



Translations from Georgian to Swedish since 1991 to 2012
a study by Next Page Foundation in the framework of Book Platform project

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The main focus of this research is the books translated into Swedish from Georgian since 1991 until today. The study based on statistical information aims to give a general observation regarding the tradition of translations from Georgian or Georgian via other language into Swedish before and after 1991, discovers the main steps and phases of the translation, division of genres and other online publications or periodicals in relevant with the general situation in Swedish book publishing market.

As the part of this research, it presents an overall review on the general situation of the publishing market and translations in Sweden. Considering of all information, statistics and receptions made for Georgian literature translated into Swedish in Sweden we can conclude what recommendations or comments can be done to improve the promotion of Georgian books in this country.

Introduction

In Sweden, there are 290 main libraries nationwide. Among them the biggest is the National Library of Sweden which keeps all kind of publications printed in Sweden or in Swedish since 1661 and has systemized in one catalog – Libris <http://libris.kb.se/>.

In the Royal Library’s searching system only 6 Georgian translations in Swedish are available, including books, audio books and movie as well. Prior to 1991, the first and only publication appears in 1978, following with years of absolute inactivity. The period after 1991 till today can be remarked as more active and important for the promotion of Georgian books; several books and audio books have been published and recently some new projects have started supported with different donors.

All the translations what can be found at present in libraries are translated via other language, particularly Russian. But in more details we will address this issue in the third chapter. Regarding translators, as it appears from our study, today they are very few, mainly they are translators from Russian language and some Georgian philologists who have studied Swedish in Georgian universities and are interested with translating, such as Tamar Maisuradze, As mentioned above, right now Georgian translators are working on different projects with the support of Svenska Institutet, which plays a biggest role in changing cultures and ideas between Sweden and its friend countries. As a result, next year another Georgian book “Georgian Short stories anthology”, translated by Tamar Maisuradze, will appear on the bookshelves.

Publishing and translation market in Sweden

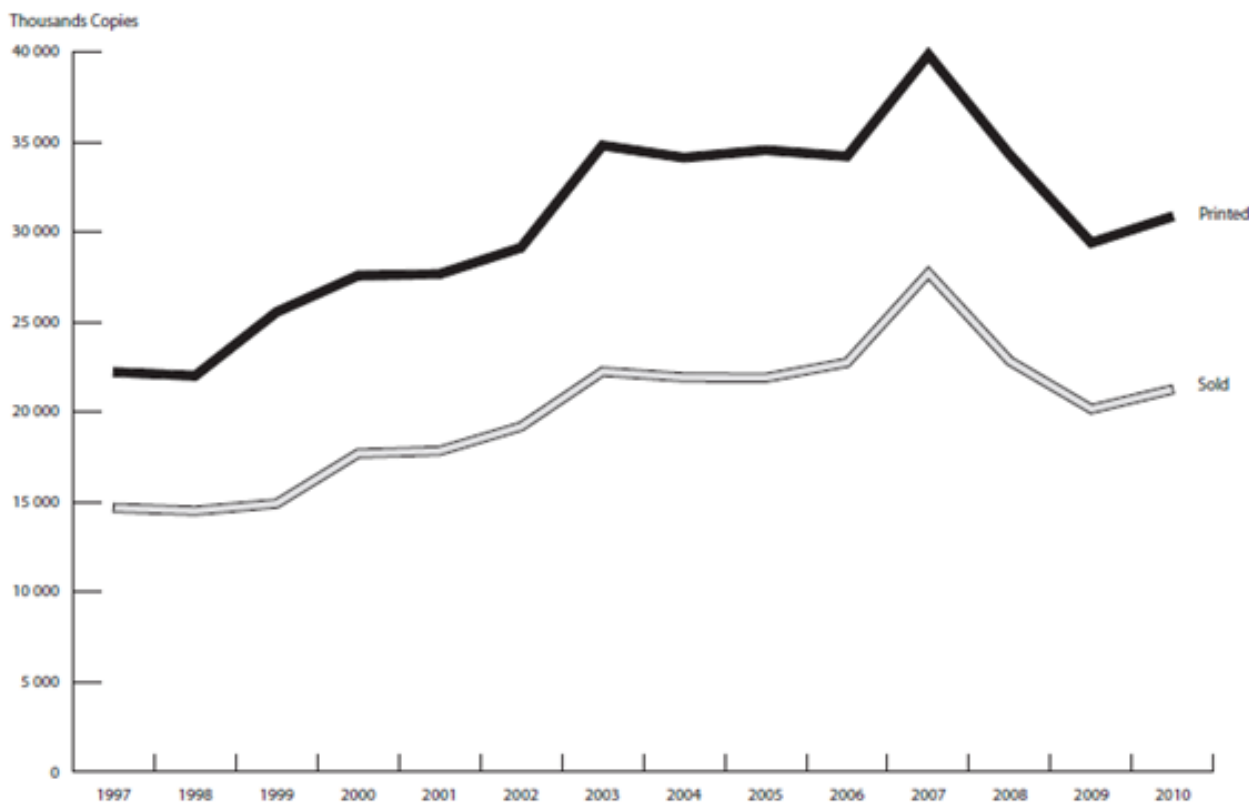
The latest available statistics on current developments of Swedish publishing and book market were published in November 2012 by “Svenska Förläggareföreningen” (Swedish Publishers’ Association, founded in 1843). The Association aims to promote



