25 September

Hall I

**The Issue of Church immunity in the Context of Relationships between the Church and the State (Catholicate of Abkhazia – 15 th-18****th centuries)**

**Tea Kartvelishvili, Korneli Kekelidze Georgian National Centre of Manuscripts**

Church immunity implied the tax, judicial and administrative privileges provided by the state. Granting the immunity to the church by the state and strengthening of the powers of clergy was conditioned by the political reasons. In the late medieval period, caring about strength of the catholicos’s power, with the jurisdiction over entire West Georgia divided into the kingdoms and princedoms, was directly in the interests of the king of Imereti. And in Guria and Odishi princedoms, immunity was granted to the specific episcopates and monasteries.

Granting of the blood privileges to the church by the state should be regarded as endowing with the immunity. Primarily, these privileges were granted to catholicate. According to “Bichvinta Iadgar”, the cathedral church, catholicos, his servants and serfs were equipped with the blood privileges, immunity of the catholicate senior was established by the law. In addition to Bichvinta, among the church seniors, the blood privileges were granted to: Khobi, Gelati and Mountain St. George (Racha) monasteries, as well as the specific persons that were the personnel of one or another church, mostly, the Sakdrishvilis. In certain cases, by the king’s incentive, the Sakdrishvilis received administrative immunity from the church archpriest as well.

Tracing of the process of granting immunity to the churches clearly reflects the political orientation of the king or the princes and their goals, strengthening of which specific church seniority was prioritized by them. It also shows the attitude of separatist princes towards the catholicate seniority.

**Strategies of Collaboration between Europe and Caucasian Georgia during the Reign of Emperor Charles V (1516-1556)**

**José Manuel Floristán, Universidad Complutense de Madrid, Spain**

The conquest of Constantinople (1453) and Trapezous (1461) marked the disappearance of the last independent territories of the Byzantine Empire. From then on, the Caucasian Christian kingdoms and principalities (Georgia and Armenia) and other Christian communities in the area (Syrians and Maronites) were isolated from Western Christendom. Thus began a new historical era for Georgia, characterized internally by the division into several autonomous kingdoms and principalities, and externally by the confrontation between the two great empires, the Ottoman and the Safavid, which frequently settled their disputes on the territory of Georgia. In this new international situation, isolated attempts are documented to coordinate joint action by Western Christendom with Georgia and other Eastern princes to attack Turkey from both east and west. We know of several embassies during the reigns of the Catholic Monarchs (1474-1516) and Emperor Charles V (1516-1556) in Spain. Their results were limited, for various reasons: the spatial distance between Georgia and Spain made communication difficult; the interests and political situation of the two allies did not always coincide; and the military strength of the Ottoman Empire during the first century after the conquest of Constantinople was still formidable. In my presentation, I will detail the contacts we know of and the difficulties encountered in the collaboration between the Spanish Monarchy and Georgia during this period.

**The Reports of the Russian Ambassador in Istanbul about Georgia in 1794-1796**

**Apolon Tabuashvili, Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University / Korneli Kekelidze Georgian National Centre of Manuscripts**

The reports sent by the Russian ambassador Viktor Kochubey from Istanbul to St. Petersburg contain noteworthy information about Georgia in the 1790s. Copies of Viktor Kochubey’s reports, written in Russian, are preserved in Korneli Kekelidze Georgian National Centre of Manuscripts, in the fund of the Georgian historian, Acad. N. Berdzenishvili (1895-1965).

N. Berdzenishvili Fund contains copies of 41 reports compiled from September 16, 1794 to September 26, 1796. The originals are kept in two Russian archives – «Российский государственный архив древних актов» (РГАДА), «Российский государственный военно-исторический архив» (РГВИА). While the originals of individual documents are kept in the archives of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs – «Архив внешней политики Российской империи» (АВПРИ).

The most of the 41 reports compiled by Viktor Kochubey have not been published yet. In 2014, alongside other preserved materials in the archives of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, only 10 of them were published (*Из истории Российско-Грузинских отношений. К 230-летию заключения Георгиевского трактата. Сборник документов*. Москва, 2014, сс. 584-594).

Despite the fact that some of Viktor Kochubey’s reports are known to historians thanks to Iase Tsintsadze’s book (*Agha-Mahmud-Khan’s attack on Georgia (1795)*, Tbilisi, 1963, pp. 77-78, 80-82, 91-92. In Georgian), it is important to study them thoroughly. The paper presents a wealth of interesting information in the context of Georgian-Ottoman relations and the Caucasian policy of Iran, the Ottoman Empire, and Russia.

**The Study of the Jacobin Dictatorship in Georgian Historiography**

**Irakli Alimbarashvili, Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University**

The French Revolution of 1789-1799 and the Napoleonic era are among the most widely discussed topics from modern world history within Georgian historical discourse. It must be noted that interest in this subject has a long tradition, dating back to the second half of the 19th century, when Georgian periodical press began to emerge. It is from that time that discussions about the French Revolution started, and ever since then, Georgian society has been consistently informed about this crucial historical event. The popularization of the topic continued during the Democratic Republic of Georgia (1918-1921), while in Soviet Georgia its study – although one-sided – acquired a scholarly form. Soviet historiography particularly glorified the Jacobins and Maximilien Robespierre, which, considering the ideological context of the Soviet state, is hardly surprising. This subject also continues to attract significant interest in contemporary Georgian historiography, where a more balanced and pluralistic approach prevails.

The research topic of this paper is to analyze how one of the most complex, controversial, and intriguing episodes of the French Revolution – the Jacobin dictatorship – has been presented, popularized, and studied in Georgia from the late 19th century to the present. Neither in Western historiography nor in Georgia, excluding the Soviet period, has the assessment of the Jacobin regime and its leaders ever been uniform. On the contrary, it is precisely around them that the greatest debates have taken place among historians interested in the French Revolution: for some, Maximilien Robespierre is a hero and Georges Jacques Danton a traitor, while others think the opposite. Some admire Jean-Paul Marat, while others consider him a terrorist, and so on. All of this is clearly reflected in various works written about the Jacobins throughout different periods in Georgia.

The relevance of our research is determined by several factors: 1) The research issue represents a scholarly novelty and remains underexplored in Georgian historiography; 2) The French Revolution – and particularly our selected topic, the Jacobin dictatorship – continues to be widely discussed and evaluated among historians. In this context, it is naturally interesting to explore how it has been analyzed in various historical epochs in Georgia over the past century and a half.

**The scientific problem** presented in this paper is directly connected to the study of the Jacobin dictatorship in Georgia, the involvement of scholars in this process, and the analysis of how the political environment influences historical research. We aim to show the extent to which political conditions affect academia and how the same topic can be studied and interpreted in radically different ways under different regimes.

From a methodological standpoint, the research is based on historical-epistemological and historical-critical approaches, which allow us to clearly see how political conditions influence scholarship, and how Georgian historians’ evaluations of the Jacobin dictatorship differ under totalitarian versus free political systems.

**In conclusion**, this paper presents how the study and interpretation of the Jacobin regime has evolved over the past 155 years in Georgia, during which four different state entities existed: 1) The Russian Empire, of which Georgia was a part; 2) The Democratic Republic of Georgia; 3) The Georgian Soviet Socialist Republic; 4) The modern Republic of Georgia. Each of these states functioned under vastly different political conditions, and our focus is precisely on how these varying contexts influenced historical scholarship in general, and the study of the Jacobin dictatorship in particular.

**Enlightenment Tendencies in Sixteenth- to Eighteenth-Century Georgia**

**Eka Chikvaidze, TSU Shota Rustaveli Institute of Georgian Literature**

The sixteenth to eighteenth centuries mark a period of profound cultural flourishing in Georgia – a time when, in Western Europe, the intellectual foundations of the Enlightenment were being laid. Although Enlightenment doctrine found direct articulation in Georgian culture at a later stage, the ideological and aesthetic movements evident in Georgia during this period reveal a striking resonance with European currents, particularly Baroque and Enlightenment thought. In Georgia, Enlightenment ideas did not emerge in the form of systematic treatises (as with Luther), nor through philosophical essays (as in Bacon or Kant); rather, they found their most authentic expression through literary and artistic mediums. No worldview ever entered the Georgian intellectual sphere through mechanical imitation; instead, any idea that took root had to encounter fertile ground – culturally, historically, and spiritually – capable of cultivating it. The Georgian Romantics offer a vivid testament to this pattern. The Enlightenment in Georgia began to take shape and intensify during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, one of its defining traits being the conscious resistance to Persianophilic, Eastern tendencies and the gradual cultural emancipation from them.

Unlike the secular Enlightenment of Western Europe, the Georgian version retained Christianity at its core – not merely as a spiritual allegiance, but as a historical and existential safeguard for national identity in the face of foreign domination. Georgian Enlighteners, drawn from the aristocratic elite rather than the bourgeoisie, neither opposed the feudal order nor rejected the authority of the Church. Yet their literary and intellectual endeavors clearly reflect a critical stance toward social injustice, a desire for moral reform, and an aspiration for state transformation. Through subtle yet forceful critique, they exposed societal flaws, including clerical corruption and spiritual decay. This period witnessed the rise of moral pedagogy and an unprecedented emphasis on education, regarded as the cornerstone for national unity and regeneration. Enlightenment, in the Georgian context, became synonymous with the strengthening of centralized governance and the overcoming of internal feudal divisions.

Alongside this, a multitude of intellectual pursuits flourished: the rise of scientific curiosity, translation of foreign treatises, the appearance of the first printed Georgian books, the scholarly systematization of national history, the compilation of the first lexicons, and the founding of Georgia’s first printing press. Consequently, the dawn of Georgian Enlightenment was characterized by both the penetration of European ideas and the refusal to replicate them wholesale. This dual dynamic was shaped by a uniquely Georgian worldview and cultural logic. This article seeks to explore the typology of Georgian literary and intellectual developments in relation to European cultural paradigms. Through comparative, analytical, and inductive methodologies, the study identifies key similarities and differences between Georgian and European Enlightenment movements and investigates the historical, social, and ideological forces that account for these intersections and divergences.

**Sulkhan-Saba Orbeliani’s Unpublished Letters from the Propaganda Fide Historical Archives**

**Tatia Mtvarelidze, Caucasus University**

Despite decades of dedicated archival research by both Georgian and international scholars, the Historical Archives of the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith (Propaganda Fide) in the Vatican still preserve a substantial number of documents related to Georgia’s history that remain unknown to contemporary scholarship. The study of these sources not only contributes to the discovery of previously unrecorded historical facts but also opens new perspectives for an objective and nuanced understanding of Georgian history from the 17th to the 19th centuries, particularly in the context of Georgian-European diplomatic and cultural relations.

At the turn of the 17th and 18th centuries, Georgia, fragmented into several kingdoms and weakened under the pressure of the Ottoman and Persian empires, faced an existential crisis. One of its most pressing challenges was the preservation of national and religious identity. Within this context, the intensification of ties with the Holy See and the pursuit of papal protection emerged as a strategic hope and a potential avenue of salvation. Georgian kings, nobles, and clergy sought to establish secret channels of communication with Western Europe as a means of resisting Iranian political influence and reorienting the country’s geopolitical trajectory.

As a result of archival research conducted in June 2025, the author identified a significant body of hitherto unknown documents preserved in various fonds of the Propaganda Fide Archives (SOCG, SC, ACTA, and others). These materials shed light on multiple Georgian attempts to forge closer ties with the Catholic West and include a large number of sources related to Sulkhan-Saba Orbeliani and King Vakhtang VI of Kartli.

Among these are dozens of newly discovered documents concerning Orbeliani’s diplomatic mission in Europe, including the minutes of cardinals’ meetings, reports, memoranda, and extensive correspondence with France, Persia, Constantinople, and Georgia. These documents offer a fresh and more nuanced picture of Sulkhan-Saba’s mission, providing valuable insights into a pivotal chapter in Georgian-European relations.

The purpose of this presentation is to introduce the academic and general Georgian public to a selection of previously unpublished documents for the first time, particularly the Georgian-language letters sent by Sulkhan-Saba Orbeliani from Constantinople to Rome in 1715, at the end of his European journey. These letters, accompanied by related documents – such as correspondence by Domenico dalla Rocca, Andrea di Brescia, and others, along with archival records and proceedings – greatly enrich our understanding of Sulkhan-Saba’s 17-month stay in Constantinople, a phase of his journey that has so far remained largely obscure.

This corpus of newly discovered materials concerning Sulkhan-Saba Orbeliani’s diplomatic activities and his mission to Western Europe will be made accessible for the first time through the present scholarly communication.

**The Pattern Poems of Vakhtang VI within the Context of Baroque Poetry**

**Maia Nachkebia, TSU Shota Rustaveli Institute of Georgian Literature**

Georgian literature of the 17th-18th centuries is rich in thematic innovations, as well as the abundance of genres and the diversity of artistic forms. The themes and motifs developed by Georgian authors of this period, and their tendency to experiment with poetic forms, are similar to European and Slavic Baroque literature.

Of the poetic experiments of Georgian authors of this era, those texts that combine both the auditory and visual, i.e., graphic aspects of the work characteristic of pattern poetry, attract special attention. During the Baroque era, which was characterized by an affinity for all things sophisticated, peculiar, strange, impressive, stunning, allegorical, and emblematic, there was a marked intensification of the tendency to visualize poetry. Consequently, within the context of Baroque poetry, which accorded paramount significance to external effects, each detail assumed profound importance. It is essential to acknowledge that this tendency led to accusations of Baroque literature prioritizing formal explorations over substance, as it was perceived that content was compromised for the sake of technique. However, subsequent assessments recognized the value of these experiments and acknowledged them as a demonstration of the author’s ingenuity, creative talent, and mastery.

The present study employs the method of comparative literary studies, a technique that facilitates the identification of similarities in the works of European and Georgian Baroque authors.

In terms of visualization and pattern poetry of Baroque era, the oeuvre of Vakhtang VI is of special interest, in particular his following works: 1) “Mukhranuli”, a poem that can be read in several ways, 2) a poem that can be read backwards and forwards based on the principle of mirror reflection, i.e., palindrome, 3) “Attskhrameturi”, which is a combination of a pattern, a drawing, and a poem, and 4) alphabetic verses. These works of Vakhtang VI, which we will discuss in the context of the European Baroque, clearly indicate that the aesthetic views and tastes characteristic of the Baroque era had a proper place in the oeuvre of such a representative of the Georgian Baroque as the King-poet Vakhtang VI.

**Vakhtang VI’s “Colored Glasses”: Analysis of Recipes in the Context of Production of European Baroque Era Imitations of Gemstones and Reconstruction of Recipes**

**Irina Gogonaia, Korneli Kekelidze Georgian National Centre of Manuscripts**

The series of paragraphs “Making colored glasses” (§§ 216-232) of Vakhtang VI’s “The Book of Chemistry” – “Book of Mixing Oils and Making Chemistry” – are well known to researchers. The peculiarity of the recipes given here and especially their names, e.g., *Making a Red Ruby, Similar to Ceylon, Eastern Topaz (topaz), Making Something Like an Emerald, the Color of a Blue Iagundi*, show that they are most likely intended for the production of gems or their imitations.

Given the success achieved in the production of colored glass during the Baroque era and the popularity of glass “gemstones”, we thought it would be interesting to analyze the recipes in this context. We also aimed to reconstruct old recipes for “colored glass” through an adequate reading of the components and their ratios.

Unlike precious stones, the history of glass “gemstones” has been studied less in depth than it deserves, despite a long tradition dating back to Byzantine times and the Middle Ages. Only in the mid-1500s did the writer purposefully provide tedious details of the entire process of glass “gem” making. The first author was Giovanni Battista Della Porta. The most important seventeenth-century glassmaking text *L'Arte Vetraria,* was first published in 1612 by an Italian glassmaker and alchemist Antonio Neri (1576-1614). Almost seventy years later, in 1679, the German chemist and glassmaker Johannes Kunkel (1630–1703) completed a German edition of the same treatise, entitled *Ars Vitraria Experimentalis,* in his hands it was transformed into a complex and multi-layered text containing numerous recipes, with smart comments and annotations, descriptions of glass technologies.

Vakhtang VI's paragraphs on colored glass bears traces of borrowing and cultural influences from various sources, which is confirmed by a number of facts, including its relevance to the era and environment of Vakhtang’s work, namely, it is:

* Units of weight used;
* Recipe titles;
* Chemical substance names (Oriental, Latin, German);
* Component ratio, to which European analogues are found.

At the initial stage of the research, through critical analysis of the sources, we have studied the primary sources and scientific literature. Based on the sources, an interdisciplinary study was conducted with the aim of providing professional analysis and interpretation of the chemical-technological knowledge preserved in the recipes, taking into account the peculiarities of the cultural-historical environment of King Vakhtang’s “The Book of Chemistry”, as well as the reconstruction of the glass-making process according to the recipes. A comparison of recipes for glasses *Similar to Ceylon*, selected from paragraphs of “Colored Glass”, with the garnet glasses of Antonio Neri’s L’Arte Vitraria was carried out.

A comparison of recipes allowed us to reveal compositional similarities and differences, outline the technological details, and identify potential challenges in producing colored glasses, which are not recorded in Vakhtang VI’s recipes, but are described in detail in Antonio Neri’s work. This created the basis for a trial experiment.

The scientific work of Vakhtang Bargrationi reflected in his “Chemistry” points to his wide erudition. He produced a highly important treatise covering numerous problems of applied chemistry, among them were the problems of the colorful glass making – glass “gem” making. This part of the treatise reflects the knowledge based on local practice, Eastern and European sources.

The research was conducted within the framework of the project “Natural Science (Chemical-Technological and Mineralogical-Gemological) Knowledge in Georgian and Eastern Manuscripts from the Depositories of Georgia” (grant agreement FR-21-620), funded by the Shota Rustaveli National Science Foundation.

**“Chemistry” of Vakhtang Bagrationi and the Medieval Eastern Cultural-Scientific Context**

**Tamar Abuladze, Korneli Kekelidze Georgian National Centre of Manuscripts**

In the Middle Ages, during a long period of exchange of material, cultural and spiritual achievements, a diverse scientific heritage was created, which was significantly determined by the fundamental works of thinkers of the Arabic-Persian world, the process of dynamic development of theoretical science and practical achievements.

