

The Sources of Personal Origin and a Portrait of the Writer in the Interior

Abstract: Memories, diaries, personal correspondence, autobiographies, confessions and other sources of personal origin intended for interpersonal communication are considered the best material in reconstruction of past events. We consider that to the texts of the “Confessions” kind should belong *Pro domo sua* (Latin saying that literally means “in favor of his own house”) written by the creators where the author is pondering on himself and the aspects of his own work. *Pro domo sua* was written by more than one writer. These are texts with special charisma that attract attention from the viewpoint of information content, novelty, unexpected interpretations or original self-assessments. The texts under similar title are found in Georgian writing too. Grigol Robakidze also wrote *pro domo sua*. Two texts have been preserved under this title. The first of them was published on October 1, 1923 in the journal "Plamya". Grigol Robakidze wrote the second text of *Pro domo sua* in German language several months prior to his death. The text of *Pro domo sua* written a few months prior to the death of Grigol Robakidze, enriches the portrait of Grigol Robakidze as a creator and personality, with new strokes. As a source of personal origin, he deeply reveals the inner image of the writer, which is especially valuable for the study of the complex phenomenon of Grigol Robakidze.

Key words: The sources of personal origin, *Pro domo sua*, Grigol Robakidze

Memories, diaries, personal correspondence, autobiographies, confessions and other sources of personal origin intended for interpersonal communication are considered the best material in reconstruction of past events. Documentation, retrospectiveness, subjectivity emphasize the personality revealed in them. One part of these texts is intended for publication and has a specific addressee and another part is intended for deferred publications (with indefinite addressee). The sources of personal origin are the memoirs, which in turn, are divided into diaries and recollections and personal correspondence. Of special importance are the so-called "confessions", philosophical texts with an imprint of a unique human individuality which are close to essays.

We consider that to the texts of the “Confessions” kind should belong *Pro domo sua* (Latin saying that literally means “in favor of his own house”) written by the creators where the author is pondering on himself and the aspects of his own work. *Pro domo sua* is the title of a speech that Cicero gave to the board of pontiffs on September 29, 57 BC. In his extensive speech, the orator provides evidence of the illegal actions of the officials and demands the return of the land on the Palatine Hill, where his house and the Statue of Liberty stood before his expulsion.

Pro domo sua was written by more than one writer. These are texts with special charisma that attract attention from the viewpoint of information content, novelty, unexpected interpretations or original self-assessments. The texts under similar title are found in Georgian writing too. Grigol Robakidze also wrote *pro domo sua*. Two texts have been preserved under this title. The first of them was published on October 1, 1923 in the journal "Plamya". A week earlier, Georgian translation of the text came out in the magazine "Rubikon" under the title "Entrance Card" (№ 15). In the “Plamya” there was a note which indicated that the editorial office does not share the author’s views on art, because he is “too far from the ideology of the proletariat”. Grigol Robakidze, as well as *Tsisperqantselebi* or the “Blue Horns” literary group, is coined a representative of the bourgeois idealist trend in Georgian literature.

The text of the *Pro domo sua* published in 1923 begins like this: “It’s not easy to write about oneself ... you will be either too modest or too boastful, in both cases this won’t be true (Robakidze 2014:411). The story is remarkable by the fact that Robakidze here denotes his own creative or ideological landmarks: “In poetry, Homer is the greatest writer of all time. I feel him “physiologically”, he writes. In another place we

read: "I experienced Nietzsche and Dostoevsky. Nietzsche opened to me Dostoevsky ... Dostoevsky opened to me the same Dostoevsky, but only under a different name". After Homer, Robakidze recognizes Charles Baudelaire as the first poet. He remarks: "Symbolists poetry is actually Baudelaire's poetry" (Robakidze 2014: 62).