issues of common interest to the publishing industry and annually publishes reports and statistics of Swedish book market, based on the data gathered from the member publishing houses. According to Swedish publishers directory all over the country there are 38 houses, publishing all kinds of books, magazines, posters, e-books and audio books, maps and journals.

As the latest statistic shows Swedish publishing and translation market experienced good and bad times during the last ten years. Period between 1997 up to 2007 is marked as a productive period in Swedish book trade history (Diagram 1.1), unexpected reduction of VAT (value added tax) on books, from 25% to 6%, in 2002 made books 15% cheaper and promoted better than any other TV commercial. This caused growth of publishers' sale with 45%, which itself gave a rise to the annual number of new books, inspiring publishers and authors to work harder.

1.1 Printed and sold copies for New Titles and new Editions (in thousands copies)



But after a while Swedish book industry faced sudden decrease. The global financial crisis and the economic downturn did not leave the publishers' front list unaffected, publishers' purchases decreased by 15 percent over next three years.



Current figures show a relatively stability in the book publishing market. According to the statistics the charts of new titles and editions, including digital and audio books, have been very stable or declined slightly. In 2011 the total number of published new titles and editions was 4 010, 1.6% less than in 2010(4 074). The number of sold new titles and editions was 21 240, 0.5% less than in 2010(21 347). Chart bellow gives more precise information about last ten years:

Printed and sold new titles and editions 2002 - 2011

	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003	2002
Total number of new titles and editions*	4 010 -16%	4 074 -5.3%	4 301 -3.5%	4 459 -5.3%	4 708 12.7%	4 178 -3.9%	4 347 -3.0%	4 219 4.7%	4 030 15.9%	3 476 5.2%
Printed volumes in thousands	29764 -3.5%	30 857 5.0%	29 391 -14.2%	34 271 -14.0%	39 838 16.5%	34 192 -1.0	34 541 1.2%	34 117 -2.0%	34 796 19.5%	29 122 5.3%
Printed volumes per title in thousands**	8.8 -3.0%	9.1 17.7%	7.7 -6.1%	8.2 -7.6%	8.9 8.3%	8.2 3.0%	7.9 -1.7%	8.1 -6.3%	8.6 3.1%	8.4 0.1%
Number of sold volumes	21240 -0.5%	21 347 5.5%	20 238 -11.5%	22 878 -17.6%	27 752 22.1%	22 730 3.9%	21 886 -0.1%	21 915 -1.4%	22 232 15.9%	19 184 7.6%
Number of sold volumes per title in thousands	5.3 1.1%	5.2 11.4%	4.7 -8.3%	5.1 13.0%	5.9 8.4%	5.4 8.1%	5.0 -3.1%	5.2 -5.9%	5.5 0.0%	5.5 2.2%