In general, alchemy played a special role in the search for the nature of physical matter and ways to transform it. It was an ancient discipline, created on the basis of natural philosophy and esoteric vision, a multicultural science and technology, which developed over the centuries in different cultures. In the Islamic world, it was called the *“art of arts”/ al-san’at,* and in medieval Europe, *Ars Magna.*

In the 18th century, during the Georgian Enlightenment, translation activities were widespread. Vakhtang VI (Bagrationi) made a very important contribution to this process as a scientist-translator. He translated works of astronomical-astrological, chemical, and mathematical content. Their originals are largely associated with Eastern sources, authors of the period known as the “Golden Age” in the history of Islam (Ulughbeg, Ar-Razi, Nasir ed-Din Tussi).

The work compiled, translated and edited by Vakhtang *“The Book of Mixing Oils and Chemistry”* (manuscript S-3721 from the collection of the National Center of Georgian Manuscripts, copied by Vakhushti Bagrationi) is a remarkable monument in many ways. It reflects the main tendency of the Georgian Enlightenment – educational purposefulness, as well as the role of Vakhtang as a scientist and editor-translator and Georgian-Eastern and Georgian-Western cultural relations. The above is clearly visible in separate parts of the works, which clearly show the traces of their origin – Georgian, Persian, Latin, Russian sources.

The work devotes a significant place to the material that is translated and edited from the works of the Iranian alchemist, scientist and encyclopedist Ar-Razi, the *“Treasure of Secrets”.* In the work, like Ar-Razi, the world of substances is divided into three parts – mineral (earthly), vegetable and animal. From each group are distinguished: from mineral substances – four spirits, seven bodies, thirteen stones...

The main direction and merit of the alchemists’ activity is the refinement of experimental methods and the purposeful use of appropriate equipment. They invented devices for experiments: distillation cubes, chemical furnaces, filtration and distillation apparatus, etc.

The Persian-Arabic manuscripts preserved in the Islamic Collection of the National Center of Manuscripts, along with theoretical material, present laboratory tools and devices that were used for the same purpose in Vakhtang’s “Chemistry”. The laboratory equipment used for distillation from PK-114, the Persian Alchemical Encyclopedia, the corresponding schematic drawings, are used as parallel material. In Vakhtang’s “Chemistry” it is called *ambukh*, Persian *anbik* with Georgian pronunciation. This is an *alembic*, a historical distillation apparatus.

Common in the work of Vakhtang and Persian manuscripts are the invariably used Arabic-Persian terms denoting the corresponding chemical-technological processes and substances: *dashrobili* – *taktir / distillation, sublimation, ghalmey* – *zinc mineral / zinc mineral, mutrikh* – *iron rust / iron rust, hadid* – *iron / iron)* and others.

The study of the multifaceted problematics of Vakhtang’s work determines the need for further in-depth analysis, in particular, in the light of the concept of Ar-Razi (the works *al-Asrar, Sirr al-Asrar*), based on a comparative analysis of other Persian-Arabic fundamental works and texts; as well as the study of the peculiarities of Georgian-Persian linguistic relations, the scientific terminology of the works, which clearly reflects the transfer of Eastern scientific thought into the Georgian scientific language.

Addressing the identified issues will open up the prospect of attracting broad-based specialists to the study, which will largely determine future documentary research on the features of an important stage of Georgian-Eastern cultural and scientific ties and trends in the cultural area of the Middle East.

**Embroidered Cuffs by the Sister of Vakhtang VI Khvaramze and their Iconography**

**Izolda Melikishvili,** **Art Palace of Georgia – Museum of Cultural History**

A pair of cuffs from David Gareji Monastery, named after John the Baptist, are among the examples of embroidery in which the mystical understanding of the liturgical service is brought to the forefront both iconographically and in meaning.

The two cuffs depict the compositions of the “Adoration of the Sacrifice” in different versions.

One of them depicts the “Crucifixion” on the altar accompanied by St. John Chrysostom, dressed in a polystavrion, and the other – “Adoration of the Sacrifice” with the image of St. Basil. The holy fathers hold open Gospels, on which fragments of liturgical texts have been preserved. The characters are accompanied by explanatory inscriptions.

Blood flows in two streams from the right side of the body of the crucified Christ and flows into a tall, silver-embroidered chalice standing at His feet: “But one of the men pierced His side with a spear, and immediately there came out blood and water” (John 19:33).

One stream of blood, embroidered with silver – water – is the biological, human beginning of the Savior, and the other, embroidered with scarlet silk thread, is a stream of blood, the beginning of the divine nature of the Savior, incarnated on earth in the image of the Son of God. This emphasizes the dual nature of the Savior.

In the period of interest to us (17th-18th centuries), such options for solving the background in the composition (architectural background, horizontal wall with window openings) were widespread, as on the “Khvaramze” railings. Found on art monuments of the 17th-18th centuries: Martvili icon – 1644, Tsaishi icon – 1619, miniature of Anchiskhati Gulani.

In the composition “Crucifixion” the chalice, into which the blood streaming from the rib of the Savior flows, is considered as an earthly church, and the architectural structure depicted opposite it is a synagogue.

In the composition, Saints Basil and John Chrysostom are presented as the fathers of the liturgy Illustrating the proskomedia.

Both compositions on the cuffs are simultaneously characterized by narrative and symbolism, that is, they are a symbolic formula of the sacrament, a symbolic image. If we consider the plant decor located on the lower horizon of the composition from this point of view, then its symbolic and semantic purpose will become clear, and we also easily recognize the symbolic sign of the face of the Virgin Mary – a lily. When considering the iconographic program from a theological and liturgical point of view, the characters of the composition, the architectural background and the plant-star decor are imbued with Christian symbolism. This is typical for monuments of the late feudal period of Georgian church embroidery.

The stylistic features of the monuments of the late feudal period (16th-17th centuries) have also been preserved. This is clearly visible in the depiction of characters and compositions, in the apparent conventionality of the depiction of individual planes, but against the background of this conventionality, the so-called stylization characteristic of the era is clearly visible.

For a complete study and analysis of these examples of embroidery, it is necessary to examine the inscriptions preserved on them, made by asomtavruli. These inscriptions are canonical, donor and explanatory.

The inscription, which suffered less and is read in full, mentions two people: “Batonishvili Khvaramze” and “Archimandrite Germane”.

On one of the sealed documents kept in Korneli Kekelidze Institute of Georgian Manuscripts, there is an inscription: “Batoni(shvi)li Kh(varamz)e” (Sh.D. 679), where she is mentioned as the sister of Vakhtang VI.

The historical documents of the first quarter of the 18th century shed light on the personality of Archimandrite Germane. In them he is mentioned as the editor of the “Gospel”, printed in the Georgian printing house during the reign of King Vakhtang VI: “(1709)” “He impeccably researched, corrected and printed the Holy Scripture.”

Based on the above, it is possible that Batonishvili Khvaramze presented this pair of cuffs to Archimandrite Germane from David Gareji Monastery in 1710, precisely in memory of his labors and merits.

**On Several Manuscripts Associated with the Name of Vakhtang VI**

**Lela Shatirishvili, Korneli Kekelidze Georgian National Centre of Manuscripts**

The purpose of the report is to introduce Vakhtang Bagrationi, a statesman and public figure of the first quarter of the 18th century, a scholar and translator, for whom the period of the reign of the Janissaries (1704-1711) and then his reign as Vakhtang VI (1719-1724) were especially important. In implementing significant innovations and reformist activities, he was supported by his brother Damian, Catholicos of Kartli since 1705, Domentius IV. Three manuscripts should be associated with this period, two of which are kept in the NCM and one in the NAG and contain the text “ On preparation and blessing of myrrh ”. Scientific activity of Vahtang VI had primary importance in the first quarter of the 18th century. His book depositories contained numerous medical and veterinary manuscripts, many of which are now kept in the NCM, the NAG and abroad. At the IOM (St. Petersburg), there is a complete inventory of the medical collections “Incomparable Qarabadin” and Zaza Panaskerteli’s “The Medical book – Qarabadin” are associated with the Name of Vakhtang 6th. Two manuscripts in the field of astronomy and astrology are associated with Vakhtang VI: Astrological Treatise (1188) and the “Book of Stars” or “Haydayat al-nujum” (1735).

The information about these manuscripts should be relevant since from the mentioned manuscripts “On the Preparation and Consecration of Myrr” has not been researched by anyone after K. Kekelidze. In addition, it is desirable to present to the public some interesting and little-known information about medical and astronomical-astrological manuscripts associated with the name of Vakhtang VI.

The report raises several problematic issues, namely: with the consent of Vakhtang VI, his brother, Catholicos Domenti IV, began to regulate church affairs in the Kingdom of Kartli. They tried to restore the ruined Svetitskhoveli to its former glory, for which it was necessary to remind the people of its main dignity. Svetitskhoveli was a place where chrism was prepared and consecrated. Vakhtang VI, together with Catholicos Domenti IV, devoted considerable attention and financial resources to copying and reproducing manuscripts. Perhaps all three manuscripts of the “Chrism Preparation” that have reached us were rewritten by their order. Moreover, these texts have been preserved in both forms of handwritten books: codex and scroll. The question arises: When did the text on this topic take the form of a scroll. and how was chrism prepared in Georgia?

The codicological-textological and historical-philological methods will help in studying various issues, namely: thematic-genre systematization-study of texts preserved in scrolls and codes; liturgical-dogmatic analysis of texts of sacred content; creation, purpose and meaning of secular scientific texts, etc., which will contribute to the emergence of significant innovations.

Thus, a comprehensive scientific study of a manuscript book taking into account modern requirements is an important stage in philology, in particular codicology-textology.

**Rustvelian Reminiscences in the Poetry of Vakhtang VI**

**Lia Karichashvili, TSU Shota Rustaveli Institute of Georgian Literature**

Vakhtang VI’s “Translation of *The Knight in the Panther’s Skin*”, appended to the first printed edition of the poem in 1712, in effect lays the foundation of Rustvelology. Akaki Shanidze referred to it as “the first Rustvelological monograph.” This work has been thoroughly examined in scholarly literature, revealing the remarkable acuity of the king’s perspective – both as a reader and a researcher – and the perceptiveness of his reception and interpretative emphases regarding the poem. Moreover, Vakhtang VI’s own original literary work testifies to a creative kinship with Rustaveli. Alongside the noteworthy innovations in Vakhtang’s poetry, the continuation of Rustvelian tendencies is clearly evident, both in worldview and in poetics. The aim of the present study is to illuminate the affinities between Vakhtang VI’s poetry and *The Knight in the Panther’s Skin*.

Although there are monographs and individual academic articles dedicated to Vakhtang VI’s oeuvre (by K. Kekelidze, Al. Baramidze, A. Shanidze, L. Menabde, G. Imedadze, S. Tsaishvili, B. Darchia, M. Karbelashvili, G. Kuchukhidze, and others), and certain parallels have already been drawn, we believe there is a broader base and more substantial evidence to more fully outline the trace of Rustaveli’s thought and the reminiscences of his poem in the king’s verse. Some of our observations in this regard are novel and reveal previously unnoted intersections between the two creators.

The present paper employs historical (a brief overview of the history of the poem’s study), intertextual (identifying passages of *The Knight in the Panther’s Skin* as intertexts within Vakhtang’s poetry), and hermeneutical (interpreting select lines, concepts, motifs, and episodes) methodologies.

Our research demonstrates that King Vakhtang’s convictions regarding the purpose of poetry, the modes and principles of poetic expression, align – indeed coincide – with Rustaveli’s poetic conception. Of particular interest in this regard is the poem *Satrpialoni*, where the king reflects on the essence of poetry and directly references Rustaveli. This poem may be viewed as a kind of paraphrase of the “theory of versification” found in the prologue of *The Knight in the Panther’s Skin*. The cognitive and aesthetic functions of poetry are clearly delineated; its brevity is noted as a virtue. According to the classifications of both poets, poetry is of three kinds (in contemporary terms: epic, lyric, and humorous or entertaining verse). As Vakhtang puts it, poetry is “to be tasted in three or four ways,” a phrase likely denoting the multilayered nature of poetic narrative and its openness to varied interpretations and understandings. It is precisely this awareness of poetic complexity that enabled the king to grasp the allegorical dimensions of *The Knight in the Panther’s Skin* – its sacred and secular aspects of love, the fairy-tale structure underlying the poem’s plot, and more.

For Vakhtang, as for Rustaveli, love is divine; it is “not easy to discern” – “Think not that love is easily judged!” His love lyrics are imbued with allegorical and mystical significance and draw upon biblical and Christian theological symbolism. It was precisely this worldview that allowed him to “recognize” divine love within Rustaveli’s poetic conception of passion.

Another central theme in Vakhtang’s poetry is the purpose of human existence. Though he often laments the transience and treachery of the mortal world, he maintains that one must leave a trace in this life and attain grace. The highest form of legacy, he asserts, is a good name. In this, the king unmistakably echoes Rustaveli’s famous aphorism: *“Better to gain a name than all else that may be gained!”*

Vakhtang’s verse contains numerous allusions and reminiscences of specific passages and lines from *The Knight in the Panther’s Skin*. The present study discusses eleven such instances.

The results of our analysis reveal more clearly Vakhtang’s creative closeness to Rustaveli – something entirely natural for the most devoted connoisseur, interpreter, and protector of *The Knight in the Panther’s Skin*. Vakhtang draws upon Rustaveli as a great creative forebear, adopts and internalizes his worldview, his manner of thinking, and his poetic culture. At the same time, it must be noted that King Vakhtang is a distinctive and original poet in his own right, who introduced a number of innovations of his own.

**From the History of Evaluating the Achievements of King Vakhtang VI (18th-21st centuries)**

**Niko Javakhishvili, Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University**

The study examines how the contributions of King Vakhtang VI of Kartli (1675-1737) were evaluated both by his contemporaries and by representatives of subsequent generations over the last three centuries.

The relevance of the research topic is determined by the fact that this year marks the 350th anniversary of the birth of the aforementioned king. On September 15, 1675, King Vakhtang V of Kartli, that same “Shahnawaz”, had another grandchild, whom they named Vakhtang. His father was the aforementioned king’s fourth son – Prince Levan, and his mother was Tuta, the daughter of Kaikhosro Gurieli. Since Prince Levan had three older brothers, several nephews, and an elder son – Kaikhosro (who was killed in 1711 in Afghanistan), according to the tradition of inheritance of the throne which long existed in Georgia, his second son should not have taken the royal throne of Kartli. However, the processes developed in such a way that indeed Vakhtang Levan’s son Bagrationi, who is known as Vakhtang VI, ascended the throne.

The question of how the contributions of the mentioned sovereign have been reflec­ted in contemporary and later public thought requires a comprehensive and monographic study, which has not yet occurred and is a matter for the future. Consequently, this work focuses only on a few significant aspects. It reviews numerous studies regarding the tumultuous life, tireless activities, and tragic end of Vakhtang VI, which highly evaluate his contributions, particularly in the cultural and educational fields. Among them are works in which the life and activities of the mentioned king are studied monographically.

When studying the raised problem, historiographical research methods based on adaptation have been used, specifically, the main sources and literature related to the research topic have been reviewed.

Based on the study of the issue, it has been determined that one of the prominent representatives of the Bagrationi (Bagratid) dynasty, who was a scholar and a lawgiver, holds a notable position in the history of Georgian writers due to his unique, open-minded contributions. A brief overview of the significant cultural and artistic activities of this distinguished figure can be summarized by highlighting the following details: The establishment of the first Georgian publishing house in Tbilisi and the publication of Georgian narrative books (including “The Knight in the Panther’s Skin”), the preparation of a legal framework (the drafting of the principles of civil law and the creation of the “Dasturlamali”), the editing and review of the text of “Georgian Life” and the establishment of a commission for this purpose (led by Beri Egnatashvili), which resulted in the creation of “New Georgian Life”, care for the advancement of individual fields of science, the translation of significant works from foreign languages, the contributions of his son – prince Vakhushti, prince Sulkhan-Saba Orbeliani, prince Gabriel Gelovani and others, the restoration of chur­ches and monasteries, and more.

It is substantiated that all of the above has been assessed appropriately by both contemporary representatives of King Vakhtang VI and subsequent generations of Georgian and foreign intellectuals, starting from the first quarter of the 18th century to the present day.

**Vakhtang VI as a character in Nikoloz Sanishvili and Ioseb Tumanishvili’s film “Davit Guramishvili”**

**Ketevan Pataraia, Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University**

The movie “Davit Guramishvili” was filmed in the last year of World War II at the “Georgian Film” studio and was released in cinemas across the Soviet Union in 1946. Along with the character of Davit Guramishvili, the main character in the film, the character of King Vakhtang VI has no less importance (which, based on Guramishvili’s biography, was expected). It is interesting what the reason for the selection of this topic was, since during this period only a few films were produced in Soviet film studios, and the choice of subject had to be approved by representatives of the highest authorities (often, personally by Stalin).The fund of the “Georgian Film” studio, preserved in the National Archives of Georgia, contains various materials related to the film “Davit Guramishvili”. The study of this material proves interesting and informative, even at first glance. On the one hand, the film introduces the great Georgian poet Davit Guramishvili to the audience; on the other hand, it seeks to depict the situation of Georgia in the 18th century and the choice made by Vakhtang VI in his attempt to lead the country out of crisis. The latter aspect carries greater weight in the film than the exploration of the human or poetic essence of Davit Guramishvili himself. Embedding certain ideological messages in a film was not new at that time – and it is not unusual now. The same plot, the same hero’s story, can serve as the basis for various ideological interpretations. In this particular case, Vakhtang VI is the character who bears an ideological significance acceptable to the government of that period. Based on a comparison of archival materials, historical references, and films, we will examine why and how King Vakhtang VI’s character was portrayed in the film of Nikoloz Sanishvili and Ioseb Tumanishvili. We will also explore the artistic techniques the directors employed to connect real stories to their own interpretations.