Grigol Robakidze links his own creative principles with symbolism. This trend for him is a philosophical perception and proletarian poetry for the author is not a separate literary school. Expressionism is interpreted as spiritual state after defeat. In the same text, Robakidze notes, that dream is a cosmic choral and lists his main values at the end of *Pro domo sua*: German music (Bach and Beethoven), French gothic cathedrals and philosophers: Plato, Platen, Leibnitz, Hegel, Kant, Bergloss. Of warriors Grigol Robakidze singles out Hannibal. Naturally, the work of such orientation deserved criticism of proletarian fans.

Grigol Robakidze wrote the second text of *Pro domo sua* in German language several months prior to his death. The existence of this text became known from the postcard written by the writer to the Countess Gitta von Strachwitz, were transmitted by the painter Vanda Hollie to the poet David Magradze in Bavarian city of Ingolstadt in 1994 (see Robakidze 1998). On May 16, 1962, Grigol Robakidze wrote to his girlfriend: "Today I am sending you *Pro domo sua*". The postcard of May 18 deals with the purpose of the work: "*Pro domo sua* is intended for the offspring. The writer rhetorically exclaimed: Shouldn't they know who I am?"

The German text of *Pro domo sua* was published in German city of Aachen, in 2011 (see Gagnidze, Schuchard 2011). The original of the work in 11 pages has been preserved in two copies. One of them, dated 14 May 1962, was sent by the writer to a German friend, poet Hans Peshke, the second one dated May 15 of the same year, was intended for the Countess Gita von Strachwitz. According to the inscription, the writer completed *Pro domo sua* in Geneva, on April 1962.

The story begins with the author's ambitious statement: "In my homeland, in Georgia, I was exceptionally popular. I dominated in the sphere of literature for over two decades (1908-1930)," (Robakidze 2012: 32). The writer names some reasons for his exile from the native land. One of the factors is considered by him the successes of the play "Lamara". From the same text it becomes clear that the writer took with him in exile the manuscript of the novel "Megi". Particularly valuable is the part of the novel which presents the evaluation of Grigol Robakidze and his writings, which were expressed by European thinkers at different times: Essad Bey, Fred Honch, Hans Peschke, Leopold Ziegler, Neander Nielsen, Marcel Brion. Let's regard two of them:

Essad Bey (under penname of Kurban Said), published an article in the *Echo der Zeit* in 1933 where he notes: "It is uncommon to declare immediately the writer known to the German public only by two essays ("The Snake's Shirt" and "Megi") to be a genius. In Robakidze's case this is admissible" (Robakidze 2012: 55). Fred Hoentsch in his letter published in the magazine "Hochland" in 1934-1935 made an explanation: "Robakidze is a really national poet, like Aeschylus, Sophocles and Homer for Greece, Dante for Italy, Dostoevsky for Russia, Hoelderlin and Kleist for Germany" (ibid, 56), etc.

In *Pro domo sua* dated 1962, attention is drawn to Robakidze's analytical observations on his own artistic images. In the writer's view, images in his contemporaneity are distorted. To confirm this thesis, the author cites examples from Rilke's poetry, but the complete destruction of the image he sees in James Joyce's works. The writer is critical to the world-renowned author: "Ulysses, acknowledged as a genuine work of literature by cotemporary elite ... seems to me subconscious dysentery " (Robakidze 2012: 61).

The same text offers valuable information on Grigol Robakidze's hitherto unknown, unfinished novel "Atlantic Dream" and verifies his hero Mister Weston's words: "The life style of every spiritual being must be measured by the feeling of the moment. The pagan felt time totally, it means divinely fully. But he saw angrily that the moment was transient. Therefore, everything he creates causes infinite sadness. Christianity perceives man in such a way that the moment holds eternity. The text of *Pro Domo sua* indicates that the same novel of Robakidze characterizes Homo americanus, who "feels the moment as totally as pagan – but he is free from any melancholy. Homo americanus: species to which modern man belongs" (Robakidze 2012: 62). In the writer's remark this image finds its full representation in Paul Valery's "Monsieur Teste".

In the same place it is noted that "the distortion and disappearance of images gradually lead to the birth of the absurd". The author sees confirmation of this in the writings of Becket and his circle. Georgian writer dissociates himself from the creators of the mentioned kind and reveals his secret to the reader: "I live in an absolute present... Therefore, I probably have no dimension of time".