* Includes printed books, audio books and digital books with new ISBN (International Standard Book Number)

** Number of print volumes per title refers only to physical books, not downloadable

Since the main focus of our study is translations, we can have a look on the data about translations divided by genres, including the total number of new titles and editions published, printed and sold per year. Hence we can define the percentage of all translations from the total book production derived since 2002 until now in Sweden.

Total number of all translated new titles and editions, categorised by genres 2002 – 2011

	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003	2002
<i>Fiction</i>	198	205	256	306	367	334	338	326	328	298
<i>Non-fiction</i>	298	283	332	452	461	445	601	436	398	367
<i>Children's books</i>	271	382	436	455	490	506	561	520	566	260



Total number of printed translations , categorised by genres 2004-2011

	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004
Fiction	1 405	1 738	2 090	2 081	2 782	2 799	3 478	3 253
Non-fiction	1 689	1 521	1 767	2 518	2 646	2 594	3 208	2 727
Childrens books	1 561	2 365	2 419	2 511	2 817	2 838	3 646	3 710

Total number of sold translations, categorised by genres 2004-2011

	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004
Fiction	910	1 283	1 603	1 475	1 835	2 003	2 408	2 344
Non-fiction	1 070	868	994	1 208	1 441	1 440	1 312	1 546
Children's books	943	1 399	1 319	1 409	1 705	2 019	2 702	2 422

Supervising the latest report about book production in Sweden we found out that from the total number of translated books the biggest per cent is shared by originally english books. After examining the charts from 2002 until 2011, the number of english books translated to swedish are the highest among other languages. But recent observations showed the decline of demand from readers on translations of english books, since the 86% of whole population speaks fluent english.

Number of translated books from different languages 2002-2011

	English	German	French	Spanish	Russian	Italian	Norwegian	Danish	Finish	Islandic	Other
2002	818	21	35	13	11	11	46	18	10	4	68
2003	845	17	36	9	13	6	55	14	16	6	76
2004	851	23	42	11	14	9	78	23	12	13	69
2005	886	52	42	16	9	15	55	16	12	7	36
2006	825	18	54	17	17	12	36	23	9	11	59



2007	918	33	29	9	12	16	58	35	14	16	76
2008	891	21	52	20	18	17	66	22	9	11	84
2009	735	36	51	16	12	7	47	29	5	5	77
2010	743	27	67	16	21	17	60	30	11	8	74
2011	738	45	59	25	21	15	64	22	10	8	66

Reading habits is also substantially stable and at a high level. In the 2012 edition of the “Statistical Yearbook” book reading is described as follows: “Over the past 25 years, the number of regular readers who say they read or listen a book at least once a week during the past 12 months increased from 28% to 39%”. Regarding the practices of reading book in 2012 statistics show that 35% of Swedes read a book daily (36% in 2011; 37% in 2010). Out of those who read books daily, 38% reads mostly fiction literature and 22% reads the non-fiction books.

As a conclusion we can say that despite of the recent downturn trend in sale and publishing numbers, according to industry statistics, in 2011 sales are 44 percent higher than in 2000, which is not a bad growth. Nowadays industry is undergoing rapid change, possibly slightly oversized in its current scope but full of possibilities for publishing houses.

