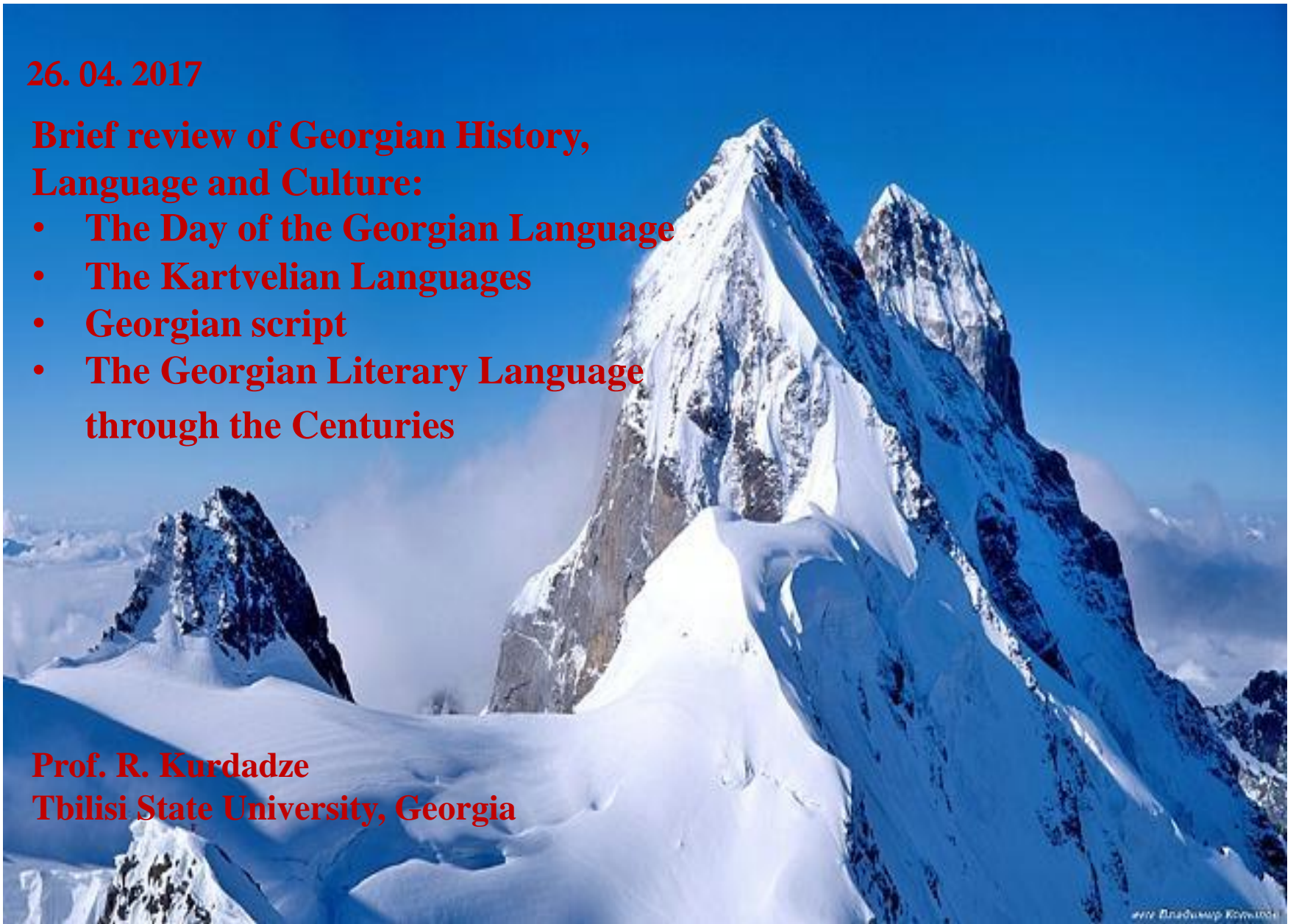


26. 04. 2017

**Brief review of Georgian History,
Language and Culture:**

- **The Day of the Georgian Language**
- **The Kartvelian Languages**
- **Georgian script**
- **The Georgian Literary Language
through the Centuries**

