhancing the literary quality of the poem and resonating with readers familiar with such stylistic traditions. Overall, Toumanian's translation choices likely stem from a combination of cultural sensitivity, artistic expression and a desire to faithfully represent the emotional and historical depth of the original text.

The balance between linguistic domestication and maintaining the integrity of the original text is crucial in translation. While it is important for the translator to make the language more comprehensible to the target reader, excessive domestication can risk diluting the unique qualities of the original work.

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Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no ethical issues or conflicts of interest in this research.

Ethical Standards

The author affirms this research did not involve human subjects.



The Prisoner of Chillon (1834), an oil painting by Eugène Delacroix housed in the Louvre Museum.
The painting is inspired by Lord Byron's title poem.