Publishers

According to the Publishing Directory of Sweden there are 38 publishing houses, categorized regarding of their publishing themes. Out of 38 companies 15 issues Swedish or translated fiction literature:

1. **Salomonsson Agency** - Literary agency representing Scandinavian authors worldwide.
2. **Alfabeta Bokförlag AB** - Publishers of books for children and adults fiction, non-fiction, historical, art, music.
3. **Leopard Förlag** - Publisher of Swedish and translated fiction, especially from the Third World. History, popular science and social affairs.
4. **Rabén & Sjögren** - High quality children's books by Swedish and foreign authors, fiction and non-fiction.
5. **B. Wahlströms&Widstrand Bokförlag** - Trade and book club publisher of fiction and non-fiction titles for children and young adults.
6. **Ordfront and Galago** - Current affairs History, fiction, thrillers, graphic novels and comics.



7. **Bokförlaget Natur och Kultur** - General non-fiction, fiction and children's books and textbooks for schools, universities and adult education.
8. **Libris Förlag** - Publishers of religion and theology, fiction, non-fiction, bibles, handbooks, quality paperbacks.
9. **Eriksson & Lindgren** - High quality children's books by Swedish authors.
10. **Berghs Förlag AB** - Picture books, fiction and non-fiction for young readers. Non-fiction, craft and hobby books for adults.
11. **Albert Bonniers Förlag AB** - Modern fiction, classics and poetry by Swedish and foreign authors. Memoirs, biography. High quality non-fiction titles and practical books covering all topics.
12. **Norstedts Agency** - Fiction, non-fiction, memoirs, biographies, political and social science. Picture books, fiction and non-fiction for children and young adults.
13. **Damm Bokförlag** - Trade and book club publisher of fiction titles for adults.
14. **Tiden** - Fiction and non-fiction for children and young adults.
15. **Tranan** - specialized in translating quality fiction from Africa, Asia, Latin America and Eastern Europe.

Among them the biggest and the oldest, hence the most respected publisher is **Albert Bonniers Förlag**, on whose official web site we read that it issues about 200 titles a year, including Swedish and translated fiction, poetry and non-fiction, many of the Nobel Laureates of recent years.

Libraries

In Sweden nationwide there are 40 research, 37 special, 80 hospital and 290 municipal libraries. Among them we should distinguish two major libraries of country: National library of Sweden and Stockholm's Public Library. Both of them collects and preserves all domestic printed and audio-visual materials in Swedish, as well as content with Swedish association published abroad.

National library of Sweden, is the royal library and it's collection consist of more than 20 million objects, including books, posters, pictures, manuscripts, newspapers and much more. The audio-visual collection consists of more than 7 million hours of recorded material.



The National Library is a research library with a primary focus on the humanities and social sciences. Accordingly, the library purchases Swedish and foreign literature on subjects including literature, art, theology, history, and archeology.

The National Library also purchases literature about Sweden written in foreign languages and works by Swedes published abroad.

According to the Swedish Legal Deposit Act publishers of printed material must send one copy of every object to the National Library and six other research libraries. Publishers of music, film, radio and TV must similarly submit copies to the library. In some cases only a sample of broadcast material has to be submitted.

The obligation to collect all printed works in Swedish was laid down in 1661 in an ordinance from the Swedish Privy Council Chancery. The ordinance (legal deposit) ordered all printers in Sweden to send two copies of every publication printed to the Chancery before the material was distributed. One copy was to go to the Swedish National Archives (Riksarkivet), the other to the National Library. The motive for this provision stemmed not from a desire to preserve publications for posterity but from a desire to monitor their contents.

Stockholm's public library includes more than 2 million volumes and 2.4 million audio tapes, CDs and audio books. Except Swedish language, it contains more than 100 languages with 17,000 volumes in Persian, 15,800 in Arabic, and 14,500 in Spanish.

According to Stockholm's public library annual statistics of last year almost 5 million customers has visited and about 4 million has loaned books from library. From the same statistics we find out that the most borrowed languages were Russian (19,300 loans), Thai, Spanish, Persian, Chinese, Arabic, Polish and Japanese.