Prof. R. Kurdadze
Tbilisi State University, Georgia



14th of April

**The Day of the
Georgian Language**

**New Constitution of USSR by
Brezhnev 1977 and Mother Tongue
crisis in Tbilisi, Georgia, April 1978**



Tbilisi State University, was founded 1918, before Sovietization of the Georgia



**New Constitution of USSR by Brezhnev and
Mother Tongue crisis in Tbilisi, Georgia,
April 1978**



**First secretary of the Georgian communist
party 29 September 1972 – 6 July 1985 and
after 2nd President of independent Georgia 26
November 1995 – 23 November 2003**

14 April 1978, demonstrations in Tbilisi, capital of the Georgian SSR, took place in response to an attempt by Soviet government to change the constitutional status of the indigenous Georgian language. After a new Soviet Constitution was adopted in October 1977, the Supreme Soviet of the Georgian SSR considered a draft constitution in which, in contrast to the Constitution of 1936, Georgian was no longer declared to be the State language. A series of indoor and outdoor actions of protest ensued and implied with near-certainty there would be a clash between several thousands of demonstrators and the Soviet government, but the Georgian Communist Party chief Eduard Shevardnadze negotiated with the central authorities in Moscow and managed to obtain permission to retain the previous status of the Georgian language. Since 1990, 14 April has been celebrated in Georgia as the Day of the Georgian Language.



**Monument of the book “Mother
Tongue” by Elguja Amashukeli
Tbilisi 1983**

Ethnolinguistic Groups in the Caucasus Region



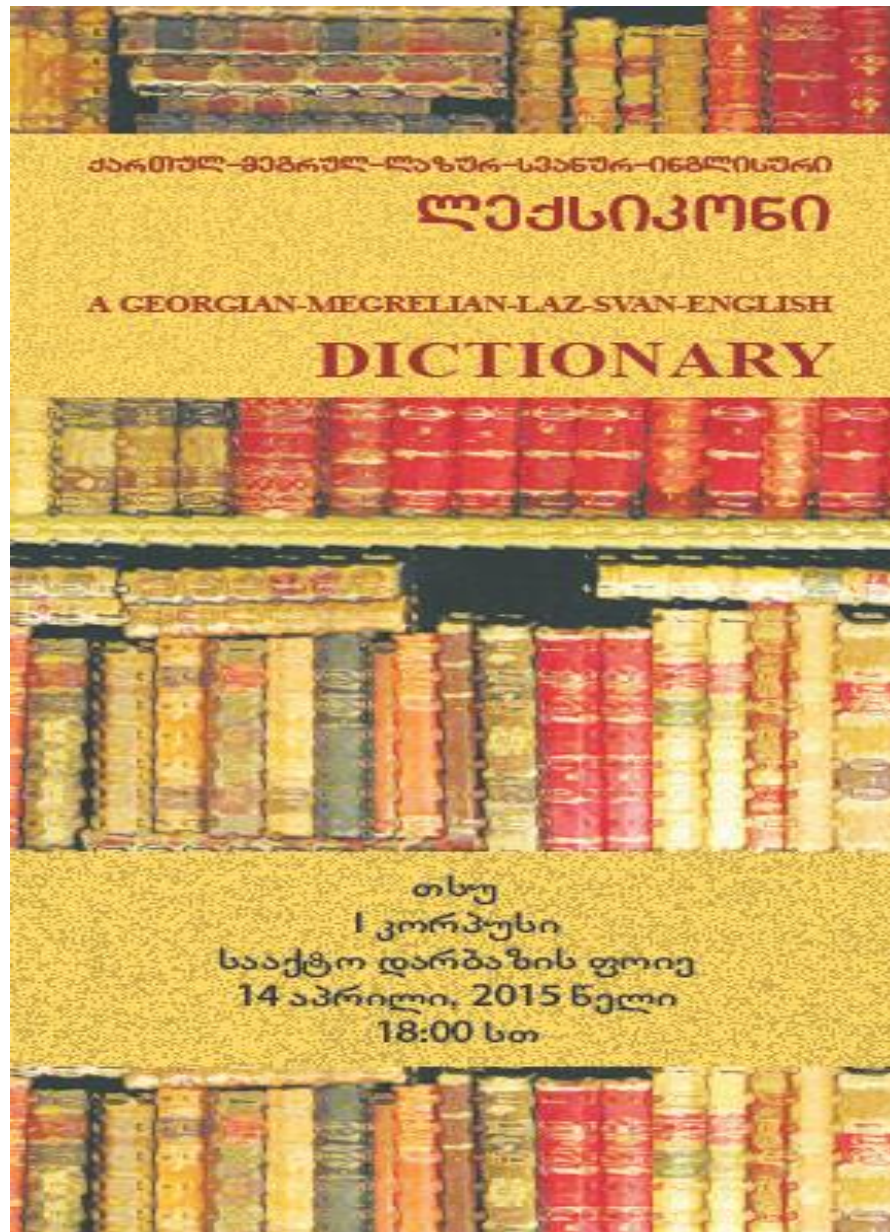
The term Ibero-Caucasian (or Iberian-Caucasian) was proposed by Georgian linguist Arnold Chikobava for the non-Indo-European languages spoken north and south of the Caucasus mountain range.