The text of *Pro domo sua* introduces us to some details of Robakidze's biography. While studying at the the Kutaisi Theological Seminary, the future writer surprised even the rector of the seminary with his deep knowledge of the basics of theology. In 1931 in Berlin, during the debates held in a philosophical society, the writer made a remark to the speaker for not having sufficient knowledge of Hegel. The essay includes the details of the debates with Hans Peschke on Hegel's dialectics in Geneva and so on.

The novel is also distinguished by peculiar digressions. Special attention deserves the discussion about "I am" affirmation, which in the writer's view is "the only feature by which man is different from all other creatures... It appears only in him as a rational being"(Robakidze 2012: 67) . In the saying "I am what I am" the first "I" in the writer's view is "I myself" (Ich-Selbst), the second one: "I- It" (Ich-Es). The first of them is elusive, the second one is tangible. The author analyzes Goethe's phrase in a peculiar way: "Exactly what is true is precisely the truth" ("Wie wahr, wie seiend!"). In Robakidze's view here Plato's thesis about essence and existence is fully unfolded.

Grigol Robakidze's composition evidences that the writer followed the achievements of modern science. The author of *Pro domo sua* is surprised by the great mystery of the atom, in which according to him the cosmic structure of the universe is reflected. Atom is a cosmic slave for the writer. In his opinion, when the atom splits, the monad splits too. Being concerned about this, Robakidze puts a question: "As a result of all this, isn't the cosmos harmed?"

The nuances of the writer's creative credo are revealed when evaluating Dostoevsky as an artist in a new perspective. Rereading the works of a Russian classic he had a thought that Dostoyevsky "constantly breaks two basic laws of art": the first is his attitude to the masses (he does not know the masses), the other drawback is considered the writer's artificiality. Georgian author offers some interesting themes to the future researchers of Dostoyevsky.

The copy of the *Pro Domo sua* text intended for Hans Peschke includes two remarks. The first states that Robakidze himself is not a destructor of images. On the contrary, he reads each new text with rapturous enthusiasm. An example of such a work for Robakidze is Hemingway's short novel "An old man and the sea". He writes: "This novel seems so perfect to me that I am totally drunk with delight" (Robakidze 2012: 78). The second remark of the writer also applies to the reader. The writer does not want the reader to call him arrogant. He states: "I am overly self-confident, but less self-satisfied".

The copy of the *Pro domo sua* intended for Gita von Strachwitz has two pages containing deep and sophisticated philosophical digressions. The "Appendix" begins like this: "The knowledge of being and the being itself are not the same. If that were so, then being would be purely immanent" (Robakidze 2012: 79), the writer notes.

The "Appendix" analyzes the views of Kant and Hartman, namely, clarifies Kant's thesis about the existence of thing-in-itself, also an in-depth discussion about true and false existence. Here the author dwells on the question as to how identical is being and knowledge about being.

As we see, the text of *Pro domo sua* written a few months prior to the death of Grigol Robakidze, enriches the portrait of Grigol Robakidze as a creator and personality, with new strokes. As a source of personal origin, he deeply reveals the inner image of the writer, which is especially valuable for the study of the complex phenomenon of Grigol Robakidze.

References:

Robakidze 2014: Robakidze G. The war and culture. (Translated from German by M. Kvataia and N.Ormotsadze). Tbilisi. "Artanuji", 2014.

Robakidze 2012: Robakidze G. *Pro domo sua* ((Translated from German by M. Kvataia). Tbilisi. "Artanuji", 2012.

Robakidze 1998: Robakidze G. Letters to Countess von Strachwitz (translated from German by T. Kotrikadze). Tbilisi: "Literary Heritage", 1998.

Gagnidze, Schukhard 2011: Gagnidze N., Schuchard M., Grigol Robakidze (1880-1962). Ein georgischer dichter zwischen zwei Sprachen und Kulturen. Shaker Verlag. Aachen, 2011.