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STUDIES: LINGUISTICS

**Georgian კერა *kera* - Hebrew כִּיר *kir* “hearth”
Georgian ქურა *kura* - Hebrew כּוּר *kur* “furnace”**

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Abstract: The article discusses the origin of the Georgian words – *kera* (the fire place on earthen floor), *kura* (furnace with bellows for metal smelting) - from the Semitic roots.

Keywords: *Hebrew; Georgian; Kera; Kura*

kera (კერა)

According to the Explanatory Dictionary of Georgian Language, *kera* “is the fire place on earthen floor” and figurative – “family” (1, IV). This Georgian word obviously corresponds to modern Hebrew *kir* // *kira* כִּיר \ כִּירָה which in singular form means “portable cooking- furnace”, yet usually in everyday speech designates “electric stove” [2, II]. In the *Old Testament* are found different phonetic versions of the root, while semantics remains the same – *kir* // *kira* // *kura* “portable cooking-furnace”, usually “small stove for two pots”. In classic Hebrew this root as a rule was used in the grammatical form of dual – *kiraim* כִּירַיִם. Seemingly therefore in modern Hebrew, it designates “gas stove” (for four pots). Generally, Hebrew root is regarded to be connected with Akkadian *kuru* and even with Sumerian *gir* [3, II].

In the Georgian translation of the Old Testament, this root *კერა* (*kerá*) appears only once in the Book of Jeremiah, which is regarded as the earliest Georgian translation of the books of the Old Testament. In the Hebrew original in this context, we found an entirely different root generally meaning “furnace”. In Hebrew it appears in singular, while the Georgian translation shows plural – *kerakni* (Jeremiah 36, 22). Thus, Georgian translator preserves Old Hebrew tradition or uses this root in dual (resp. Georg. plural). Medieval Georgian lexicologist Sulkhan-Saba Orbeliani shows this root in the plural and refers to the same single example from Jeremiah (4, 1).

***kura* (ქურა)**

Georgian *ქურა* (*kura*) even today in the literary language means special metallurgical equipment – “furnace with bellows for metal smelting” [1, VII]. In Hebrew Old Testament this word appears as *k u r* כּוּר and bears exactly the same semantics: “*kur* – furnace for metals smelting”. As like as *kir* // *ker* genetically it is connected with Akkad. *kuru* and Sumerian *gir* [3]. Hebrew *kur* many times appears in the *Old Testament*, yet in Georgian translation, like *kira* // *kerá*, it never is translated by Georgian *ქურა* *kura*. So, *kur habarzel* “metal furnace” in Deut. 4, 20 is translated by Georgian lexical equivalent *saqumile* “furnace”. As well in 3 Kingdoms 8, 51 the same Hebrew *kurhabarzel* is translated by Georgian *brdzemli*; cf., “*brdzemli* – melting pot, *kura*” (I. Abuladze). Thus, the Georgian translator for Hebrew *kur* had Georgian correspondence, while the loan word *kura* (ქურა) was not realized as a feasible translation of the word. In the same way, an anonymous translator of Jeremiah in one of the contexts uses for *k u r* כּוּר Georgian equivalent *saqumile* (“metal furnace”) (Jeremiah 11, 4), while in the second time he refers to ancient loan-word in the form of plural – *kerakni* (Jeremiah 36, 22).

So, the Georgian translation of the *Old Testament* evidently shows that the Semitic root *ker* // *kur* had not entered the Georgian language by the way of translation of the books of the *Old Testament*. At the time of translation (IV – V cc. AD), it just existed in Georgian and the translator of the Book of Jeremiah knew it. On the other hand, Georgian lexical items under discussion hardly can be regarded an immediate borrowing from Sumerian as soon as the last shows voiced “bearing” consonant in the root *gir*, while Georgian has voiceless one

kera // *kura*. At the same time, Georgian *kura* (ქურა) displays fully phonetic and semantic coincidence with Akkadian *kuru* “melting pot”. As a matter of fact in modern Georgian one can see concrete lexical item having at least 3 000 years unchanged vocal and semantic history, the history reflecting ancient Mesopotamian metallurgical culture.

In Georgian we have two different (though semantically similar) words: *kera* კერა containing glottal *k*, and *kura* (ქურა) with aspirate *k*, yet both Georgian roots correspond to single Semitic root containing aspirate phoneme *ḳ* *k* with different vocalization: *kir* // *kur*. In this case is observed some regularity characteristic to ancient ethno-dialectal contacts between Kartvelian and Semitic languages: place of articulation of semantically “bearing” consonant remains the same, while type of articulation may be changed. So, aspirate *ḳ* of the source language (Hebrew or even Akkadian) gives in Georgian glottal *ḳ* *k* and aspirate *ḳ* *k*. Similar regulatory reveals in other case as well: Akkadian // Hebrew root *kir* כִּיר (with glottal *k*) meaning “lime // lime stone” in Georgian gives glottal *ḳ* *k* - კირი (*kiri* “lime”) and aspirate: ქართლი (*Kartli*) [see 5]. Each of these Semitic roots presumably had been borrowed at different time and feasibly – by different ethno-dialectal communities.

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