**Several Issues of Mentality according to the Book of Law of Vakhtang VI**

**Tsira Janashia, Georgian National Academy of Sciences**

The “Book of Law” of Vakhtang VI clearly shows the character of the Georgian intellectual system (mentality). Based on the observations of this text, I will address several issues in the study, such as: the role of the judge and his conduct during legal proceedings; the relationship between the king and the liege, and between the nobleman and the liege – their spiritual condition; the value of honor; the role and place of the clergy in legal proceedings; the sale of another’s family members (wife and children) and its punishment; and the notion of blood price. In the report, I will discuss issues of mentality through the analysis of Vakhtang VI’s Book of Law and contemporary Georgian written sources, which show a change in the methodological approach of the research, a mutual synthesis of socio-economic and human perceptions, and clearly present mental values. Such an analysis represents the first attempt at research in the specialized literature on this subject.

**The Legacy of Vakhtang VI in the Gori Museum**

**Tamila Koshoridze, Ekaterine Ilarishvili, Sergi Makalatia, Gori Historical and Ethnographical Museum**

This report presents an analysis of archival material preserved in the manuscript collection of the Sergi Makalatia Gori Historical-Ethnographic Museum. The collection includes around 2,000 exhibits. A significant portion of these materials entered the museum during its early years, donated by the heirs of the prominent public figure in Gori, Alexander Garsevanishvili. Using methods of historical and source analysis, the paper will examine several charters of privilege and confirmation issued by Vakhtang VI.

The relevance of the topic is underscored by the fact that these charters were primarily granted to the Garsevanishvili family. The history of this family is directly connected to Vakhtang VI – Iese Garsevanishvili was Vakhtang VI’s spiritual mentor and the tutor of his son, Prince Vakhushti – as well as to the history of the Okoni icon and churches. Additionally, the research presents various pieces of information related to the history of the city of Gori. Some of these have been previously studied, while several documents will be re-analyzed here, in light of contemporary trends in source studies, and introduced into academic circulation for the first time.

The study will address several important issues, including those directly related to the history of the city of Gori, the churches and icon of Okoni, and the Garsevanishvili family. It will also examine volumes of the *Dasturlamal* and the *Code of Laws* preserved in the museum’s manuscript collection, which are associated with the Gori school of calligraphy.

We believe that in the presented report, **“The Legacy of Vakhtang VI in the Gori Museum,”** we will offer a fresh interpretation of materials preserved in the manuscript collection of one of Georgia’s oldest museums, taking into account current challenges in archival and source studies. The results of this research will highlight the special significance of materials stored in regional museums and contribute to their increased recognition within the academic community.

**The Black Sea Archive at Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. Historical Background and Content**

**Theodosios Kyriakidis, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki / International Hellenic University**

The Center for the Study & Development of Greek Culture of the Black Sea was created in 1996 at the initiative of the Prefecture of Thessaloniki. It operated until 2011 and, following actions by the Chair of Pontic Studies, was transferred to the Library & Information Center of Aristotle University of Thessaloniki on February 4, 2019. The archive was divided into two sub-archives: the administrative sub-archive and the research sub-archive. The first includes files and documents related to the management of the activities of the center; the second – the material collected by the researchers and collaborators of the center for research purposes. This paper deals with the second sub-category which includes publications, newspapers, maps and other archival material and evidence of the Greeks who lived in Georgia in the second half of the 19th and early 20thcenturies.

**New Sources on Greek Masters in Georgia (Second Half of the 19th and Early 20th Centuries)**

**Nino Badashvili, National Archives of Georgia**

In the aftermath of the Russo-Turkish wars of 19th-20th centuries, compact Greek settlements were established across various regions of Georgia. A considerable corpus of archival documents has been preserved, offering valuable insights into the particularities of their social and cultural life, the challenges they faced in the struggle for survival and integration, and their persistent efforts to safeguard and maintain their collective identity.

In various regions of Georgia, Greek churches, houses, and schools have been preserved. These institutions, built by the Greek community, reflect their sustained efforts to safeguard their language and cultural heritage. At the same time, they played an active role in the repair and construction of Georgian churches, as well as in the building of houses and bridges. In both eastern and, more prominently, western Georgia, Greek masters occupied a respected position within the local socio-economic landscape, being widely acknowledged for their professional expertise and technical mastery.

Greek masters were frequently commissioned to repair church walls and vaults, replace roofs, and lay new floors... There are also non-Orthodox churches known to have been constructed by Greek stonemasons.

The primary focus of the present report is on newly discovered materials concerning Greek masters, particularly highlighting their contributions to the construction of various bridges and tunnels.

**The Issue of Administrative-Territorial Structure of Georgia in the 1920s.**

**Archil Kokhreidze, TSU Ivane Javakhishvili Institute of History and Ethnology**

The 20th century proved to be dramatic and tragic for the world, including Georgia, which had to experience firsthand all the permissible and impermissible experiments of the totalitarian regime. In 1922, Georgia was first incorporated into the Transcaucasian Federation, but later into the Soviet Union. The formation of such a completely artificial state entity as the Transcaucasian Federation sparked serious disagreements and disputes, even within the ruling Communist Party. Georgia remained a member of this federation for almost 15 years. Several aspects of this state formation remain unexplored to this day. Among them is the question of what Georgia’s administrative-territorial structure looked like at that time, between 1921 and 1936.

The purpose of this study is to examine the administrative-territorial structure of Georgia in 1921-1936. From the very first days of Soviet power, it became obvious that the old administrative structure did not meet the requirements of the new political and economic realities. In the new, changed conditions, it was necessary to bring the national economy and administrative management of the country as close as possible. The administrative-territorial division of the country was based primarily on economic factors, in which the national question and related realities receded into the background.

- The planned research on the above-mentioned issues will apply the methods of systems analysis and economic-statistical analysis;

- The principle of historical research allows us to address the economic issues in conjunction with current historical events;

- The study and the analysis of the existing documents and the historical moment will provide an opportunity to assess the above-mentioned issues impartially and realistically;

- The method of multilateral analysis allows for a comprehensive approach to the research subject, taking into account the dynamics of the domestic political factors existing at that time.

- In addition, general scientific-theoretical methods will be applied, such as analysis, synthesis, and a systematic approach to the problem.

An analytical study of archival documents will enrich the history of the creation of our state with additional information about the administrative-territorial borders of Georgia as part of the Transcaucasian Federation. The results of this study will be very significant from both a scientific and a practical point of view. The main stages of the evolution of the problem will be identified, including the differences between these stages, as well as unknown episodes related to the administrative-territorial division of that time. All this should ensure high scientific and practical value of our study.

The administrative-territorial division from 1921 to 1936 represented a rather complex and dynamic process. Georgia’s administrative structure was very turbulent at that time. It was constantly undergoing major changes, which were preceded by political and administrative reforms in the Soviet Union. These changes were aimed at establishing control over the country’s population and economy. During this period, the autonomous republics of Adjara and Abkhazia, as well as the autonomous district of South Ossetia, were also created. The creation of these autonomous entities within Georgia was part of the Soviet Union’s policy of better controlling various ethnic groups within the country.

**Two Unknown and Significant Episodes from General Ilia Odishelidze’s Biography**

**Dimitri Silakadze, National Archives of Georgia / Free University of Tbilisi**

General Ilia Odishelidze is a well-known historical figure, both in Georgian society and in academic circles: he had a long and successful career in the Russian Imperial Army and held high-ranking positions, including that of Commander-in-Chief, in the army of the Democratic Republic of Georgia.

There is also a book about him in Georgian by Mikheil Bakhtadze, which mainly focuses on the period of Georgia’s independence. His military education and the positions he held in the Russian army are also well known. However, there are two episodes in his biography that have remained almost entirely unknown in historiography until now.

The first episode concerns his contribution to the planning of the Przasnysz operation during World War I (February-March 1915), which is now clearly confirmed by previously unknown archival materials, providing a more accurate picture.

The second episode relates to the period in the general’s biography when, following the occupation of Georgia, he lived in exile – specifically in Istanbul. In Georgian historiography, it was known through oral accounts that Soviet intelligence services had offered him the opportunity to return to the Soviet Union.

In the 2010s, a 10-volume collection of archival documents on the Russian military emigration was published in Russia, which included two documents by General Odishelidze: one setting out the conditions he proposed to the Soviet special services in exchange for his return to the USSR, and another ultimately refusing to return.

These two episodes will further enrich our understanding of his biography and make it more complete.

**Historical Myths of the Soviet Era about the Democratic Republic of Georgia and Modernity**

**Tamar Orjonikidze, Ilia State University Institute of Political Science / Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University**

**Research Topic:** Political myths, especially those of a historical nature, are quite often and effectively used in political processes to achieve a specific political goal. The study presents a scientific literature review, which examines the concept of historical myth and its application for political purposes. As a result, the theoretical framework of the report is created. This study examines the negative myths about the Democratic Republic of Georgia that were perpetuated in Soviet-era school history textbooks – myths that remain largely unchallenged and continue to influence Georgia’s development to some extent in the modern era.

**Relevance:** In contemporary Georgia, specific segments of society – particularly among the older generation – still harbour negative perceptions of the Democratic Republic of Georgia and its government, which were shaped during the Soviet era, including through school history textbooks. These perceptions have persisted despite the introduction of new books, scholarly research, and increased access to archival documents and accurate historical information. Notably, within this segment of society, the notion of the “Menshevik evil” partially obscures the crime committed by Soviet Russia – the occupation of the Democratic Republic of Georgia – fostering the belief that “The Bolsheviks did nothing wrong by overthrowing the First Republic, we had a bad government.” This understanding of the past shapes attitudes toward the modern political process; the Russian Federation is the legal successor to the Soviet Union. That is why it is essential to disclose the information provided in Soviet-era school history textbooks about the Democratic Republic of Georgia.**Issue:** More than three decades have passed since the collapse of the Soviet Union, yet the harmful myths about the Democratic Republic of Georgia, established in that era, remain deeply insurmountable. This affects the perception of Soviet Russia (the Union) in society and, to some extent, the perception of contemporary Russia (as the legal successor of the Soviet Union) – “The bad (“Menshevik”) government of 1921 was replaced by a new one, which granted real sovereignty to the country.”

**Method:** The study examined the scientific literature on historical myths using content analysis, as well as five school history textbooks published during the Soviet period.

**Result:** The study revealed that the concept of “historical myth” is quite vague, with no clear definition. In general, it can be said that a historical myth is a type of political myth; it is a simplified, often inaccurate, yet easily understandable and convenient representation of the past for mass consciousness. A historical myth is more attractive and understandable to a mass audience than a reliable scientific model of the past. One of the key aspects of a historical myth is its ability to either legitimise or undermine a specific political order. Therefore, the myths of a historical nature spread during the Soviet period about the Democratic Republic of Georgia, on the one hand, question the legitimacy of the first republic (“The Democratic Republic of Georgia is a state created as a result of the collapse of the *Deadborn independent federal republic of Transcaucasia*”); and, on the other hand, they legitimize the occupying Soviet government (“The Soviet government brought real independence to Georgia”).

It is noteworthy that textbooks published during the Soviet period contain negative information about the Democratic Republic of Georgia in two directions – both the republic itself and its government are diminished: a) “The republic was not truly independent”; b) the “Menshevik” government was first a vassal of “imperialist Germany” and, after Germany’s defeat in World War I, of “imperialist Britain”. These myths created during the Soviet period are still used in modern Russian historiography.

**The Issue of Georgia at the Genoa International Economic Conference**

**Levan Jikia, National Archives of Georgia**

**Research Topic.** The Soviet Russian conquest of the Democratic Republic of Georgia in February-March 1921 spurred the Georgian national movement to operate in two spheres: within the country and in emigration. These two branches often coordinated their efforts; this fact was evidenced and demonstrated by three documents submitted by Mr. Akaki Chkhenkeli, head of the Georgian émigré government’s delegation, at the Genoa International Economic Conference. Two of these documents were drafted in Georgia, while the third one was prepared in Paris. One of the documents being composed in Georgia was authored by the Catholicos-Patriarch of All Georgia, Ambrosi Khelaia, and the other document by Georgian opposition political parties. The third document also originated from political parties but, as noted, was written in Paris. All three documents addressed the same core issue: the political repressions taking place in Georgia following its subjugation by Soviet Russia. The Catholicos-Patriarch’s memorandum additionally underscored the dire condition of the Georgian Apostolic Autocephalous Orthodox Church, calling for assistance from the international civilized community.

Despite significant efforts, the Georgian émigré government’s delegation was denied participation in the conference, officially due to Georgia’s geographic location in Asia. However, through Chkhenkeli’s persistent efforts, the Soviet Georgian representative, Budu Mdivani, was also barred from participating. Although the three documents submitted by the Georgian delegation were read at the preparatory session of the conference, and the Georgian question attracted significant attention (with the Patriarch’s memorandum even published in the newspaper Caffaro), the conference ultimately failed to meet the Georgian side’s expectations.

**Relevance**. While the Genoa International Economic Conference is widely recognized in Georgian historiography, and although no monograph or comprehensive study on this specific topic currently exists, the activities of the Georgian émigré government’s delegation – initiated even before the convocation of the conference – require in-depth scholarly investigation. It is therefore evident that the issue remains insufficiently explored to this day.

**The Problem.** Following the Soviet occupation of Georgia, the primary concern of the Georgian émigré government was to bring the Georgian question before international forums. Unfortunately, such efforts proved unsuccessful at both the London and Cannes conferences. It was at the Cannes Conference that the decision to convene the Genoa International Economic Conference was made. Akaki Chkhenkeli held meetings with numerous influential figures, including Poincaré and others, to secure support for the Georgian delegation’s participation.

Unpublished documents housed in the National Archives of Georgia provide valuable insights into the efforts undertaken by the Georgian delegation (Chkhenkeli, while eligible to travel to Rome as an ambassador, did not possess the necessary visa to enter Genoa). These archival sources are further enriched by Chkhenkeli’s recently published diaries. Together, these materials enable a reconstruction of the process in considerable detail.

**Method**. The research employed the method of content analysis.

**Conclusion**. The documents submitted by the Georgian delegation at the Genoa International Economic Conference vividly demonstrate the unity of the Georgian national movement, both within the country and in exile. The active involvement of Catholicos-Patriarch Ambrosi Khelaia in this cause highlights his role as a spiritual and national leader. Upon arriving in Paris, Chkhenkeli presented a report to the expanded presidium of the Georgian government-in-exile detailing his diplomatic activities. This study aims to introduce into academic circulation the archival materials housed in the National Archives of Georgia, which shed light on the work carried out by the Georgian émigré government at the Genoa Conference.

**“Remembering” versus “Condemning” Communism: Politics of History and “Wars on Memory” in Eastern European Museums**

**Constantin Iordachi, CEU PU Vienna, Austria**

The presentation focuses on patterns of representing the history of communist regimes in Eastern European museums, approached from a comparative, European-wide, and global perspective. My overview reveals that, due to the significant differences in the outlook of communist regimes in various Eastern European countries and the numerous stages in their internal evolution, this form of totalitarianism has been displayed in a bewildering array of ways, resulting in a fragmented and kaleidoscopic memory landscape. I argue that the process of creating and recreating the memory of communism in Eastern Europe has been framed by a confrontation – a schism between understanding communism as an everyday “lived experience” and communism as a totalitarian, occupational regime, characterized by political repression and criminalized behavior. Methodologically, my approach is based on the premise that the remembrance of the recent past is multifaceted, reflecting the multiple and contradictory aspects of various political regimes, their longevity, and their peculiar features. Therefore, to arrive at a thorough understanding of practices of social remembrance, it is important to understand who is remembering, when s/he is remembering, and for what purpose.

**Profiles of Polish Women Repressed in the “Kulak Operation” of the Great Terror in Soviet Georgia (1937–1938) in the Documents Kept in the Ministry of Internal Affairs Archive in Georgia**

**Stanisław Koller, Institute of National Remembrance, Warsaw, Poland**

The Great Terror began in the USSR with the issuance on 30 July 1937 of Order No. 00447 by the People’s Commissar of Internal Affairs, Nikolai Yezhov, concerning the repression operation against former kulaks, criminals, and other anti-Soviet elements. Women were also among the people arrested. The Polish diaspora in Georgia at that time numbered around 3,500-3,600 people. In the documents of the Georgian Ministry of Internal Affairs Archive, information was found about the sentencing of twenty Polish women as part of the “kulak operation”, eleven of whom died and nine were sent to labour camps. They were charged with numerous offences: Trotskyist activities, anti-Soviet agitation, counter-revolutionary activities, membership in anti-Soviet organizations, espionage, hostile propaganda, acts of terrorism, damage, anti-Soviet statements, visiting consulates of foreign countries, contacts with foreigners, activities in associations, and participation in religious practices. In the face of the enormity of the victims of the Great Terror, the fate of twenty repressed women may seem merely an insignificant episode. However, in the history of Georgia they constitute an important record of the presence of Poles, reviving the memory of those days. Innocent victims deserve better than having their fate remain anonymous.

**Stalin Museum: Monumental Ideology in Gori**

**Nino Kotolashvili, Ilia State University**

The Stalin Museum is one of the most controversial memorial monuments in Georgia and the post-Soviet space. Its content and exhibition have remained unchanged since the day it opened. With nearly one million visitors annually, the museum continues to be at the center of debates: Is it a piece of cultural heritage, an ideological anachronism, or a social phenomenon of authoritarian legacy that remains embedded in modern Georgian collective memory?

This study examines the Stalin Museum as part of the 1930s cult of Stalin and explores its problematic dimensions in a contemporary context. It investigates the ideological foundations of the museum’s construction and its connection to the consolidation of Stalin’s personal power. Furthermore, it considers why the museum was never restructured or reinterpreted after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Its preservation in original form reflects the absence of a coherent memory policy and lack of public consensus in post-Soviet Georgia.

The research is guided by two main questions:

1. Why and how was the Stalin Museum built in Gori?
2. Why and how does it continue to exist in its original form?

The study uses a qualitative methodology, incorporating analysis of historical documents, archival and press materials, and contemporary narratives about the museum.