Georgian translation in Swedish

As we have mentioned in introduction we find only 6 translations of Georgian publications from 1978 up till present, presented below:

Georgian translations	before 1991	after 1991	total
Books	1	2	3
Audio books		2	2
Visual collection		1	1



The division of translations by genres is as follows:

Genres	number of books
Fiction	4
Contemporary poetry	1
Visual collection	1

Translation of Georgian literature via other languages

During our study, we found out that there are no direct translations from Georgian to Swedish. All presented translations of Georgian literature to Swedish are done via Russian language. For the reasons of this fact we have to recall history, Georgia was part of the Soviet Union for a long time and the majority of all publications in Georgia were translated into Russian. Taking in consideration this fact, we easily explain the origins of the tradition of translating Georgian books via Russian into Swedish before 21st century.

As mentioned above in the 3rd chapter, there are only three books, two audio books and one movie translated in to Swedish language.

Name	publ. year	Publisher	Translator	type of publ.
Den Fredlose	1978	Wahlström & Widstrand	Hans Björkegren	book
Den sista flyckten	1996	Wahlström & Widstrand	Hans Björkegren	book
Den Fredlose	2002	Wahlström & Widstrand	Hans Björkegren	audio book
Den sista flyckten	2005	Wahlström & Widstrand	Hans Björkegren	audio book
Modern Georgisk Poesi	19??		Kajsa Lindsten	book
Far till en Soldat	2005			movie

The first two printed books from the table above were translated by Hans Björkegren and were published by Swedish publishing house “Wahlström & Widstrand”, founded in 1884. Today “Wahlström & Widstrand” is the part of “Bonnier förlagen” and publishes almost 100 books a year including Swedish and translated fiction, poetry and non-fiction.



After a while, in the era of digitalization these two books were published as audio-books, without any changes.

Translating and publishing of “Modern Georgiska Poesi” was supported by Svenska Institutet” (Swedish Institute), Swedish embassy and “Svensk-Georgiska Kulturforeningen Stiftelsen “Kaukasus” (Swedish-Georgian culture society and fund “Caucasus”). Kajsa Lindsten translated several poems of contemporary Georgian poets via Russian language.

Working Conditions for translators

In Sweden working conditions and contracts for all writers and literary translators are mostly one and the same, strictly determined with some regulations and amendments made by “Swedish Writer Association” (central professional organization for all authors and literary translators) and “Swedish Publishers’ Association”. The SWA collaborating with SPA settled a standard contract and the minimum terms for the agreement between publisher and writer, which defends authors’ rights from any kind of violation.

According to these terms and standard contract remuneration for primary use (publication by the publishing company which contracted for the translation) at the time of writing is a minimum of SEK 1,900 per standard folded section of the printed text (a standard printed section corresponds to 32,000 characters). The minimum honorarium per printed section has been determined in negotiations between SWA and the Swedish Publishers’ Association and set down in a special honorarium agreement. In addition to the remuneration for primary use, the publisher also undertakes to pay a “vacation remuneration” corresponding to 12% of the total agreed sum.

For secondary use (all reissues by book clubs, and all other use of the translation by anyone other than the publishing company which contracted for the translation), there is additional remuneration to the translator in accordance with principles given in the basic agreement. The basic agreement also states that the translator only grants sole rights to the publisher to make public and reproduce the translation in print. All other rights remain with the translator. The publishers’ rights are terminated as of the end of the tenth year in which they were most recently asserted.

In some cases terms of contract differs, varying according to the professionalism of translators, some are usually able to negotiate higher remuneration than the minimum with the individual publisher and for each work.

Information regarding working conditions of those translators who have been working on Georgian translations is very poor. Particularly it was impossible to get any



information,” since these books were published too many years ago, no report can be found” according to “Wahlström & Widstrand” publishing house.