Arnold Chikobava 1898 - 1985

The South Caucasian or Kartvelian (Georgian) Languages

- Georgian
- Mengrelian (or Mingrelian)
- Laz (Chan)
- Svan



https://tsu.ge/data/image_db_innova/GEORGIAN-MEGRELIAN-LAZ-SVAN-ENGLISH%20DICTIONARY.pdf

The Northwest Caucasian or Abkhaz / adygh Languages

- Abkhaz
- Abaz
- Kabardian (or Cerkezian)
- Ubikh (now extinct)

The North-central Caucasian or Nakh Languages

- Chechen
- Ingush
- Batsbi (or Tsova-Tush)

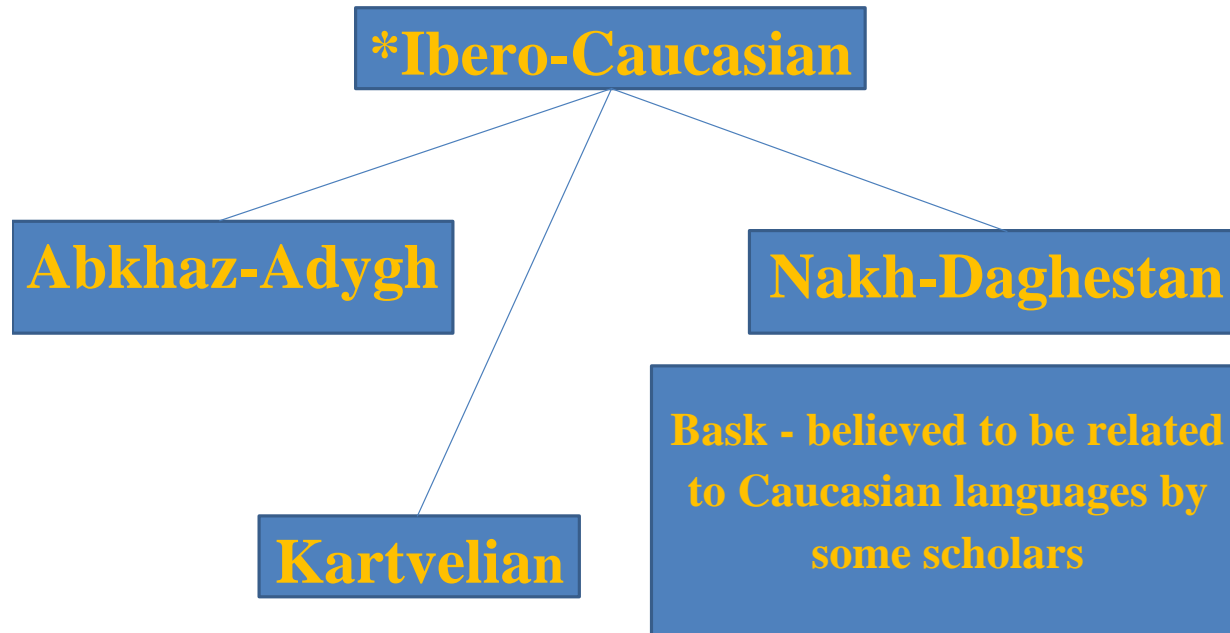
The Northeast Caucasian or Dagestan Languages