The findings suggest that the Stalin Museum operates as a living mechanism of monumental memory politics and serves as a crystallized space in time. It preserves the ideological matrix that gave birth to it and continues to function as an architectural manifestation of Stalinism. Its continued existence in original form underscores the state's weakness in managing memory politics and achieving public consensus on how to address the issue.

**Assimilation or Integration? The Case of Russian Language Classes for Finnish, Swedish and German Expatriates at the Nobels’ Enterprises in Azerbaijan and Georgia.**

**Dmitri Frolov, Aleksanteri Institute – University of Helsinki, Finland**

The exact number of Finnish, Swedish, and German expatriates, who worked and lived in Baku, is not yet known. According to Lutheran parish, the Index cards of the Nobels and other foreign companies established in Baku, as well as police reports and other documents, approximately 6,000-7,000 Finns, Swedes, as well as Germans were registered in Azerbaijan and Georgia. It was a unique expatriate community with its own culture, church, schools, and cemetery. The Finns and Swedes constituted the largest foreign diaspora in Baku, followed by the Germans and Danes.

The Russian language was a tool for the assimilation of the local population in the Russian Empire. But was it so in case of foreign expatriates? Was it assimilation or integration of foreigners into the Russian society?

The Nobels, who lived in the Russian Empire for many years, were fluent in Russian. They also demanded a good knowledge of the Russian language from their employees, since all office work and almost all correspondence of the company were conducted in Russian. One of the criteria for recruiting for positions was a good command of the Russian language. However, the Nobels understood that Russian is a difficult language, and it is not always possible to study it at a sufficient level outside the Russian Empire. Therefore, language courses and schools to study Russian were organized for foreigners and local employees who did not speak Russian well enough. Within the framework of the project, I am interested in issues related to the organization of schools and Russian language classes for foreign expatriates from Finland, Sweden and Germany.

The social and cultural policy of the Nobel company was unique for the Russian Empire. Already from the beginning of the 1880s, the Nobels began to pay great attention to the education of their own personnel. Schools, advanced training courses for employees were organized for this purpose. Moreover, schools for the children of workers and personnel of the Nobels’ company were organized in Baku and St. Peterburg since the end of the 1890s. The company established a special grant for the employees’ children to study at the Universities of St. Petersburg and Moscow. Moreover, the Nobels supported the idea of a foundation to which all Baku oil producers contributed money. The Nobels donated more than 3 million rubbles to it. The resources of the foundation were used to build schools, hospitals and theatres.

**What Do Petitions Tell Us? Forced Deportations and the Struggle for Survival in Soviet Uzbekistan.**

**Said Gaziev, Humboldt University in Berlin, Germany**

By the end of the Second World War, the Soviet state had carried out large-scale deportations of entire ethnic groups, effectively depopulating vast areas. These brutal actions had de facto genocidal consequences for the deported populations. One of the poorest republics of the Soviet Union, Uzbekistan, was burdened with the enormous task of housing and feeding the deportees, placing immense strain on its already fragile post-war economy. The combination of wartime privations and the sudden influx of deported peoples led to severe shortages, famine, and widespread mortality.

After being uprooted from their homelands, the Crimean Tatars, Meskhetian Turks, and other victims of forced deportation faced dire conditions in post-war Soviet Central Asia. They endured chronic shortages of food, clothing, and housing, all exacerbated by bureaucratic red tape and harsh restrictions imposed by the regime. This is how the exiled people described their plight in diaries, complaints, and petitions addressed to Soviet authorities and leadership. These personal accounts stand in stark contrast to the official narrative found in the extensive body of government papers, official documents, and internal correspondence.

While there is a growing body of scholarship on the history of these deportations, most of the studies rely on sources produced by state institutions and officials. In contrast, ego documents, personal writings such as letters, memoirs, and diaries authored by the deportees, feature far less prominently in scholarly narratives of Soviet deportation and exile. Although these personal texts constitute only a small fraction of available archival materials, they often reveal details rarely mentioned in official records, offering valuable insights into the lived experiences of deported peoples and shedding light on aspects of Soviet policy otherwise obscured.

In the course of my research, I have identified dozens of such documents, personal narratives from the early years of exile in Soviet Uzbekistan, written by Crimean Tatars and Meskhetian Turks and preserved in the holdings of the National Archive of Uzbekistan. When read alongside the official paperwork of the Resettlement Department of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Uzbek SSR, these sources provide a compelling account of the first years of exile for these ethnic groups. I plan to present my findings at the upcoming conference as part of my research project on deportations and exile in the late Stalinist USSR.

**Soviet Forced Resettlements: The Case of the Khevsurs Between Mountains and Lowlands**

**Anna Tchintcharauli, Ilia State University**

Forced resettlement was a common strategy of control and repression in the Soviet Union. Over thirteen nationalities were exiled from their native lands during the 1940s, yet the internal forced

resettlements within Soviet republics – particularly in Georgia – remain significantly underexplored.

This panel paper draws on my ongoing PhD project, which examines Soviet forced resettlement practices in the Caucasus during the 1940s-50s, and investigates their long-term impact on the

resettled communities.

The research focuses on three groups: the Chechens, the Ingush, and the Georgian highlanders, the Khevsurs. While the broader study engages with intergenerational memory, trauma, and the entangled nature of these historical processes – particularly as shaped by neighborhood relations and external political narratives – this paper will specifically highlight the case of the Khevsurs as a focused case study.

Traditionally seen as a closed, culturally distinctive highland society, the Khevsurs were resettled to the arid lowlands of eastern Georgia under the guise of enlightenment and modernization. This paper investigates the profound impact of this displacement, which serves as a microcosm for understanding broader Soviet resettlement policies. The analysis draws on original oral histories and self-testimonies collected from multiple generations of Khevsurs, and

considers the following themes:

● Humanitarian challenges during the resettlement process and daily life in the lowlands

● Shifts in social roles and structures as a result of the following displacement

● Labor and adaptation practices in new environments

● Memory practices and the (non-)existence of official memory policies

● Narratives surrounding return and homecoming

● The reproduction and transmission of memory across the generations

By foregrounding first-hand voices and experiences, the study aims to reconstruct the effects of resettlement from a bottom-up perspective, free from the frameworks of Soviet propaganda. Ultimately, this paper contributes to a more nuanced understanding of Soviet internal

colonization practices and the lived experiences of marginalized highland communities.

**Histories of Deported Women under the Shadow of the Official Documents**

**David Jishkariani, Max Weber Stiftung – Georgian Branch Office**

Vera Anastasiadi was born in 1931 in Sokhumi to a Greek family. Like many Greeks in Abkhazia, her ancestors had migrated from the Ottoman Empire to the Russian Empire in the nineteenth century, eventually settling in Abkhazia. She spent her entire childhood in Soviet Abkhazia, attending a Georgian school and becoming fluent in the Georgian language. She hoped to pursue higher education and a professional career in the Georgian SSR, but her plans were derailed in 1949 by a large-scale deportation campaign targeting Greek minorities along the Black Sea coast.

Between 1949 and 1950, several ethnic groups – including Greeks, Armenians, Turkmens, and Iranians – were deported from the Georgian SSR. Archival documents preserved in Georgia provide insight into the bureaucratic machinery behind these deportations, highlighting the roles played not only by the NKVD (The People’s Commissariat for Internal Affairs)  and military personnel but also by Communist Party and Komsomol (Communist Youth League) representatives. The documents reveal both the challenges in implementing these mass deportations and the subsequent occupation of the deportees’ homes and property by members of other ethnic groups.

At the time of her deportation, Vera Anastasiadi was 18 years old. Her vivid recollections, recorded during a biographical interview, allow us to reconstruct her journey from Sokhumi to Kazakhstan and eventually back home. This presentation will employ a comparative methodology, juxtaposing oral history with official archival sources to examine how state orders affected individuals, how local authorities interpreted and implemented those directives, and how the deported Greeks perceived their experiences. It will also explore the strategies of survival they developed at various stages of the deportation and analyze the challenges they faced upon their return to Sokhumi.

The presentation is based on materials from the National Archives of Georgia, the Archive of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia, and a biographical interview with Vera Anastasiadi.

Hall II

**Synchronisation of the Technical Data of Late Bronze-Early Iron Age Metal Artefacts Discovered at the Dolosha Burial Ground with Early Data from Contemporary Sites**

**Mariam Mtchedlishvili, Nino Kebuladze, Ana Sakhvadze, Georgian National Museum**

From the perspective of technological research on Bronze Age metallurgy, particular significance is attributed to the analysis of archaeological complexes in which the material is represented in a burial context and is characterised by morphological diversity. The Dolosha burial ground (Dusheti Municipality) represents a significant archaeological site of the Late Bronze-Early Iron Age, distinguished by its rich metal inventory and a relatively well-dated burial context. The study aims to synchronise the metal artefacts discovered at this burial ground with high-tin bronze artefacts known from other regions, based on the results of chemical analysis.

Metal production in the South Caucasus has been closely linked to social and technological developments since the Bronze Age. This study is significant for identifying patterns of technological uniformity and regional specificity, as well as for assessing the level of metallurgical knowledge. This study is significant for identifying technological uniformity and regional specificities, as well as for assessing the level of metallurgical knowledge. The analysis of such data enriches our understanding of the economic and cultural systems of the Late Bronze-Early Iron Age.

Although numerous chemical analyses have been conducted on Late Bronze-Early Iron Age metal artefacts, synthesised data that would allow for the evaluation of the dissemination of metallurgical strategies and regional interactions, based on chronologically and technologically contemporaneous tin-bronze artefacts, remains limited to date. Without the chronological alignment of artefacts, it is difficult to reconstruct a coherent picture of technological development for this period. It is also important to assess the extent to which the material from a specific site, the Dolosha burial ground, can reveal regional particularities and be synchronised with data from contemporaneous sites.

At the first stage of the research, corrosion products of several artefacts were analysed using X-ray diffraction (XRD). The analysis revealed that the corrosion on the examined artefacts is predominantly composed of carbonates and chlorides. In the second stage of the study, the artefacts underwent spectroscopic analysis using an ElvaX portable X-ray fluorescence (XRF) spectrometer. The analysis determined the chemical composition of the alloys, confirming that the artefacts were produced from tin bronze with a high tin content. At the third stage, soil samples from the Dolosha burial ground were analysed, providing insights into the environmental conditions that contributed to the deterioration of the bronze artefacts. At the fourth stage of the study, only tin-bronze artefacts with high tin content from various regions – Adjara, Guria, Racha, Abkhazia, and Samegrelo – were selected. Based on these data, a parallel examination of technological characteristics was carried out, aiming to identify technological similarities and regional metallurgical specificities.

The study indicates that the artefacts from the Dolosha burial ground serve as representative examples of high-tin bronze production, showing clear technological parallels with materials recovered from Adjara, Guria, Racha, Abkhazia, and Samegrelo. This synchronisation highlights the transmission of technological knowledge and the convergence of metallurgical strategies between the archaeological regions of eastern and western Georgia. It was confirmed that in some cases the tin content reaches 14-15%, which indicates a technological understanding of the selection and processing of bronze alloys.

The case of Dolosha clearly illustrates that a complex analysis focused on a single site can serve as a basis for identifying broader regional connections. Thus, the study confirms that the chemical analysis of high-tin bronze artefacts provides valuable insights into the internal structure of Late Bronze-Early Iron Age metallurgy, technological uniformity, and local specificities. The advancement of this approach constitutes an important precondition for a comprehensive understanding of metallurgical processes in the South Caucasus.

**The Belt of** **Aspavruk the Pitiakhsh from Tomb No.1 at Armaziskhevi**

**Mariam Gvelesiani, The University of Georgia** – **Tamaz Beradze Institute of Georgian Studies**

The gold belt of Aspavruk Pitiakhsh (Eristavi), unearthed in 1940 in Tomb No. 1 at Armaziskhevi, ranks among the finest examples of Georgian art of the Classical period. Alongside the belt was found a gold signet-ring with an intaglio on a sardonyx stone depicting a male portrait and bearing the inscription Ἀσπαυρούκις πιτιάξης (“Aspavruk Pitiakhsh”) which revealed the identity of the deceased. The discovery within the rich burial inventory of Roman gold coins of the emperors Trajan and Hadrian, together with other artefacts, provided grounds for dating the monument to the 2nd-3rd centuries AD.

The belt consists of a buckle and nine plaques, seven of which are oval-shaped and two rectangular. In the centre of the rectangular plaques and one circular plaque are engraved portraits on semi-precious stones: the goddesses Fortuna-Isis and Ariadne on two, and on the third – a man and a woman identified as Karpak and Zevakh. The remaining plaques have uniform decoration: all are adorned with large and small settings for turquoise and garnet, encircled by filigree, with additional S-scroll ornament on the two rectangular plaques.

From the very beginning of its scholarly circulation, Aspavruk’s belt was rightly regarded as an insignia, a symbol of official authority. This interpretation was grounded in the high hierarchical rank of the Pitiakhsh-Eristavi and in the fact that such a masterpiece of artistic craftsmanship, executed in precious metal, corresponds to the regalia befitting the second person in the Kingdom of Kartli after the king – the highest royal and military official, judge, and commander-in-chief.

Since the interpretation of Aspavruk’s belt as an insignia was based only on the above considerations, the relevance of the present paper lies in the need to address the issue in a broader context, within the cultural sphere of Georgia’s neighboring civilizations. Interdisciplinary research has shown that the belt of Aspavruk, a historical figure of the Late Antique period, embodies a synthesis of Eastern and Western cultural elements: on the one hand, its function as an insignia reflects a Near Eastern origin; on the other hand, the artistic decoration incorporates Graeco-Roman deities. Chronologically corresponding and morphologically similar specimens have been identified in depictions of rulers from the Parthian and Kushan kingdoms of the 2nd-3rd centuries AD, as well as in the gold nine-plaque belt (1st century AD) from the nomadic chieftain burial at Tillya-Tepe (Northern Afghanistan). This rich comparative material, supported by recent studies, has made it possible to examine Aspavruk’s belt from semantic, historical-geographical, religious, and linguistic perspectives.

In relation to the significance of the belt as insignia, particularly valuable information is provided by late 1st-early 2nd century AD Parthian coins, on which a goddess Tyche (Tyche-Fortuna), hands a belt (girdle) to a king, ruler, or high official as a symbol of authority. This makes it unlikely to be coincidental that an intaglio with the image of Fortuna appears on one of Aspavruk’s belt plaques. Equally relevant to the semantic understanding of the belt as insignia are passages from Ferdowsi’s epic Shahnameh describing the realities of the Sasanian conception of kingship, which originated in the early Parthian period.

Unfortunately, the belt under discussion is unknown to some Western scholars, who therefore compare segmented belts found in other cultures not with Aspavruk’s belt, but with Late Antique openwork belt buckles from Western Georgia bearing highly stylized animal motifs. This view is incorrect, as the latter were belt terminals, deposited in burials as a single buckle, and not segments of a complete belt. The paper will also address this issue.

The results of the presented research will serve as a basis for the author’s future publication.

**Two Tribes, One Ethnonym: Ἀχαιοί of the Pontic Region and Ancient Greece**

**Lela Chotalishvili, European University / Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University**

In this presentation we draw upon information provided by Greco-Roman sources to examine the ethnonym *Ἀχαιοί* who, according to the account of Pseudo-Skylax (4th century BCE), lived in the area between present-day Tuapse and Sochi.

In general, the study of ancient Colchis and Iberia relies heavily on textual and epigraphic evidence from the Greco-Roman period, as it is in ancient sources that Caucasus first appears as a distinct geographical and cultural region. Of particular interest are the border regions, where the ongoing migrations of peoples and shifts in toponyms and ethnonyms give rise to a range of complex and often contested questions. In this context, the analysis of onomastic material plays a crucial role in the reconstruction of historical and ethnographic processes, as place names can reveal how certain regions developed over time and how they were shaped by contact with different languages and cultures.

The written records of ancient civilizations contain records of ethnonyms that scholars generally connect to Kartvelian tribes. It is assumed that some of the South and North Caucasian groups that inhabited the region in prehistoric times either disappeared entirely or survive in part within the modern Caucasian ethnolinguistic mosaic. Determining their precise geographical location is often problematic, as the same tribal settlement names frequently appear in sources in reference to different regions – sometimes even within the same historical period. Notable examples include the Sanigs, Trapezus, Sani, Heniochi, Phasis, Sebastopolis, and Pityus.

The appearance of the *Ἀχαιοί* in the territory of present-day Abkhazia is traditionally associated with the Trojan War, as well as with Jason’s expedition to Colchis (i.e., the voyage of the Argonauts), which is historically believed to have preceded the Trojan War. Dionysius of Halicarnassus writes about *Ἀχαιοί* of the Black Sea region: “Though originally Eleans, of a nation the most Greek of any, they are now the most savage of all barbarians” (I, 89, 4). In addition to Dionysius, other authors also write about the connection of *Ἀχαιοί* to their Greek namesakes, regarding both the ethnonym and the tribe as having Greek origin (e.g., Strabo, Appian, Dionysius Periegetes). However, according to etymological lexicons, the name *Ἀχαιοί* is believed to be of non-Greek, pre-Greek origin.

In Georgian translations, the ethnonym *Ἀχαιοί* appears in various forms. Those living along the eastern Black Sea coast are referred to as *Akaiebi, Akeebi, or Akeelebi,* while the tribe associated with mainland Greece is called *Akavelebi.* This presentation will examine parallel Georgian variants used to denote *Ἀχαιοί* and offer a scholarly analysis of their usage. Furthermore, we will seek to determine the nature of the relationship, if any, between the Greek Achaeans and the *Akaiebi* of the Black Sea coast, as well as the substantive basis ancient authors might have had for associating the tribes inhabiting Greece and the Caucasus with each other.

**Representations of Kartvelian Ethnoses in Three Greek Authors: Pseudo‑Scylax, Pseudo‑Scymnus, and Dionysius Periegetes**

**Ketevan Nadareishvili, Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University, Classical Philology, Institute of Classical, Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies**

Following the Classical period, during the Hellenistic and subsequent eras, interest in the Caucasus region in general – and in the Kartvelian ethnoses in particular – grew significantly. As geographical knowledge expanded and new literary genres of geography emerged, namely, the periplus, periegesis, and universal (world) geography, a more or less adequate understanding of the Caucasian region and its inhabitants began to take shape. Nevertheless, in the writings of authors from these periods, xenostereotypes of the so-called “Others” continue to occupy an important place, often marked by varying degrees of subjectivity characteristic of each author. In many cases, these representations reflect the ideological contexts of the authors’ own times. Naturally, this factor also extends to portrayals of the Kartvelian peoples.