As we found out from the conversation with Kajsa Lindsten, translator of Georgian contemporary poems for “Modern Georgiska Poesi”, the project she worked on was supported by Svenska Institutet, remuneration and royalties were covered by this institute.

Mediators

The most important, for successful cross-cultural communication and for the creation of close relations between two countries is the proper promoting campaign worked out in a given country. Therefore the role of mediators in promoting culture and translations in a “target” country is essential.

In Sweden, among various actors, which have been popularizing Georgian culture, the first we must note is the role of “Svenska Institutet” (Swedish institute), a public agency that promotes interest and confidence in Sweden around the world. SI seeks to establish cooperation and lasting relations with other countries through strategic communication and exchange in the fields of culture, education, science and business. As a part of “Baltic sea Cooperation” Georgia is getting only academic collaborations and funds. Under these circumstances it supported several projects for promoting Georgian culture.

After SI, translators and contemporary authors living in Stockholm represent the essential promotion of Georgian translations and culture in Swedish society.

Hans Björkegren - first who translated Georgian literature via Russian language is a Swedish writer, translator, historian, journalist and Dr. Phil. after Slavic studies, mainly focused on Soviet Union. He was born in 1933 in Sweden and his skills in Russian language and ingenuity were well known already in high school. From 1960 he moved to Moscow. At first he was working as a correspondent of “Stockholm’s Newspaper” and later was appointed as a head of the News Agency of Northern Europe.

The author of several collections of poetry and three historical novels is considered as Sweden’s one of the foremost translator of Russian literature. He has translated masterpieces of several famous Russian authors; such are Boris Pasternak, Fyodor Dostoevsky, Nadezhda Mandelshtam, Joseph Brodsky, Anna Akhmatova, Vasily Aksenov and many others. Björkegren had a great interest in Soviet Union and its history; he published several books on this theme. In 1985 he published “Russian Revolution in North”, collection of historical research about activities of the Russian revolutionaries’ in Scandinavia. The same idea has his other book “People in Soviet Union”.

Björkegren was awarded the Swedish Academy's translators prize in 1975, the Elsa Thulin's translators prize in 1985 and in 1993 received the title of Honorary Professor



of the University of Uppsala. In 2008 he was awarded a medal of Alexander Pushkin "for his contribution to the dissemination and popularization of the Russian language and Russian culture."

As mentioned above, Hans Bjorkegren was the first to translate Georgian literature in Swedish. Two books - "Den fredlose" and "Den syste flyckten" are the masterpieces of Georgian author Chabua Amiredjibi, who himself and his family were the victims of Soviet Union. Both his novels depict the pre-period of Russian revolution in Georgia.

Regarding Hans Bjorkegren's great interest in Soviet Union and Russian revolution we easily explain the connection between translator and the translation.

Also, it's worth noting another translator Kajsa Lindsten, who translated several Georgian poems of contemporary authors via Russian. Kajsa Lindsten is an author, translator and the member of Swedish PEN club. For several years she had worked as Swedish embassy's Cultural Attaché in Russia, where she got to know Georgian literature, culture and cuisine.

Regarding translation of "Modern Georgiska poesi", she worked with Georgian co-translator Nana Guruli, who unfortunately died few years ago in a car accident.

As one of the other mediator, we have to remark the role of Ministry of Culture of Georgia, which in 2010 launched new "Program of contribution Georgian book and literature", with the main idea to promote and popularize Georgian book and literature, both in Georgia and abroad. The main goals of this program are to contribute book markets and festivals abroad, accomplishing translating projects, development of libraries and supporting free initiatives.

Under this program ministry announced competition of translations for local and foreign publishers to develop traditions of translating Georgian literature in foreign languages and facilitate its integration internationally. Annually as part of this program with supporting of British council and Goethe Institute, forums and discussions are held. Participant authors, Georgian and foreign publishers (Great Britain, German, Sweden, France, Poland, Turkey, Slovenia, Italy, Switzerland and Austria) and translators discuss the better ways to promote Georgian literature abroad and on the contrary, foreign literature in Georgia.