- Avarian (or Avar)
- Andian (Andi, Botlikh, Ghodob, Chamal, Bagval, Tindi, Karata, Akhvakh)
- Didoian (Dido, Khvarshi, Bejit, Hunzib)
- Lak-dargwa (Lak, Dargwa, Kubach)
- Lizgian (Lezg, Tabassaran, Aghul, Rutul, Tsakh, Krits, Buduk, Khinalug, udi)

Other Languages in Caucasus:

- **Indo-European:** Armenian, Russian, Ukrainian, Ossetic, Greek Pontic dialect, Persian, Kurdish, Judeo-Tat, Bukhori.
- **Turkic:** Azerbaijani, Balkar, Karachay, Kumuk, Nogai.
- **Semitic:** Assyrian Neo-Aramaic.
- **Mongolic:** Kalmyk.

Genealogical tree of the Ibero-Caucasian Languages



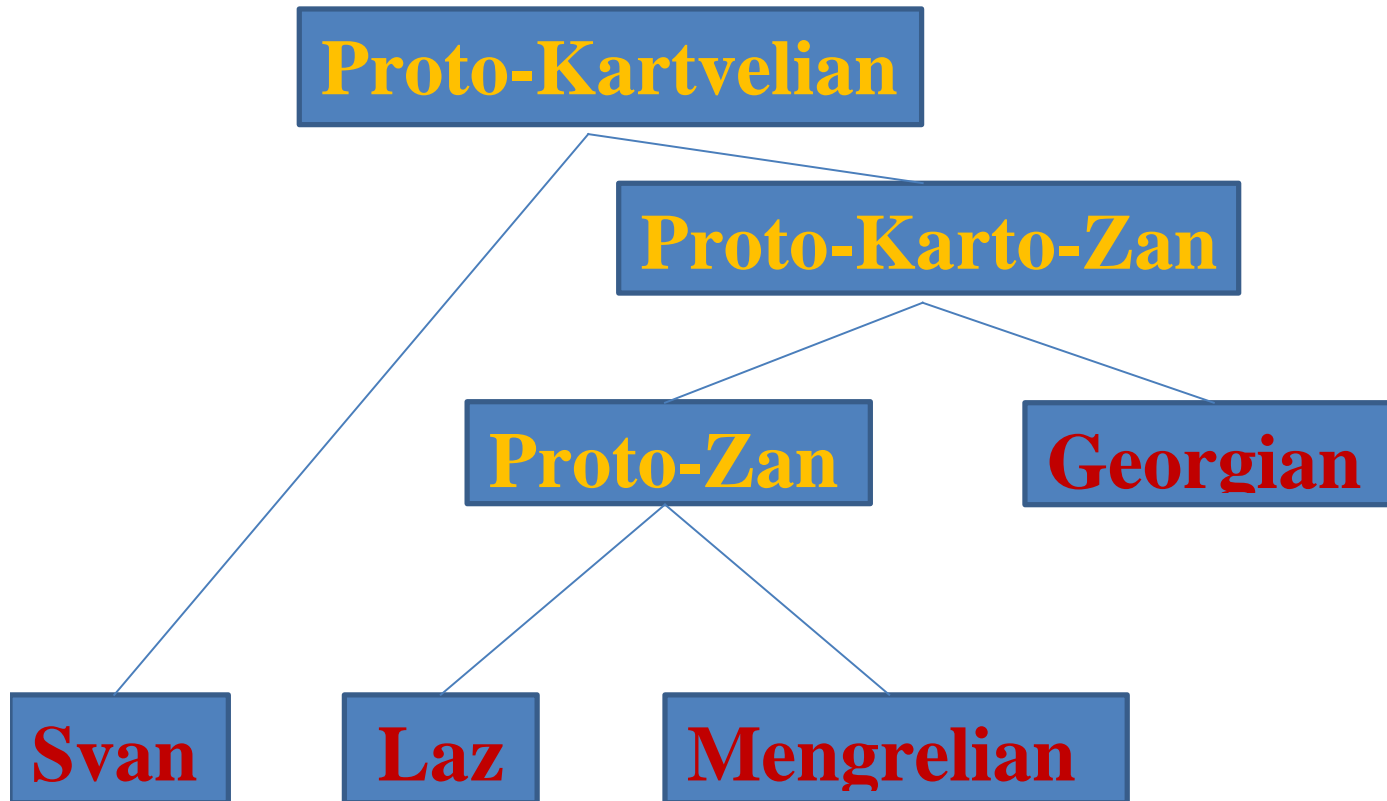
Common similarities:

- Glottal consonants;
- Ergative construction;
- Lexical evidence; etc.