This paper aims to examine the representations of Kartvelian ethnoses in the works of three Greek authors: Pseudo-Scylax of Caryanda (4th c. BCE), Pseudo-Scymnus of Chios (2nd–1st c. BCE), and Dionysius Periegetes (2nd c. CE). **Beyond the valuable information on Georgia preserved in these sources, our selection was also guided by the fact that these authors represent the dominant geographic genres of their respective periods** –periplus, periegesis, and universal geography. Consequantly, their narratives exhibit distinct emphases and address different audiences, each shaped by specific interests. Together, these accounts allow for the construction of a more comprehensive picture.

Our analysis revealed that these authors were particularly interested in aspects of the Kartvelian peoples’ **cultural identity**. Drawing on the tripartite model of culture – diaita (material culture), ethea (ethnic characteristics), and nomoi (customs and laws) – we find that each author focuses on different dimensions: some emphasize ethnic markers, others highlight cultural connections of certain Kartvelian tribes with the Hellenic world, while some provide accounts of local customs or material artifacts. Issues such as the **genesis of the Kartvelian ethnoses** and their **kinship ties with other, particularly European peoples and regions** also fall within their field of interest.

These authors also extend discursive traditions found in earlier literature, namely, the association of local Caucasian toponyms with the Argonauts’ myth; the discussion of the origins of certain mythological figures of the Argonautic legend as being from regions of Georgia, the linking the offspring of Circe and Odysseus – who is associated with the Kartvelian milieu – to Europe, and so on. In our view, this discourse demonstrates how closely the myth of the Argonauts was intertwined, in the consciousness of the Greek and Roman world, with the cultural identity of the Kartvelian tribes.

The outcomes of this paper will be of interest both for the study of the cultural identity of the Kartvelian ethnoses – peoples inhabiting the crossroads of Europe and Asia – and for exploring their relationship with Hellenistic (i.e., European) civilization within the broader discourse of the Europe-Asia opposition.

**Clarifying One Account of Claudius Ptolemy**

**Kakhaber Pipia, Giorgi Apkhazava, Sokhumi State University**

The famous work of the famous Alexandrian scholar, geographer and astronomer Claudius Ptolemy (c. 100-170 AD) – “Geographical Guide” is an important primary source for studying the ethno-political situation of the Eastern Black Sea coast, historical Colchis. For a long time, before Copernicus and the scientific revolution of the 17th century, Ptolemy was considered an unshakable authority on astronomical and geographical knowledge. His “Geographical Guide” is a description of the world based on the works and records of ancient authors. The work is notable for its rich, new and previously unknown data.

The ninth chapter of the fifth book of “Geography” is dedicated to Colchis. Ptolemy names the Suanocolchi tribe in the extreme northwestern part of Colchis, along the Korakos River (Koraxi, also known as Bzifi), which is unknown to other sources. Based on the name, the Svan-Colchian or Chan-Megrelian, or at least Western Georgian, origin of this tribe is not in doubt. One fact is noteworthy here. It is known that Ptolemy used the information of Plinius (23/24-79 AD) and Flavius Arrian (c. 95-175 AD), but despite this, he describes a different picture in the eastern Black Sea region. If, according to Arrian, in 131 AD the Macrones-Heniochi, Lazi, Apsilae, Abasgoi and Sanigs lived on the coast of Colchis (the same tribes, in addition to the Abasgoi, are mentioned earlier by Plinius), Ptolemy names only the Lazi and Suanocolchi here. How can the disappearance of the Apsilae, Abasgoi and Sanigs from Ptolemy’s map be explained? As can be seen from the Greek inscription on a silver cup recently discovered in the Gagra region, on the territory of historical Sanigeti, by the middle of the 2nd century AD, the Lazi king Pacor expanded the borders of the Laz kingdom to Northwest, including the Sanigia union. This, naturally, implies that Pacor had earlier united the small unions of the Apsilae and Abasgoi to his kingdom. The creation of a unified state by Pacor on the territory of Western Georgia was also reflected in Ptolemy’s “Geography”. This is precisely what should explain the fact that Ptolemy no longer mentions the Apsilae, Abasgoi and Sanigs. He accurately reflects the new reality and mentions only one political entity – Colchis – in the entire territory of the Eastern Black Sea coast up to Sarmatia, from the province of Cappadocia to the river Bzip. As for the Svano-Colchis, who replaced the Arian Sanigs, this term has ethno-political significance and should mean the Svans living on the territory of the kingdom of Colchis (Lazica). That Ptolemy is well acquainted with the situation in Colchis is also evident from the fact that he names the population of Ekri[k]tiki (Egrisi) in the inner regions of Colchis and the Manrali (Margal-Megrelians), unknown to other sources. It is known that Ptolemy, in addition to the works of ancient authors, was guided by various types of data collected in the Library of Alexandria (itineraries compiled by Roman mensors, accounts of travelers, merchants, and military personnel). It seems that when describing Colchis, he relied on one of such sources, which quite accurately reflected the reality created in Colchis by the middle of the 2nd century.

**Relevance:** In modern political reality, the objective study of the historical processes taking place in the territory of northwestern Colchis (present-day Abkhazia) is, for obvious reasons, particularly relevant. For the scientific reconstruction of the ethno-political picture of this part of Colchis, Claudius Ptolemy's account of the Suanocolchis is of great importance.

**Problem:** The goal of our research is to clarify the identity of the “Suanocolchis” mentioned by Claudius Ptolemy and to understand the historical context of the emergence of this term.

**Research Methodology:** The research employed established methods from modern historical science, including historical-source-interdisciplinary analysis, source hermeneutics and historical-comparative analysis. The methodology also incorporated broader analytical techniques such as observation, logical reasoning, analytical, inductive, and deductive methods.

**Conclusion:** As a result of the research, we came to the conclusion that Ptolemy accurately reflects the political changes that occurred in the Eastern Black Sea region by the middle of the 2nd century, the spread of the hegemony of the Laz kingdom in northwestern Colchis, and it is precisely with this new political reality in mind that he uses the term “Suanocolchis”.

The results of our research will be of great help to researchers of the history of ancient Georgia, and they can also be used in the educational space.

**“The Agrarian Question” in Early Republican Rome (The First Half of the 4th Century BC)**

**Zaza Karchava, TSU Ivane Javakhishvili Institute of History and Ethnology**

“The agrarian question” constituted one of the most contentious issues in the late Roman Republic, as evidenced by the reform efforts of Tiberius and Gaius Sempronius Gracchus. Nevertheless, ancient Greek and Latin sources also attest to earlier attempts at agrarian reform in Rome during the first half of the fourth century BC. This report focuses on an analysis of these early reforms and the historical context in which they emerged.

The “leges Liciniae Sextiae” are a small set of four Roman legislative acts introduced in 367 B. C. to regulate several matters. They take their name from their proponents, tribunes of the plebeians Licinius Stolo and Sextius Lateranus. These laws provided for a limit on the interest rate of loans and a restriction on private ownership of land. The law sought to establish a means of regulating the exploitation of the land seized by Rome from defeated enemy populations. There are numerous sources that discuss this law. With regard to the law in question, there is a divide between modern scholars who deny its historical accuracy and those who support its authenticity, thus rejecting only the information according to which the limit for agrarian possession was set at 500 iugera, a limit considered anachronistic for the 4th century B.C.

The central problem addressed in this report concerns the historicity of the Licinian-Sextian laws. By comparing the available historical sources with one another and examining them in light of the socio-political context of the era, this study seeks to determine whether it was plausible to impose a legal limit of 500 iugera (approximately 125 hectares) on land ownership during the first half of the fourth century BC.

This research is grounded in a critical analysis of ancient Greek and Latin sources. In examining contemporary scholarly literature, a historiographical method was employed, supplemented by elements of discourse analysis and hermeneutic interpretation. Comparative analysis was applied to identify discrepancies and variations among historical sources.

Based on the available historical sources, it appears unlikely that conditions in the fourth century BCE would have permitted the establishment of a legal limit on land ownership. Consequently, the agrarian law attributed to Licinius and Sextius, as it is preserved in the historical tradition, lacks historical credibility. Our argument for the ahistorical nature of this legislation rests on four main points: 1. The inconsistency among ancient authors regarding the law; 2. The limited extent of newly conquered public land (ager publicus); 3. The external and internal challenges faced by Rome in the first half of the fourth century BC, which, in our view, rendered agrarian reform implausible; and 4. A significant shortage of available labor. Taken together, these factors strongly suggest that the so-called “agrarian reform” of Licinius and Sextius was not a historical reality.

**Sources of Energy in the Diet of Colchians in Classical Antiquity**

**Omar Dzadzamia, Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University**

The largest part of the daily human food requirement for micro and macro nutrients is represented by various sources of energy, carbohydrates, and therefore the most practical and widespread way of obtaining energy is through the consumption of grain crops, which contain a large amount of starch and other types of carbohydrates. Western Georgia has natural features that distinguish Colchis not only in Transcaucasia, but also in the ancient Mediterranean in general. The mild humid climate has a dualistic resonance, as a result of which Colchis formed a space for endemic, evolutionarily adapted fauna and flora That is why crops were grown here that were as profitable and proven as possible. Subsequently, this contributed to the development of local, authentic and exotic dishes, although at a certain stage of the development of society, as we have already mentioned above, this geographical environment created certain difficulties in everyday life.

The humid climate prevented the spread of durum wheat, i.e. tavtukhi, in western Georgia, which practically excluded the transformation of wheat into a central crop in Colchis. Of the grain crops, perhaps the most important and more productive was emmer, the same as *asli*, which the Colchis had cultivated since ancient times. Of the cereal crops, another important one, although also geographically limited due to the humid climate of Colchis, was barley. Barley, like bread and rye, is also confirmed by archaeobotanical materials.

As for beer, which was made from barley, in general, throughout antiquity, beer was considered a drink of the lowest classes, who could not afford wine – in Rome, beer cost half the price of the cheapest wine. Of the millet-like crops, the most important and widespread in Western Georgia were two species – the first is ghomi (Setaria Italica), and the second is millet (Panicum miliaceum), with its subspecies. In its composition, ghomi is a unique grain. In our classification of the food of ancient Colchis, we have determined its place among energy sources, since it contains a large amount of digestible starch, energy. However, the grain has such a high content of vegetable proteins, and even complete vegetable proteins, that it leaves behind all the cereals known to us and is inferior only to legumes in protein content.

Another source of energy in ancient Colchis was honey. Honey and beekeeping were well developed throughout antiquity, both in Upper Colchis and in the lowlands and central regions.

Nutritional issues have been studied by paleobotanists, zoologists, archaeologists, ethnologists, and others, however, the issue of nutrition in ancient Colchis was not emphasized from a historical perspective, and food products have not been classified according to macronutrients until now. This classification allowed us to draw additional new conclusions.

This and other issues related to energy sources in the nutrition of ancient Colchis will be the main subject of our report.

**A Woman in Colchis in Classical Antiquity in the Light of Epigraphic Material**

**Natia Phiphia, Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University**

Epigraphic materials about women in ancient Colchis provide us with quite interesting and important information. Part of this epigraphic material is well-known for scholars, part has become available through the latest technologies, in particular, databases of Greek and Latin inscriptions. Inscriptions found in Georgia and abroad differ from each other in terms of information. If the inscriptions found in Georgia show that women could serve as priestesses in the temple, and goddesses were often worshiped in the temples of Van, which in turn indicates the importance of women in society; the inscriptions found abroad invariably show that women taken from Colchis were slaves or freedwomen. This is natural, as the social status of women living in Colchis should have been much higher than that of women who ended up in Greece and Rome.

At the same time, it is also worth considering that in Colchis itself, which is a proto-feudal society, in the absence of slavery, there should have been no inscriptions about slave or freedwomen, while in ancient Rome and Greece, where non-Greeks and non-Romans were considered barbarians, the maximum social status they could achieve in such a society was the status of freedwoman. Two inscriptions are known from Athens that tell us about enslaved Colchian women: the inscription of Kephisodorus on a stele from Athens and the inscription of a Colchian woman on a tombstone in Athens. Another manumission is known from Delphi which mentions a Colchian woman. Inscriptions found in Vani from the Hellenistic period tell us about women from Colchis, specifically, the famous decree of Vani and the inscription of a prayer to the goddess of Vani. Five inscriptions are known from ancient Rome that record of the betrothal of Colchian women, namely, the inscription of Sallustia from Rome, the epitaph of Vireia Colchis, the inscription of Volusia Colchis, the epitaph of a Colchian woman, and the epitaph of a Colchian wife from the province of Caserta.

**For the Issue of the Migration of the Heniochi to Southwestern Colchis**

**Kakhaber Pipia, Sokhumi State University**

**Research Topic:** One of the problems of the history of eastern Black Sea coast of ancient times is the issue of the movement of the Heniochi from northwestern Colchis to the south, which is well known in Greco-Roman sources. Until the 1st century AD, the Heniochi are mentioned by ancient authors in the northern sector of the eastern Black Sea coast; however, from the 2nd century AD, they disappear from this region, and in 131 AD Flavius Arrian already places them in the south. Thus, the disappearance of the Heniochi from the northwestern Black Sea coast coincides in time with their appearance in the south, in the valley of the Chorokhi River. In historiography, the reason for the movement of the Heniochi to the south is the persecution of the Jiki (Zikhi). However, in our opinion, the main reason should have been the policy pursued by Rome in the Caucasus-Black Sea region.

In 63 AD, by order of Nero (54-68), the Pontic Kingdom of Polemon was occupied. Its territory, together with Colchis, was annexed to the province of Galatia. Roman military units were deployed on the Crimea and the Caucasus coast; the Ravenna fleet entered the Black Sea and full control over the region was established. The policy of strengthening Roman military forces in the eastern Black Sea region continued during the reign of Vespasian (69-79). It is conceivable that such a policy pursued by Rome greatly oppressed the Heniochi tribes, whose main activity, according to the unanimous testimony of ancient authors, was robbery and piracy. If until now, the skilled seafarers “were freely roaming the entire eastern Black Sea coast and were also threatening the western coast of the Black Sea” (Ovid., Epis. Ex Ponto, IV, 10, 25-30), after the appearance of the Roman fleet at sea, their area of operation was limited. The situation was also complicated by the fact that the Bosporus, which had facilitated the piracy of the Heniochi, “provided them with harbors, a market, and the opportunity to sell their bounty” (Strabo, XI, II, 12), came under direct Roman control in 62 AD. In such a situation, part of the Heniochi, living in sparse and barren areas, were forced to leave their native regions and move south.

Migration, it seems, was carried out by sea, which was not difficult for a seafaring tribe. Naturally, the settlement of the Heniochi on the territory of the empire could not have happened without the consent of the Romans. It seems that the Romans also arranged for the settlement of the warlike, “fierce Heniochi” on the territory of the newly created province. This was advantageous for them as the settled Heniochi would be obliged to participate in the auxiliary troops of the allies. It is not excluded that the Romans used the well-proven tactics of the Hellenistic period and, in the vicinity of the mountainous, uncontrolled Sani (Arr., PPE, 11), they created a counterbalance by the settlement of the Heniochi of the “Katoikia” type.This policy of the Romans was justified, and throughout the 2nd century, the Heniochi actively assisted the Romans in the wars waged in the East. The fact that the migration of the Heniochi to the south began precisely during the time of Nero is also evidenced by the account of Pliny (23/24-79), which accurately reflects the created reality. Pliny, in the 60s-70s of the 1st century AD, simultaneously records the newly arrived Heniochi in the south, and their relatives who remained on the northeastern Black Sea coast.

It is interesting to see how events developed further Dynamics: the southern Heniochi, together with the neighboring Macrones (, without any complications, form a consolidated union of the Macrones-Heniochi; later, the Heniochi disappeared from the arena of history and painlessly merged with the Macrones in the south and the Sanigs in the north, which clearly proves that the Heniochi were Kartvelian tribes.

**Relevance:** Despite the fact that the Heniochi issue has long attracted the attention of scholars and a number of works have been written about them, the entire spectrum of problems related to these tribes is still unresolved. In addition, there is an attempt by Abkhaz separatist researchers to politicize the issues of the Heniochi’ ethnicity and their localization. Therefore, an objective study of the ethno-political processes taking place on the territory of historical Colchis does not lose its relevance.

**Problem:** The object of our research is one of the most important problems in the history of the Heniochi - the issue of their migration from north to south on the map of ancient Colchis. In the work, this issue is rethought in a new way based on a comprehensive critical analysis of ancient sources.

**Research Methodology:** The research process used the method of historical-source analysis and hermeneutics of sources, which implies a comprehensive detailed study of sources, their mutual reconciliation and interpretation; as well as a pragmatic methodology for establishing the interdependence and interconnection of events in a specific historical period.

**Conclusion:** As a result of the research, we came to the conclusion that the migration of the Heniochi to the south began in the 60s of the 1st century AD, and was caused by the policy pursued by Rome on the Black Sea coast. The results of the research will help scientists working on the problems of the history of ancient Georgia, and it can be used even in the field of education.

**Ambiguous Passages Related to Antiquity and Their New Interpretation in “The Hundred Year’s Chronicle” by an Anonymous Chronicler**

**Ekaterine Kobakhidze, Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University**

It is widely known that in the “Life of Kartli” there is a lot of material related to the Greco-Roman world, which was studied by both the publishers of the text and other famous scientists. The relatively late text of the “Life of Kartli” is particularly distinguished by its variety of depictions of antiquity, the author of which we know as the Anonymous Chronicler, and his work – under the conditional title “The Hundred Years’ Chronicle”. Despite the fact that a number of important studies have been dedicated to commenting on passages depicting antiquity, the definition of several terms and contexts, by the scientists’ own admission, could not be achieved due to the distortion of the text or the mistakes of copyists. The article presents an attempt to read and interpret just a few of these so-called “obscure” passages in a new way, based on which the content of the text and the meaning of several terms related to antiquity become clear, which, naturally, is important for the correct understanding of the context of the works.