On the last forum, held in May 2012, the program funded translation of "Georgian Short stories Anthology" into Swedish, which will be published by "Tranan och Trasten" publishing house in 2013. Tranan publishing house is specialized in translating quality fiction, especially interesting short stories from Africa, Asia, Latin America and Eastern Europe. Tranan is the owner of several prizes for its publishing, among them an award



from the Swedish Nobel Academy. Trasten is the subsidiary label of Tranan, which publishes mainly translated fiction and non-fiction for children and young adults.

Beside the Tranan publishing house we have to note “Publishing house of Bakur sulakauri”, the leading Georgian publisher of adult fiction, children's and juvenile books, school textbooks, reference and cookbooks. It has published several Swedish books translated to Georgian and currently collaborates with Tranan publishing house regarding the new book which will be published next year.

The book “Georgian short stories anthology” will consist 14 different authors’ short stories and will be translated by Georgian translator Tamar Maisuradze, whose role as a mediator is worth to be mentioned.

Tamar Maisuradze is one and probably the only translator of Georgian into Swedish. After graduating bachelor and master degree in linguistics from Tbilisi State University, she continued her studies in main universities of Sweden; such are Gothenburg and Stockholm University. During her studies she fulfilled some language and pedagogic courses organized by Swedish Institute.

In Georgia in Institute of foreign languages, Tamar organized and managed the “Center of Swedish Language and culture” for more than 8 years and as the head of the center she has participated in many Swedish-Georgian cultural projects.

Currently she lives in Sweden and works on the project, mentioned above. She has contract with Tranan publishing house, which pays her royalty in whole translation, not according of number of characters or pages.

Another active mediator is a Georgian poet Zurab Rtveliashvili, who lives in Stockholm since 2010 and organizes evenings reading his poetry, in Georgian, Russian and English languages. His poetry is appreciated by several groups of Swedish authors and critics. He promotes Georgian literature and introduces it to bigger audience. With help of his friends he is planning to publish collection of his poetry translated into Swedish.

To this end, we have to note the modest contribution of Embassy of Georgia to Sweden, which has financed and organized several cultural projects in Sweden, promoting Georgian Culture by organizing galleries, exhibitions and Georgian evenings with Georgian folk music. As mentioned already it co-financed translation of “Modern Georgiska Poessi”.

Considering our study results we can conclude that Georgian translations since the first publication 1978 has developed merely. The fact illustrates the lack of professional translators and interest from publishing houses.



Recommendations

According to Kajsa Lindsten the main problem is the lack of information which as a result causes lack of interests. In this aspect she sees Georgians governments big role, specifically criticizing embassy of Georgia to Sweden for not having cultural attaché who could organize evenings presenting Georgian literature to publishers and literary society of Sweden, what as a result could raise Swedes interest in publishing and reading Georgian literature.

Zurab Rtveliashvili complains about lack of attention from embassy and criticizes the policy of government. He imposes the main responsibility to ministry of culture of Georgia, which should invest more in promoting and encouraging publishers internationally.

In the contrary, Tamar Maisuradze thinks that there have been done a lot for popularizing and introducing Georgian culture to Swedish society, but according to her the main problem is the lack of professional translators. There is no big interest among Georgian students in Scandinavian Studies. This could be also responsibility of government, to show all students that translator as a profession is perspective and their job would be appreciated.

The last and not the least problem is the narrowness of Georgian contemporary literature. As it is obvious from the research, all translations were mainly done just for a little audience and some even have not been send to book shops. It means that Georgian contemporary writers should create literary works of global scope that can easily catch the attention of public.

So as a result, after analyzing research and conversations with translators, the main obvious problem is not enough promotion and support from Government. If Georgia wants to introduce herself and forge the strongest cultural relations with Sweden there should be taken more serious measurements from Georgian Government.

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