Natural question:

**Are these similarities
typological or genetic ones?**

Genealogical tree of the Kartvelian Languages





Methodology:

- **Comparison** of words representing concrete language vocabulary;
- Identification **regular phonetic correspondences:**

Georgian Megrelian

k'ac-i

k'oč-i

‘a man’

as-i

oš-i

‘hundred’

Georgian

Megrelian

Svan

k^hat^ham-i

k^hot^hom-i

k^hat^häl ‘a hen’

General Information on the Georgian Language

The Georgian Alphabet

- The Georgian alphabet is one of the oldest scripts in the world. There are several hypotheses concerning the origin of the Georgian Alphabet. According to the oldest Georgian chronicle the origin of the Georgian alphabet is supposedly ascribed to *Pharnavaz I*, the first king of Kartli, an ancient Georgian kingdom known as Iberia. Some scholars assumed that Georgian script existed before Georgia was converted to Christianity. In 326 AD Christianity was adopted as the state religion by the rulers of Iberia, King (later Saint) *Mirian III* and Queen (later Saint) *Nana*.
- There are 3 historical systems of the Georgian Alphabet:
 - Asomtavruli or Mrglovani – from the beginning till 9th century;
 - Nuskhuri – 9th - 11th centuries;
 - Mkhedruli from 11th century till today.

*Examples of the ancient Georgian inscription: Asomtavruli or Mrglovani from the
Georgian church in Bethlehem
Mosaic inscription, 430-433 AD*



Examples of the ancient Georgian inscription: Asomtavruli or Mrglovani from the church Bolnisi Sioni, near Tbilisi, Georgia, 492-493 AD



Examples of the of the Georgian script: Asomtavruli or Mrglovani 10th century



Examples of the of the Georgian script: Nuskhuri 1681



*Examples of the decorated initial letters of Georgian script Mkhedruli, from
medieval centuries*

The Letter m



*Examples of the decorated initial letters of Georgian script Mkhedruli, from
medieval centuries*

The Letter u



Letters and Sounds of modern Georgian

- 5 vowels:

ა – a ე – e ი – i ო – o უ – u

- 28 consonants:

ბ – b ფ – ph პ – p' ღ – d თ – th
ტ – t' ძ – dz ც – ts წ – ts' ჯ – j ჩ – ch
ჭ – ch' გ – g ქ – kh კ – k' ყ – q' ვ – v
ზ – z ს – s ჟ – ĵ შ – sh ჭ – ğ ხ – x
ჰ – h ლ – l მ – m ნ – n რ – r

Letters not in use from 19th century

- ი — Short i, like Russian й
- ჟ — Like English w
- ჴ — Specific sound kh, but different from ბ – x
- ვ — replaced in modern Georgian by ვი – vi
- ეჲ — replaced in modern Georgian by ეი – ei
- ჟი — replaced in modern Georgian by იი – oi, ჰიი – hoi
- ფ — f (used for foreign words in 11th and 12th centuries) later replaced by ფი – ph

General features of the current Georgian alphabet

- Unlike many other languages there are no capital letters.
- All graphic signs denotes phonemes.
- Each sound corresponds to one letter.

For instance, there are no patterns like English

sh or *ch*

In Georgian *sh* is *შ* and *ch* is – *ჩ*.

- Each letter corresponds to one phoneme. For instance, there is no letter like *О* in Russian which, depending on the context, can be pronounced like *О* or like *А*.