**These Passages are:** 1. “Eristavi Samadavla, a man gifted with all kinds of military virtues and a chosen archer, like the Jew Mosomakhos, or the chosen Neoptolemeos Pighas of glorious tutor of the Myrmidons”.

Until now, the meaning of the word “Pighas” was not determined, which made it difficult to fully understand the content of the sentence. We believe that “Pighas” is a scribal error and should be replaced by “Pighos” – in late Byzantine Greek pronunciation of the word “Pyrrhus”, the second name of the son of Achilles – Neoptolemus. My proposed reading of the text easily explains the moment why the author connects the name of Neoptolemos with “Pyrrhus” and also with such a phrase as “of glorious tutor of Myrmidons” (i.e. Achilles, E.K.), because another Neoptolemus is also known in history, in particular – the leading warriors in the army of Alexander the Great. Those Pyrrhus descended from the Aeacids, the kings of Epirus (Arr. Anab. ii.27). Also, it is noteworthy that there was another Pyrrhus, the king of Epirus (319/318-272 BC) and “Pyrrhus of Neoptolemus” without the special definition “of glorious tutor of the Myrmidons” the reader could understand that Neoptolemus, a descendant of Pyrrhus, king of Epirus, is mentioned here. It is worth noting that Pyrrhus, in the form of “Pviro” can also be seen in the “Fables of the Hellenes”, in particular in the work “Judgments of Julian the First”. It is said about Priam's daughter Polyxene that Achilles, fascinated by her, was fatally wounded by Paris with an arrow in the temple of Apollo.

It is important that Pyrrhus is also mentioned by the 12th century poet Chakhrukhadze. In “Tamariani”, Chakhrukhadze says in praise of Tamar’s son, Lasha Giorgi, that he is “a new Pyrrhus”.

Thus, it turns out that the tradition of comparing with Neoptolemus existed in Georgian fiction as early as the 12th century, which was repeated by the Anonymous Chronicler two centuries later in connection with another character.

2. “But it is written, as in Aphrosinians’ writings, someone says that fights with Antipatros and young Cassandros killed him”.

Despite numerous attempts, the word “Aphrosinians” could not be understood correctly, which is why the essence of the sentence remained unclear. As for the meaning of “Aphrosinians”, it is noteworthy that this source is not created by any “word maker” – historian or writer. I think this refers to the “Ephemerides” – Ἀλεξάνδρου ἐφημερίδων βιβλία (in ancient Georgian „ეფემერიდნი“), the diaries of Alexander’s exploits, which were written by the king’s private secretaries, Eumenes of Kardia and Diodotos of Erythrai. Thus, most likely, “Lies among the Aphrosinians” refers to “Alexander’s book of Ephemerides”, the existence of which could have been known to the Chronicler through various sources, it is also possible to assume that the name of this book was distorted by the Chronicler himself (because he knew it from oral transmission) or by the copyist.

3. “And it was said that he was poisoned by his wife Esukan, as the writer says about the Great Macedonian, who had a headache and was in thought, who feasted in the evening and drank the cup of Irakli. They say that Esukan took vengeance on him for putting to death Basil of Ujarma for his dishonorable behavior: Basil committed adultery with Esukan and dishonored the King’s bed, and threw off his cassock, and stole the power. And for this dishonor, Basil was put to death.”

This passage can be seen in a relatively recently discovered two-page manuscript (H-1067) of the writings of Chronicles, which was published in 2009. In my opinion, this passage has been misunderstood and interpreted by the publisher, who thinks that it refers to Deianira poisoning Heracles out of jealousy. In my opinion, in this case we are dealing with the information preserved in the sources about the death of Alexander (which originates from the “Ephemerides”), according to which Alexander was poisoned when he emptied a large cup full of undiluted wine in honor of Heracles (Iust. 12.13.7; Plut. Alex., 75.3; Ar. 7.24.4-25.1; Diod. XVII, 117).

**Georgia in the Politics of the Byzantine Empire in the 5th Century**

**Nino Induashvili, Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University**

The 5th century marks an era of significant transformations. This period is characterized by increasing tensions between Byzantium and Iran, which turned the kingdoms of Kartli and Egrisi into arenas of civilizational confrontation. Although large-scale military conflicts between Byzantium and Iran were rarely recorded at this time and relations mostly developed in a peaceful phase, the real power struggle in the region manifested itself in covert forms. By this period, Kartli was considered a vassal state of Iran; however, Byzantium, covertly supported by local rulers and pro-Byzantine factions, sought to establish its influence in Kartli.

A completely different situation existed in Egrisi, which at the time was a vassal territory of Byzantium. Its advantageous geographical position made Egrisi a key military and political outpost for both empires. Control over this region held particular strategic importance for Byzantium in its struggle against Iran. In the following centuries, Egrisi's favorable location became a recurring cause of conflict.

The examination of the Byzantine-Sasanian rivalry in relation to the Georgian kingdoms is a highly relevant topic, as it not only reflects the political reality of a specific historical period but also lays the groundwork for the development of subsequent historical processes. Analyzing this issue is particularly interesting given that, during the period in question, there was no clearly defined or stable political course. The rulers of Kartli and Egrisi, as well as local political factions, frequently shifted their foreign policy orientation in response to changing circumstances.

The presentation reviews a scholarly issue of political nature: how the confrontation between Byzantium and Iran in the 5th century influenced the formulation of the foreign policy course of the kingdoms of Kartli and Egrisi.

Based on the study of historical sources and scholarly literature, the article highlights the key features of Byzantium’s political strategy toward the Georgian kingdoms of Kartli and Egrisi. It outlines the main characteristics of the empire’s policy and the methods it employed to maintain influence in the region. Both primary sources and the works of modern historians are utilized to provide a comprehensive analysis of the foreign policy dynamics of the given period. The research methodology relies on a source-based analytical approach, which enables the examination of historical processes within a broader context and the identification of the main directions of Byzantine policy.

Georgia’s geopolitical location played a significant role in shaping the course of the Byzantine-Sasanian rivalry. From a contemporary perspective, analyzing the relationship of Kartli and Egrisi with Byzantium offers a comprehensive assessment of Georgia’s geopolitical function. Within the context of regional and global power interests, the country’s strategic position remains highly relevant. The study of this issue is not only valuable from a historical standpoint, but also allows us to draw parallels and better understand Georgia’s place in the modern geopolitical system.

**Rev the Just and His Place in the History of Kartli and the Sasanian Empire**

**Ketevan Kimeridze, The University of Georgia, Tamaz Beradze Institute of Georgian Studies**

Rev the Just – King of Kartli and father of Mirian, the first Christian king – remains a relatively understudied and underappreciated figure in Georgian historiography. Some scholars do not even attribute to him the royal title. This paper identifies Rev the Just as the son of Hormizd Ardashir, who is referred to in the sources first as King of Armenia and later as King of Persia. In foreign chronicles, Rev appears under the name Hormizd, heir to the Persian throne, actively fighting to reclaim royal authority.

Episodes of Rev the Just’s rule in Georgian sources – particularly in *The Life of the Georgians* – are often attributed to Mirian’s activities, which leads to chronological inaccuracies in historical narratives. The aim of this study is to reconsider the historical role of Rev the Just and to reassess the evaluations made about him. Based on the research, it is confirmed that Rev the Just, also known as Hormizd, was a significant political figure both in the context of Kartli and the Sasanian Empire.

**The Eurasian Steppe Empire in Georgia: The Third Hegemon in the Georgian Political Reality of the 7th Century**

**Leri Tavadze, Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University**

The political reality of the 7th century is unique in the history of Georgia and the South Caucasus. The 7th century is associated with the emergence of the third imperial power in the Caucasus. It was the Turkic Khaganate. In the first third of the mentioned century, the Eurasian Steppe Empire, represented by the Western Turkic Khaganate, and Byzantium divided the South Caucasus into two parts.

The Western Turkic Khaganate was an empire that emerged as a result of the division of the First Turkic Empire. The Turkic Khaganate, also known as the Göktürk Khaganate, was already formed in the second half of the 6th century as the leading political entity of the Eurasian Steppe. The Turkic Khaganate began its expansion towards the South Caucasus and, in general, the Middle East during the ongoing war between Sassanid Iran and the Byzantine Empire, with the active support of the latter. If in the 6th century the Turkic Khaganate fought on the side of Byzantium against Sasanian Iran, already in the 7th century its successor, the Western Turkic Empire, took control of the east of the South Caucasus. This was the result of the defeat of Iran and the Byzantine-Western Turkic agreement. A third hegemon appeared in the Georgian and Transcaucasian political reality.

During the Erismtavari period, Kartli and Egrisi were forced to resist the political expansion of the emerging Turkic Khaganate and its direct successors (Western Turkic Khaganate; Khazar Khaganate). This political reality was already noticeable in the 7th century. In addition to political hegemony, our paper will also focus on the economic ties.

The politics and economic relations of the Turkic Khaganate and its successors with the Georgian world are less explored. The problem is relevant, since it shows the genesis of the relations between Georgia and the Eurasian steppe empires. The paper will discuss the beginnings of the relations between the Turkic Khaganate and the Georgian world, which, in many cases, were based on the struggle for a common goal. Traditional methods of historical research will be used, as well as complex research methods, which involves the use of various types of primary sources for the purpose of studying a specific problem.

Thus, after investigating this issue, it will be possible to ascertain the economic and political relations of Kartli and Egrisi with the rest of world in the 7th century. Clarification of this issue allows for an in-depth study of the relationship between the Eurasian steppe world and Georgia.

**On Masjid Dhu al-Qarnayn, According to Medieval Arab Sources**

**Omiko Ejibia, Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University**

After the Arabs appeared in the Caucasus and conquered its eastern, southern, and northeastern parts, the region became the furthest point of Arab-Muslim expansion in that direction. The Caucasus region is described by several medieval Arab-Muslim authors, and their accounts often include myths, legends, or stories reflecting historical and religious themes. The existence of the Masjid Dhu al-Qarnayn mosque in the Caucasus is one such case.

Dhu al-Qarnayn, also mentioned in the Quran and considered one of the prophets, is known in Islamic cosmology for his travels or campaigns in the East and West. He is credited with building a great barrier or wall to protect against the people of Gog and Magog. Muslim historians and theologians have often identified him with historical figures such as Alexander the Great, Cyrus the Great, or the Lakhmid and Himyarite kings.

Various opinions have been expressed about the location of Masjid Zu al-Qarnayn, mainly suggesting it is in Mtskheta. However, we believe that different authors may have referred to different places, not only Mtskheta, regarding its location. This issue is relevant because it has not been thoroughly studied or researched. Only general opinions and arguments are widely accepted, primarily those of Brose and Marquart, whose works have influenced subsequent research, highlighting the need for a proper investigation.

The main challenge of this topic is the mythical nature of the research site and the need to synthesise medieval Arabic, Georgian, and Armenian sources. This report aims to present and explore theories about the probable location of Masjid zu al-Qarnayn or the places Arab-Muslim writers may have referred to.

Regarding research methodology, we employed the method of historical comparative analysis, data collection and selection (to evaluate the reliability of primary sources), and a microhistorical approach since the subject is singular and the region is precisely defined.

In conclusion, we will gather both theoretical and practical data to determine the potential location of Masjid zu al-Qarnayn or the sites implied by various authors. We will also explore why Arab- Muslim writers connected it with the Caucasus region. The findings will benefit those interested in medieval Arab-Caucasian cultural and religious relations, Caucasus toponymy, legends associated with the region, and Arabic sources.

**The Monastery and Its 'Wings': The Relationship Between Large and Small Monastic Complexes in Tao-Klarjeti**

**Buba Kudava, Caucasus University**

In Tao-Klarjeti, in the vicinity of major monastic centers, smaller-scale complexes—comprising one or two churches along with auxiliary structures—are also present. Some scholars interpret these as autonomous monasteries, while others consider them solely as monastery churches. Frequently, scholarly focus tends to emphasize the architectural features of the churches, often neglecting their functional aspects.

Based on their geographical location and, in some cases, their composition, it is evident that such complexes are neither parish churches nor autonomous monasteries, as they lack the extensive territory, scale, and infrastructure characteristic of the latter. Additionally, the term "monastery churches" does not fully capture their specific nature.

When examining such cases, Giorgi Merchule’s *Life of Grigol Khantsteli* provides a relevant reference, mentioning the renowned Opiza Monastery and its "wings." Indeed, these complexes can be considered as “branches” (or “wings”) of nearby monasteries. It appears that only a limited number of monks resided in these locations, who were members of the monastic brotherhood but followed a different (perhaps more ascetic) typicon. The establishment of such "wings" was likely motivated by a desire for solitude and a distinctive mode of spiritual practice.

The "wing" of one of the monasteries—possibly Tskarostavi—is believed to have been the renowned Nuka-Sakdari. It is also evident that the "branch" associated with the *Otkhta Eklesia* Monastery was the so-called "Arseni’s Church." Additionally, at this site, a second church has been discovered, along with the remains of other structures within the complex.

In some cases, churches situated at a distance from the central monastic complex can also be classified as "wings." The absence of visible remains of cells or auxiliary structures around these churches does not necessarily indicate that they did not exist in the past; often, subtle traces may be detectable through careful examination. It is important to note that some monastery structures were constructed of wood, which complicates the identification of their remains today. Conversely, it is clear that not every remote church within a monastic complex—even those located far away—should be regarded as a "wing." These churches were likely built for different purposes and served distinct functional roles.

Since this topic has not been subjected to detailed study, the terminology used to refer to such "branches" of monasteries in the tradition of Tao-Klarjeti or other regions remains unclear. It is uncertain whether the term "wing" was an established designation during that period or merely a figurative expression employed by Giorgi Merchule. For comparison: in the same context, the author mentions the Berta Monastery and "its neighbors" (there is an opinion that Parekhta, considered a separate monastery, was affiliated with Berta). Elsewhere, Merchule notes that the Bagrationi rulers visited and prayed at Midznadzori, Tskarostavi, Baretelta, and "their places." Most likely, "wings" are also implied in these references, although they may not have been designated by a single, universally accepted term. An important consideration is that these "wings" (and their terminology) could have varied depending on factors such as scale and the number of monks residing there. Such distinctions remain relevant in monastic traditions today, for example, on Mount Athos, which has a rich history of monastic organization.

According to the aforementioned sources, some monasteries likely encompassed several "wings." Naturally, it is reasonable to assume that, in addition to the monasteries explicitly mentioned, other monastic centers may also have had such hermitages. Preliminary observations suggest that similar branches could have existed in other monasteries of Tao and Klarjeti, including Oshki, Khakhuli, Parkhali, Bana, Khantsta, Shatberdi, and Jmerki. Additionally, there are examples of small, monastic-style complexes—akin to hermitages—although it remains unclear to which larger monastic entities they were affiliated.

**On Georgian Crusading**

**Mamuka Tsurtsumia,Independent Researcher**

In historiography, Georgia’s wars with the Islamic world are often examined in parallel with the Western Crusading movement. As both Georgian and foreign scholars have noted, in the Middle Ages Georgia was indeed perceived as a significant bulwark of Christendom, actively fighting against the Muslim world, and its military operations were represented as “wars for the faith”.

Within Western historiography, several types of explanation for crusading exist: **traditionalists**, who regard as crusades only those expeditions directed toward the liberation of Jerusalem and the Holy Land; **pluralists**, who recognize as crusades all campaigns sanctioned by the Pope, regardless of destination; **popularists**, who emphasize the eschatological and apocalyptic dimensions of the movement; and **generalists**, who consider every Christian holy war to be a crusade.

In these debates, an important contribution was made by Paul Chevedden, who presented crusading not as a sudden phenomenon beginning in 1095, but as part of a longer process. In his view, the Norman wars against Muslims in Sicily, as well as the Reconquista on the Iberian Peninsula, should be understood within the context of crusading. Muslim scholars (al-Sulami, Ibn al-Athir, and others) likewise described Western military campaigns in Sicily and Spain as the beginnings of a “Christian jihad”. Chevedden interprets the Crusading movement as a response to the threat posed by Islam.

In Georgia, the idea of holy war developed locally in the form of the “war for Christ’s faith”. Georgian kings and the Church saw their wars not only as a matter of political independence but also as the continuation of a Christian mission. King David IV “the Builder” even adopted the title “Sword of the Messiah”, an analogue to the epithet “Sword of Allah” common in the Muslim world. This clearly reflected the concept of a Christian jihad. In the speeches of Georgian rulers and military leaders, appeals to self-sacrifice for the faith are constant. Historical sources testify that wars against Muslims were perceived as holy undertakings, waged in the name of Christ, where martyrdom was considered a heavenly reward. The Georgian Church played a special role in this process. The Catholicos of Georgia and the clergy obligated the king to participate in the fight “for the faith of Christ”. The Church was not merely an observer but actively supported military campaigns, reinforcing the morale of soldiers through religious ritual and personal example.

In Latin and Muslim chronicles, Georgians are frequently mentioned as natural allies of the Western crusaders. Walter, the chancellor of Antioch, describes King David IV as “a pious and perfect Christian,” while his army is presented as “the soldiers of Christ” (*Christi milites*). Such accounts demonstrate that European authors regarded Georgian warfare as part of their own crusading narrative. Similarly, Muslim authors portrayed Georgians as some of the most formidable enemies, who, together with the Franks, posed a serious threat to Islam.

Georgia’s wars with the Islamic world were simultaneously perceived as struggles for local political interests and as part of the defense of the Christian faith. Both Latin and Eastern sources agree that Georgian warfare naturally fit into the broader framework of the Crusading movement and represented a component of Christendom’s collective defense. The idea of self-sacrifice for Christ’s faith, which at once strengthened royal authority and inspired the spirit of the warriors, was one of the main reasons why Georgia’s military campaigns across the centuries became seen as a manifestation of crusading.

Despite the circumstances in which Georgia found itself, outside papal jurisdiction, and therefore without access to papally granted crusading privileges and indulgences, the Georgians nevertheless fought for the liberation of occupied Christian lands (*reconquista*), for the restoration of the Christian Church (*restauratio*), and for the gaining of spiritual reward. This corresponds closely to the pluralist definition of crusading, not to mention the generalist one.

**Augustine of Hippo and his Concept of Holy War**

**Tea Gogolishvili, Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University**

Saint Augustine was born in 354 in Numidia, then the African province of the Roman Empire. He was the Bishop of Hippo and a renowned theologian and philosopher of his time. Saint Augustine is canonized by many Christian churches. His works have had a great influence on Western Christian thought. Augustine laid the foundation for the concept of just war, also known as holy war, which over time became widely shared by Christians. In 1095, at the Council of Clermont, Pope Urban II presented the concept of holy war as the main ideological basis for his speech and the beginning of the Crusades. In the subsequent period, Crusade historians of various periods often used Augustine’s concept of holy war to justify and justly present the campaigns of Europeans in the Holy Land.

Saint Augustine’s views on just war are scattered throughout his work, but we can nevertheless identify several major works where the specific issue is addressed, namely: De libero arbitrio voluntatis (On the Freedom of Choice), De civitate Dei (The City of God), and in his personal letters to various individuals.

Understanding the concept of holy war according to Saint Augustine is very important in order to understand what kind of thinking system Western Europeans had in the Middle Ages, how events and, in many cases, state politics were determined by the worldview and ideology of that period, what kind of everyday life people had in the Middle Ages and what kind of beliefs and ideas they had, what was right, just and appropriate behavior for them and what was the basis for all this. Saint Augustine had a great influence on Christian scholasticism and Thomas Aquinas. His theory of holy war created an ideological basis for the Crusades, and it is no coincidence that all historians of the Middle Ages who tell us about the Crusades draw on and develop the discussion of holy and just war.

While working on the report, we were guided by two important aspects: 1) to reveal the essence of Augustine’s concept of holy war and 2) to understand how much influence this concept had on his contemporaries and the subsequent period.

In addition to the question, during the preparation of the report, a complex of sources and the comparative research method were used, various works of Blessed Augustine were compared with each other, and the Latin primary sources were critically analyzed. Proceeding from the specifics of the topic, the report is based on an interdisciplinary research methodology, which, in turn, made it possible to address the pressing problem in a broad and comprehensive manner. The material for the research was studied both from a source and from a historical perspective.

 In conclusion, it can be said that Saint Augustine had a great influence not only on the thinkers of his time and contemporaries, but also on the entire Christian system of thought; his theories and views are still accepted and shared by theologians and theology.

**David Ulu’s Prayer: “Minor” Eschatology in the Medieval Georgian Historical Narrative**

**Rusudan Labadze, Georgian National Academy of Sciences**

Medieval historiography was shaped by Christian concepts, primarily eschatology, as well as the doctrine of providentialism. Georgian hagiographic and historical writing of the Middle Ages is rich in eschatological motifs. The conception of these motifs is associated with periods of hardship, such as the invasions of the Arabs, Seljuks, Khwarazmians, or Mongols, which were identified with the eschatological end times. Hagiographers and chroniclers sought the Old and New Testament prophecies about the end times in their contemporary era. Ioane Sabanisdze’s eschatological theory of the seventh epoch (*მეშვიდე დარი*), which he calls “shortened time”, most accurately corresponds to the understanding of Eschatological time in the medieval system of thought.

Unlike hagiographic writing, in Georgian historical narrative the eschatological idea is conveyed by general concepts. In addition to direct quotations and comparisons, the text of Kartlis Tskhovreba (The Life of Kartli) contains some expressions and terms from the Old and New Testaments, while biblical vocabulary and phrases are often reproduced unchanged.

In terms of eschatological expectations, we should single out the *Hundred Years’ Chronicle* separately. The eschatological world view of the author of this Chronicle is expressed in the same general discourse as the rest of the text of the Kartlis Tskhovreba. However, only the Zhamtaaghmtsereli (Chronicler – *ჟამთააღმწერელი*) mentions the actors of the “minor” eschatology – the “air guards”. The air guards, well known to hagiographic writings, are the executors of a private judgment, who judge the souls of sinners in the so-called “tax-offices” (teloneia – *საზვერეები*). This individual judgment takes place immediately after death and expresses the intermediate state that the soul will pass through before its fate is finally clarified. In the episode of theHundred Years’ Chronicle, which tells the story of David Ulu’s capture at the court of Queen Rusudan’s son-in-law, the Sultan of Rumi, it is described how David prays before the icon of the Virgin Mary and asks for help: “…Hear my plea, for only in You I can find consolation for my orphanage and my unjust death, for nobody will favor me with a burial and grave, and fish will eat me. And nobody will ever know where my grave is. I beg you in this last place, trusting in Your mercy, to save me from the hands of the air guards and from their terrible torments, to which all sinners and guilty people like me await.”

A review of various Georgian sources reveals that at both levels of medieval culture (official, i.e., theological and popular), the attitude towards sin and the private judgment intended for sinners is the same, that is, people are well aware of their sinfulness and are afraid of judgment, even preliminary. This is evidenced by the cases of two main figures of the Middle Ages – a saint and a king. We have in mind the following passages cited in hagiographic and historiographic works: before his death, the Assyrian father, Ioane of Zedazeni, is terrified by the encounter with the air guards, the same feeling is experienced by the captive David-Ulu and/or the martyred king Luarsab, and in the deed of donation for one of the temples, Vakhtang V Shah Nawaz threatens those who violate the *dispositio* (one of the clauses in a deed) with the air guards.

The report discusses the issue of attribution of the air guards and their functions. It is also emphasized that the one and only mention of the characters of the “minor” eschatology in the Kartlis Tskhovreba by the anonymous historian, may once again indicate the correctness of considering the author of the chronicle as a cleric. This opinion is supported by the abundance of miracles described in the chronicle, which is an important component of hagiography, i.e., a genre feature and seems alien in a historical chronicle.

**On the Dating of One Document**

**Bezhan Khorava, The University of Georgia, Tamaz Beradze Institute of Georgian Studies**

**Goneli Arakhamia, Georgian National Academy of Sciences**

**Davit Chitanava, TSU Ivane Javakhishvili Institute of History and Ethnology**

A copy of one unpublished document (Sd-3035) is stored in the Korneli Kekelidze Georgian National Centre of Manuscripts. At the end of the text, a date is added – 1492. The document is a grant deed of the “King of kings Teimuraz”, his wife, the queen of queens Tuta, daughter of the ruler of the Circassians, and their son Alexandre to Bakara Bakradze, according to which the following villages of Racha are granted to him: Jvarisubani, Shkmeri, Bajikhevi, Tskhmori, and Chordi with its castle. The grant deed was written by the priest Maxime, and witnesses were mouravi (steward) Garsevan Kochakidze and Zaal Erishidze.

The document is interesting primarily because, given its date (1492), the identification of the king and other persons mentioned in it based on comparison with other sources of this period seems impossible.
The present work is aimed specifically at establishing the identity of the King of the kings Teimuraz, whose wife, according to this document, was allegedly Tuta, the daughter of the ruler of the Circassians, and whose son was Alexandre. If the date of the manuscript is correct, King Teimuraz is unknown in Georgia of this period. The name Teimuraz is not found among the names of provincial kings either.

The work uses methods proven in modern historiography, including historical cognition, systematic, complex and comparative research, source identification, critical analysis and other methods.
In the work, based on an analysis of various historical written sources and taking into account scientific literature, the supposed date of the compilation of this document and the identity of the “King of kings Teimuraz” are determined. Namely, as it turns out, the document was drawn up in the second half of the 16th century in the kingdom of Imereti, at the court of the brother of King Giorgi II (1565-1585), Prince Teimuraz, whose appanage was Racha.

Thus, as a result of the research, we learn several facts from the history of the Kingdom of Imereti. It is certain that the document is genuine, although it is dated incorrectly.

**An Analysis of the Ideological Conflict over Royal Succession Based on Two Specific Sources (“The Gelati Testament” and Michael Psellos’ “On the First-Born”)**

**Ana Kitesashvili, Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University**

In medieval monarchies, the issue of royal succession was crucial for ensuring political stability, social order, and divine legitimation. In Georgia, during the reign of David the Builder, these matters became particularly significant. This thesis examines the ideological conflict surrounding royal succession in 11th-12th century Georgian sources, specifically analyzing the contradiction between Michael Psellos’s theological treatise and the so-called David the Builder’s “Gelati Testament”.

Michael Psellos’s treatise *On the First-Born*, translated into Georgian in the 11th-12th centuries, reflects the influence of Byzantine theological thought in the Georgian intellectual sphere. This work addresses the concept of primogeniture not only in the context of family law but also infuses it with deep theological, philosophical, and ontological significance. Psellos, relying on Christological reasoning, argues that the “first-born” is not merely “first by birth”, but is “first" in nature, dignity, and inherent superiority, which reflects divine order. Although the text does not directly discuss royal succession, its discourse on the divine nature of primogeniture provided a powerful ideological foundation for legitimizing the transfer of the throne to the first-born in Christian monarchies. This ideology contributed to the stability and legitimacy of royal authority.

At roughly the same time, the *Gelati Testament* came into circulation, which has become a contentious topic in Georgian historiography. Some scholars believe the testament is a forgery, supported by the fact that the text was likely written after David’s death, and no original manuscripts have survived – only four 19th-century copies remain. Other scholars argue that the ambiguous formulation of succession rules and the transfer of the throne from one brother to another seems improbable for such a strong and autocratic ruler as David the Builder. It is also suggested that the forged text was created to appeal to neutrally inclined feudal lords. However, other scholars assert that the testament was indeed written according to David the Builder’s wishes.

In the *Gelati Testament*, David instructs Demetrius to cede the throne to his younger brother, Vakhtang, which appears to sharply violate the principle of primogeniture. This contradiction points to a deeper ideological discourse in which the legitimacy of royal power was still in the process of formation. It is likely that the testament was created for political reasons, in an attempt to influence historical reality. Regardless of its authenticity, the testament served as a political statement and presented a new argument for legitimation amidst feudal conflicts. Its survival in historical memory was due to the ongoing need for legitimizing non-first-born heirs. It became a precedent that created the illusion of an established order of succession.

In conclusion, Michael Psellos’s work offers an ideologically established principle: the right of succession naturally belongs to the first-born. In contrast, the *Gelati Testament*, whether authentic or not, constructs an alternative narrative based on political practice, where the king’s will takes precedence over the naturally established rules. These two approaches were in constant opposition. In Georgian history, preference was generally given to the king’s will, the sentiment of the feudal environment, and practical realities, which shaped the effectiveness of succession.

**The Bagrationi Residence in Zegami**

**Nino Kobauri, Korneli Kekelidze Georgian National Centre of Manuscripts**

**Research Topic:** Our study focuses on the royal residence of the kings of Kakheti, located within the present-day territory of the Republic of Azerbaijan. In historical written sources, this location appears under various toponyms **–** most notably Dzegami and Bazari. In this paper, we aim to explore the reasons behind the establishment and eventual discontinuation of the royal residence in Dzegami. We will attempt to reconstruct, to the fullest extent possible, the historical narrative of the palace and assess its role and significance within its historical period.

**Relevance of the Study:** Our primary objective is to examine the royal palace of Dzegami from a historical and source-critical perspective. In Georgian historiography, research on royal palaces remains limited, and Dzegami is no exception. Numerous questions concerning this site remain unanswered. We believe this study is timely and relevant, as it will result in a comprehensive scholarly work that poses critical questions, identifies key problems, and **–** through rigorous examination of primary sources and existing historiography **–** reconstructs the chronological history of the Dzegami palace. This will include an analysis of its historical-geographical, political, economic, and cultural functions.

**Research Problem:** Throughout the research process, we encountered several complex challenges. Foremost among these is the identification of the precise location of the royal residence, followed by the task of determining its exact position within the city. This issue naturally leads to further inquiry into the historical necessity and rationale behind the construction of the palace at this particular site. Addressing these questions requires an in-depth study of the region’s historical geography, as well as the political, social, and economic factors of the period. Another major problem involves determining the causes and timing of the palace’s functional decline: whether it was triggered by a specific event or resulted from broader systemic changes within the kingdom.

**Methodology:** To address these challenges, we will employ a wide range of research methods, both interdisciplinary and historiographical, drawing from archaeology, art history, and historical geography. Our primary methodological approaches will be the historical-comparative and historical-typological methods. Notably, the questions raised in this study are not unique to the Dzegami palace; similar issues arise in the study of other royal residences. Given our prior experience in researching comparable sites, we are well-positioned to apply a comparative framework in our analysis.

**Conclusion:** As a result of this research, we will present a historical and source-based study of the royal palace of Dzegami. In areas where sources are limited, we will offer reasoned hypotheses; where evidence is sufficient, we will provide substantiated conclusions. The study will determine the palace’s location, identify the historical and political factors behind its foundation, examine its functional role in a chronological context, and explore the causes behind its decline and eventual cessation as a royal residence.

**The Family of Charmauli of the 17th Century, their Activities and the Hereditary Line of David Charmauli (1602-1626)** **– according to Historical Documents**

**Otar Zhizhiasvili, Korneli Kekelidze Georgian National Centre of Manuscripts**

In Georgian historiography the significance and history of a family such as the Charmauli feudal house has received limited scholarly attention. The activity of representatives of this family in the political life of Georgia began in the 13th century and ended in the second half of the 18th century. Throughout this time, they were quite actively involved in both secular and ecclesiastical affairs. Kings and clergy were quite generous to them at the official positions and allowed them promotion or property transfer by documents. Their dominions were mainly in the Aragvi Valley, Shida Kartli, and to a lesser extent in Kakheti. They benefited from the approval of positions and property received from church officials. They also had the rank of church nobility, which was one of the honorable and influential institutions in feudal Georgia. Some members of the family also held the status of Catholicos and Svetitskhoveli serfs. They belonged to such a large institution as the “Mtskhetishviloba”.

From the doctoral dissertation **–** *The Charmauli Feudal House*, *13th-18th Centuries* **–** we selected individuals active in the 17th century for a conference presentation and documented their genealogical line using historical records. These documents also detail the activities, official positions, peasant holdings, and estates of the Charmauli family representatives, which were transferred to them by the Catholicos. The topic is relevant because the 17th century Charmauli family has not yet been the subject of research or scientific publication.

During our scientific research, we posed the question (or problem) of establishing a genealogical line among the active Charmauli people of this century, which we were able to do through the documents and sources available to us (stored in the Central Archive and the National Center of Manuscripts). We also identified and highlighted the issue of the hereditary transfer of the guardianship of the village of Aghaiani. We paid attention to the rule and etiquette of the head of

**On the Tenure of** **Christopher Mukhran Batonishvili as Archbishop of Kartli: Clarifying Chronology and Identity**

**Maia Shaorshadze, Korneli Kekelidze Georgian National Centre of Manuscripts**

The ecclesiastical history of Kartli at the turn of the 17th and 18th centuries is complicated by the presence of two hierarchs named Christopher who served as Archbishops of Kartli in close succession. This paper aims to distinguish between Christopher Mukhran Batonishvili and Christopher Palavandishvili, and to establish, as precisely as possible, the chronological framework of their tenures within the episcopal see of Kartli. Drawing upon documentary evidence from royal charters, ecclesiastical decrees, and references in contemporary chronicles, we offer a reassessment of the episcopal chronology and clarify earlier historiographical ambiguities, especially those concerning their appointments and activities.

**Introduction:** From the late 17th century to the early 18th century, the Archbishopric of Kartli was occupied at different times by two distinct figures sharing the same ecclesiastical name **–** Christopher. One was Christopher Mukhran Batonishvili, a member of the princely Mukhrani family, and the other was Christopher Palavandishvili. The overlapping names, combined with fragmentary and sometimes contradictory source material, have led to confusion in identifying their respective episcopates. This study synthesizes extant archival and manuscript sources to clarify their historical and ecclesiastical roles, focusing primarily on the tenure of Christopher Mukhran Batonishvili.

**Christopher Mukhran Batonishvili: Genealogy and Appointment**
Christopher Mukhran Batonishvili, a member of the royal Mukhrani House, was the brother of Papua Mukhran Batonishvili (1658-1700) and uncle of Prince Konstantine, son of Teimuraz Batonishvili (1677-1700). Their uncle was King Vakhtang V Shah Nawaz. Documentary records indicate that Christopher became Father of the Monastery of the Cross in Jerusalem in 1683, and subsequently was elevated to Archbishop of Kartli by [1688]. His tenure is confirmed during the years 1690-1693, 1696, and 1698-1703.

**Documentary Evidence of Activity (1690-1703):**

Christopher Mukhran Batonishvili is attested in numerous official records:

* In 1690, he was granted the governorships of Ujarma, Uzunkanti, and Agizni by Sakhltukhutsesi Revaz Cholokashvili, along with his brothers.
* He confirmed various legal acts, including the consolidation of the Gori herd to the Garsevanishvili family (1690-1703).
* He accompanied King Erekle I Nazarali-Khan to Isfahan on three diplomatic missions (1693), for which he was granted additional land holdings.
* He mediated disputes among nobility and witnessed important documents, including the donation of serfs to Svetitskhoveli Cathedral (1696), and participated in ecclesiastical governance alongside the Catholicos of Eastern Georgia.

Despite a temporary absence or resignation around 1693-1696 **–** possibly due to political or ecclesiastical reasons **–** Christopher remained a key religious figure, reemerging in episcopal documents from 1698 onwards. His presence is confirmed in the *Monastic Regulation Decree* of 1702, signed alongside Catholicos Evdemoz and other hierarchs.

**Identity Confusion and Differentiation**
Vakhushti Batonishvili’s historical commentary suggests that another cleric, Meleti Natsvlisshvili **–** allegedly Erekle I’s tutor **–** may have briefly occupied the Archbishopric in 1688. However, this appears to have been an anomalous or temporary appointment, possibly driven by court politics. Similarly, Archbishop Evdemoz Ratishvili served from 1687 to 1698, potentially overlapping with Christopher’s intermittent presence.