Old Georgian centers of scholarship and culture:

- Monastery of Saint Saba near Jerusalem, c. 6th - 8th centuries. (“Sinai Homiliary”, first dated Georgian manuscript was written here in 864, afterwards taken to mount Sinai, Egypt).
- Monastery of Saint Catherine at Sinai, 9th - 10th centuries (Egypt).
- Holy Monastery of Iviron, was established 980-983 AD (Greece).
- Several monasteries in Tao-Klarjeti (historical region of Georgia in southwest of the country, now in Turkey): Khandzta, Shatberdi and others, 7th - 13th centuries.
- Monastery of David Gareja, 6th – 18th (now on the border of Georgia and Azerbaijan).

Saint Catherine's Monastery



Sinai Peninsula, showing location of Mount Sinai (Egypt)



Holy Monastery of Iveron



The monastic complex of Khandzta



The monastic complex of David Gareja



Jacob of Tsertavi (Georgian: იაკობ ცურტაველი) also known as Jacob the Priest, was the 5th-century Georgian priest and writer from Tsertavi, then the major town of the Lower Iberia, Georgia



Saint Shushanik

440-475



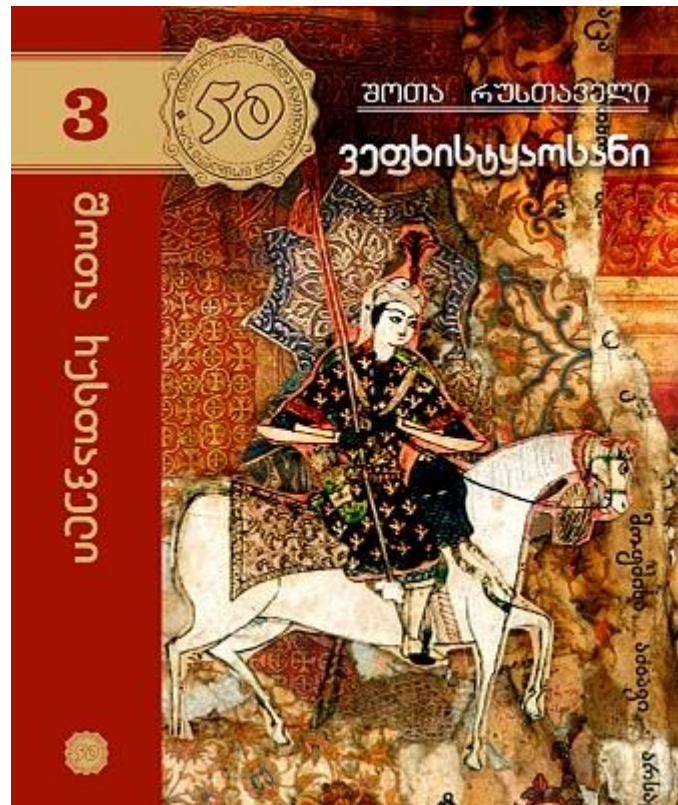
“Martyrdom of the Holy Queen Shushanik” was written between 476 – 483 by Jacob of Tsurtavi

Shota Rustaveli, the greatest Georgian poet

1172-1216



"The Knight in the Tiger's Skin" by Shota Rustaveli



Strophe from “The Knight in the Tiger’s Skin” by Shota Rustaveli

„ვერ დაიჭირავს სიკვდილსა გზა ვიწრო, ვერცა – კლდოვანი,
მისგან ყოველი გასწორდეს, სუსტი და ძალ-გულოვანი,
ბოლოდ შეყარნეს მიწამან ერთგან მოყმე და მხცოვანი,
სჯობს სიცოცხლესა ნაძრახსა სიკვდილი სახელოვანი!“

“A narrow road cannot keep back Death, nor a rocky one;
by him all are levelled, weak and strong-hearted;
in the end the earth unites in one place youth and greybeard.
Better glorious death than shameful life!”

Translated by Marjory Scot Wardrop

**Akaki Shanidze, Georgian linguist,
1887-1987, one of the founders of
Tbilisi State University in 1918**



Periodization of the Literary Georgian Language

- Old Georgian Literary Language: 5th -11th centuries.
- Middle Georgian Literary Language: 12th – 18th centuries.
- New Georgian Literary Language: from 19th - present.

A. Shanidze

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- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eduard_Shevardnadze
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tbilisi_State_University
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1978_Georgian_demonstrations
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- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nakh_languages
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Northeast_Caucasian_languages

Thank you for attention!