A particularly persistent confusion arises from a mistaken identification in Vakhtang VI’s *Escort list*, which names an “Archbishop Christopher, son of Tavadishvili.” St. P. Karbelashvili erroneously associated this with Christopher Mukhran Batonishvili, when it more accurately refers to Christopher Palavandishvili, active as Archbishop between 1718 and 1724 and later taken to Russia by Vakhtang VI.

**Chronological Summary:** Based on documentary references, the following timeline is proposed:

* **Christopher Mukhran Batonishvili:**
	+ Father of the Monastery of the Cross: 1683
	+ Archbishop of Kartli: [1688], 1690-1693, 1696, 1698, 1700, 1701-1703
* **Christopher Palavandishvili:**
	+ Father of the Cross and Abbot of Kvatakhevi: 1716
	+ Archbishop of Kartli: 1718, 1719, 1722-1724
	+ Emigrated to Russia with Vakhtang VI: 1724

**Conclusion:** This study demonstrates that Christopher Mukhran Batonishvili held the Archbishopric of Kartli during a non-continuous but documentarily verifiable period between 1688 and 1703. Later ecclesiastical activity attributed to “Archbishop Christopher” from 1716 onwards pertains not to the Mukhranian prince but to Christopher Palavandishvili. Clarifying these identifications not only corrects earlier historiographical errors but also provides insight into the complex interplay of political, dynastic, and ecclesiastical power in early modern Kartli.

**The Status of Lomisi Church in the Political Processes Taking Place in Eastern Georgia during the Second Half of the 18th Century and the Beginning of the 19th Century**

**Gela Kistauri, Saint Andrew the First-Called Georgian University of the Georgian Patriarchate**

The Church of St. George of Lomisi is located in the historical “Khad” community of Mtiuleti, which, presumably from the turn of the 14th-15th centuries, has been the common central religious center of Mtiuleti (in the Middle Ages, Mtiuleti was divided into two parts **–** “Khad” and “Tskhavati” communities). The church has been actively mentioned in Georgian narrative and documentary sources from the 14th century, both from a religious and political perspective, which indicates that Lomisi Church played a fairly active role, both in the religious and political life of the Ksani and Aragvi river valleys, as well as in the general Georgian state life.

Until now, researchers have presented Lomisi Church only in the direction of religious studies. We have investigated a number of issues related to Lomisi Church from a completely different aspect. Especially its political significance and influence on the political processes taking place in Eastern Georgia in the second half of the 18th century and the beginning of the 19th century.

The research problem has been studied based on previously unknown archival materials that we recently uncovered while working in the archives, which allowed us to study the history of the Lomisi Church from a completely different perspective.

The article examines not the religious, but rather the political issues of tLomisi Church. For example, the efforts of Bezhan, a representative of the Aragvi Eristavi clan, about the attempt to restore the old political and social status, during which all these problematic processes, Lomisi Church is brought to the forefront as an ally of Bezhan. Why the Church of Lomisi?! **–** According to the data of new sources available to us, the Church of Saint George of Lomisi, not only from a religious point of view, but also from a political and social position, was particularly important, both for the royal family of Kartli-Kakheti and the Eristavi dynasty of Aragvi, as well as for the Russian royal court.

We have studied the research problem using historical-source analysis, archival, museum, and secondary research methods.

Based on new archival documentary sources, the confrontation between the representatives of the Aragvi Eristavi dynasty and the royal court of Kartli-Kakheti in the second half of the 18th century and the beginning of the 19th century was clearly revealed, the reason for which was the attempt of the representatives of the Aragvi Eristavi dynasty to restore their old status. The fact that there were tense relations between the house of the Kartli-Kakheti kingdom and the former Aragvi eristavi was clearly evidenced by a letter sent to Knoring by Vakhtang (Almaskhani) Batonishvili in 1801. The aforementioned letter is well-known in Georgian historiography. However, in addition to this letter, we have uncovered new archival materials that tell of the efforts of Bezhan, a representative of the Aragvi Eristavi dynasty, to restore its old political and social status, which clearly shows the level of political legitimacy that Lomisi Church had in all these political processes.

**The Impact of Greek Colonization on the Southeastern Shores of the Black Sea: according to the Research of Professor Giorgi Gozalishvili**

**Chabuka Metonidze, Natia Amirejibi, Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University**

**Research topic** presented by us concerns the peculiarities of Greek colonization in the Southeastern region of the Black Sea according to the scientific research of Prof. G. Gozalishvili. Greek colonization is a prerequisite for the formation of a global Hellenic civilization, where the process of forming a new world trade system was systematically carried out on the basis of the creation of Hellenic new constructions. In general, trade, the emergence of trade factors (settlements) were not alien to either the peoples of the East or the Phoenicians, however, the trade and economic empire that the Hellenic civilization created completely changed the previously existing world economic order.

The **relevance** of this topic lies in determining the specifics of functioning of Greek colonization in the area of settlement of Kartvelian tribes based on the views of Prof. G. Gozalishvili. Our goal is to look at G. Gozalishvili’s research from a new perspective and give it its due place; to show what was the main and essential distinguishing feature of the scientist’s contribution in relation to Greek colonization on the example of the Southeastern Black Sea coast. The Greeks introduced a new system of settlement arrangement, management, and interaction with the outside world. These were settlements where the local population was not exploited, subjugated, or subjected to forced labor. On the contrary, these were settlements where mutually beneficial trade-partnership regulations were established with the local population. They did not force the locals to accept their rules of the game, but rather, they tried to establish close contact with the indigenous population themselves, take into account their worldview, economic or social interests, and take appropriate steps. This was the approach to Greek colonization throughout almost the entire period. The only exceptions were those settlements where there was almost no local population. Naturally, the Greeks themselves became dominant here (for example, in the Northern Black Sea coast: Olbia, Chersonese, Ponticapea, where the Greeks later created the Bosporus Kingdom). As for the Southeastern Black Sea coast, the local population was abundant and diverse. It was here that the first Greek colonial cities on the Black Sea coast were founded: Sinope, Amassos and Trebizond. Although they were considered purely Greek city-states for a long time, recent scientific research has shown traces of much earlier settlements in their place.

The **main problem** of the topic is the gaps in the Georgian scientific space regarding this issue, which is due to both the scarcity of sources and the biased approaches existing during the Soviet Union. One of the first in the scientific literature was Prof. G. Gozalishvili, who introduced the study of this issue into the Georgian scientific space. He tried to determine the scale of Greek colonization in this region and to define the ethnic and cultural area of the local population. We believe that he was among the few scientists working in this field who, despite the Soviet totalitarian restrictions, dared to say a new word and determine the traces of the Georgian ethnos in the Southeastern Black Sea region and the scale of the relations of the Georgian tribes with the Greek world.

In the article, we refer to the generally recognized scientific **methodology of research**: the interdisciplinary research method, the comparative-historical method, the method of critical analysis and synthesis of sources, ideographic (descriptive), retrospective methods.

**Conclusion.** Professor Giorgi Gozalishvili in his time said something new both in terms of the nature and settlement of the Georgian tribes in general, and in terms of the specific features of their activities and way of life, including their existence under the conditions of Greek colonization. The scientist’s opinions are distinguished by their originality, breaking the closed circle established for scientists during the Soviet totalitarian regime and opening the arena for modern research.

Hall III

**Georgian Theater in the 18th Century**

**Tamar Tsagareli, Shota Rustaveli Theatre and Film Georgia State University**

As is known, during the Middle Ages, various types of public entertainment were used in our country to replace the theater. The most popular of them were the *mushaitoba* **–** similar to modern circus performances, as well as the ball and the cabaret, which were more like training and exercise performances. Theatrical dramatism **–** notes Acad. Korneli Kekelidze **–** in the literal sense of the word, is more like the so-called *keenoba* and *berikaoba*, which have the character of a semi-staged action. Such performances provided rich material for the development of the national Georgian theater from these primitive elements. It is a well-known fact that in medieval Europe church performances-mysteries were held to attract parishioners. This was unacceptable for the Orthodox Church. However, such theatrical performances, influenced by European culture, apparently, in the second half of the 18th century, against the backdrop of cultural upsurge, could not be ignored by the Georgian Church either. Its development was facilitated by Catholic missionaries who founded schools, churches and, presumably, staged mysteries in Georgia. The theological seminaries of Tbilisi and Telavi must have played a special role in introducing such performances.

After the establishment of “absolutism” in European states, royal theaters were created. It represented the entertainment of the aristocracy. Following the example of Western Europe, a similar theater appeared in Georgia in the 18th century.

Historical sources show that at the end of the 18th century, a theater was also founded in the Kingdom of Kartli-Kakheti, and dramaturgy developed. Theatrical performances soon attracted the attention of the people and, accordingly, enjoyed great popularity. According to Zakaria Chichinadze, during the performance of the play “The Horn Train”, “They started asking us to act out more. Then many people performed it. The following took part in the performance: David Batonishvili, David Cholokashvili, Giorgi Avalishvili, Tamaz Andronikashvili, the wives of King Giorgi and Irakli Batonishvili.”

When was the Georgian Theater created? **–** There are different opinions about this issue. As we mentioned, according to one assumption, it was founded in 1791, according to some opinions, 1780 is the date of the founding of the Georgian Theater, and Count Kochar (the entrepreneur of the Vienna Theater Company) and Jacob Reineggs, who were in Tbilisi at that time, made a great contribution to its establishment.

The Georgian Theater was not created in one specific year. In the 70s of the 18th century, along with the economic boom, Georgian culture developed.

Through connections with Europe and sharing the experience of their achievements, many innovations were introduced in Kartl-Kakheti. Among them was the Georgian theater. With the help of Europeans, in particular, Reinegs and Kohar, it developed even further, and in the 90s of the same century it took its final form. Dramaturgy also developed during this period. Plays by prominent authors of Russian, French and other nationalities were translated.

Original Georgian plays were also written. In general, it should be noted that the founders of Georgian theater did not blindly accept foreign experience. Although they introduced the culture of the European or Russian stage, at the same time, they used the traditions of Georgian character. According to Giorgi Avalishvili, the purpose of the theater was fighting against the lower qualities of man, moral perfection, etc. In the second half of the 18th century, theater existed in Georgia in this form.

**The Architectural and Artistic Study of a Historic Residential Building Located at 9 Dimitri Uznadze Street in Tbilisi**

**Tatia Gvineria, Tbilisi State Academy of Arts**

This research [FR-23-6740] supported by Shota Rustaveli National Science Foundation of Georgia

This thesis is dedicated to the architectural and artistic study of a historic residential building located at 9 Dimitri Uznadze Street in Tbilisi. Dating from the second half of the 19th century, the building is a significant example of the stylistic synthesis characteristic of the era, blending Western architectural forms with Eastern, specifically Qajar, artistic aesthetics. This fusion is particularly evident in the interior, which is notable for its compositional complexity, spatial depth, and rich decorative elements.

The research is relevant because the building, particularly its interior artistic components, has not yet been thoroughly studied. This topic provides an important context for fields such as architectural heritage, intercultural visual arts, and urban identity formation. The research pays special attention to cultural interactions and their artistic manifestations within the urban space.

The central scientific problem of the research concerns identifying and interpreting artistic and architectural heritage, specifically how the dominance of Qajar painting can be seen in Tbilisi’s residential architecture and how it was adapted for a particular social group. The focus is on analyzing the social function of artistic language and decorative systems.

The methodological approach is based on an interdisciplinary analysis which includes archival and photographic research, as well as stylistic, iconographic, and textual interpretations of artistic language. The main methods involve identifying artistic structures, distinguishing stylistic layers, and recognizing the dialogue between cultural codes **–** specifically, the coexistence of Qajar and European traditions.

Ultimately, this study reveals the significant role of the interior artistic language of the building in shaping the social identity of its time. The research highlights the peculiarities of integrating Western architecture with Eastern artistic traditions and their influence on spatial perception and cultural structuring of heritage **–** a highly characteristic feature of Tbilisi’s architecture. The presented material, with its thematic and methodological framework, serves as a foundation for developing a full-length scholarly article while preserving its structure and core research components: topic, relevance, problem, methodology, and conclusion.

**Alexander Teachers’ Institute in Tbilisi – History and Architecture**

**Tamta Shonvadze, National Archives of Georgia**

This research supported by Shota Rustaveli National Science Foundation of Georgia (FR-23-6740 *Interdisciplinary Research and Documentation of the Architectural Heritage of Uznadze Street in Tbilisi)*

Before the 18th century, centers of knowledge in Georgia were primarily located within monasteries**.** However, beginning in the 18th century, significant changes occurred in this regard. European culture and education gained a strong foothold in Georgia, creating the need for dedicated buildings for educational purposes. One such institution was the ecclesiastical school established in Telavi, which, according to relevant academic literature, was transformed into a European-style philosophical seminary in 1782.

In the 19th century, the development of this process was further supported by the establishment of various societies, scientific-cultural, and educational institutions. The small number of narrowly specialized schools in Tbilisi was no longer sufficient to meet the demands of the evolving educational system. Consequently, the foundation of educational institutions of various types and profiles, along with the construction of purpose-built facilities, became a matter of urgency.

This paper focuses on the building of Alexander Teachers’ Institute in Tbilisi, its history, and architecture. The institute was founded in 1866 in the suburbs of Tbilisi by order of the Imperial Viceroy Mikhail. It was one of the first institutions of higher education in Georgia. Alexander Teachers’ Institute was closely tied to the educational activities of the Society for the Restoration of Christianity in the Caucasus, which, along with its cultural mission, was also engaged in organizing schools and training teachers.

The institution has a long and well-documented history, as evidenced by written documents and architectural drawings preserved in the National Archives of Georgia. Official correspondence, reports from the construction commission, and other important records provide detailed insights into both the founding and subsequent development of the institute, as well as into the buildings that housed it at different stages in its history.

At the beginning of the 19th century, the concept of educational architecture in Tbilisi (in the modern sense) had not yet fully formed**.** Most educational institutions initially operated in buildings temporarily allocated for such purposes and only later moved into structures specifically designed for them. Alexander Teachers’ Institute serves as a good example of this pattern. Like many other institutions of that time, it changed locations frequently until a dedicated building was constructed for it.

Initially, the institute was located in Navtlughi, but due to the poor condition of the building, it was decided to relocate it to a facility with its own yard or garden. As no funds were available for a new construction at the time, a decision was made to rent a building. In 1873, the institute was moved from Navtlughi to the city center, into the residence of Friedrich Mader on Mikheil Avenue. This was a two-story building with a yard and a garden, rented by the institute for 12 years. The institute remained there until 1885, when a more suitable facility was found **–** Friedrich Zetzers’ house **–** which was later renovated and expanded with additional wings built specifically for the institute.

Eventually, the institution settled at 91a Grand Duke Street (present-day Dimitri Uznadze Street), and it is this building that is the focus of the present study.

Through the example of Alexander Teachers’ Institute, this presentation will explore the history of a specific educational institution and the architecture of its building. The paper highlights the developmental processes in 19th-century Tbilisi in this regard **–** specifically, the role of purpose-built educational facilities in transforming the urban space and driving physical change in the city. It will also address how such institutions contributed to the infrastructural development of neighborhoods and to the formation of new functional zones.

The scale, silhouette, and architectural style of these buildings helped define the overall character of the surrounding area. Frequently, such structures employed advanced engineering solutions, which in turn raised local construction standards and altered the visual identity of the urban environment.

**About the Revealed Wall Paintings in the Historical Buildings Located at 80 and 101 Dimitri Uznadze Street in Tbilisi**

**Nutsa Papiashvili, Gvantsa Potskhishvili, Heritage Conservation Laboratory**

**Tatia Gvineria, Tbilisi State Academy of Arts**

This paper focuses on the wall paintings discovered in listed historical buildings located at 80 and 101 Dimitri Uznadze Street in Tbilisi, and examines the mechanisms for their protection. It is prepared within the framework of fundamental research funded by the Shota Rustaveli National Science Foundation of Georgia. Project title: *“Interdisciplinary Research and Documentation of the Architectural Heritage of Uznadze Street in Tbilisi”*, project code: FR-23-6740.

The aim of this study is to identify, document, and examine the architectural heritage of Dimitri Uznadze Street and its preserved decorative elements, while also developing appropriate recommendations for their protection. A fundamental study of this kind **–** focusing on the interdisciplinary research of architectural heritage along a single street in the historical part of the city **–** has not previously been conducted in Georgia. Many of the historical buildings on Dimitri Uznadze Street are in poor or even deplorable condition. Due to renovation efforts or neglect over various historical periods, numerous buildings and their carved, molded, and painted decorations are at risk of deterioration or destruction. Consequently, it is essential to conduct a detailed inventory and documentation of each building and its components, along with research into their history and current state. Investigating the stratigraphy, original materials, and condition of immovable cultural heritage monuments and their decorative wall paintings is a critical prerequisite for formulating long-term conservation strategies and consistent action plans.

This paper specifically highlights the history, styles, diversity, and current condition of wall paintings preserved in historical buildings. In many entrance halls and privately owned apartments, such paintings have been concealed beneath layers of later paint or materials. Therefore, a comprehensive study is needed, involving both archival research and on-site examination of the artworks. Identifying and documenting wall paintings and decorative elements is essential to prevent their inadvertent damage or loss. These features are integral to the character of the buildings, and, where possible, should be fully identified, conserved, and presented in their authentic form as important components of architectural heritage.

The research methodology includes both non-invasive and invasive techniques:

1. Collection and analysis of archival materials (written, graphic, photographic, etc.);
2. Compilation and review of relevant bibliography;
3. Aerial, macro, micro, and multispectral photography of the monuments;
4. Photogrammetry and architectural elevations;
5. Historical and art-historical research;
6. Study of original materials, current conditions, and damage mechanisms affecting the architectural structures and their components (plaster, decorative elements, wall paintings, etc.);
7. Systematization and interpretation of collected data, leading to the development of tailored recommendations.

We hope that the resulting catalog of wall paintings preserved in the entrances of historical buildings along Dimitri Uznadze Street, along with in-depth case studies, will prove valuable to professionals, students, state institutions responsible for cultural heritage, residents of these buildings, and the broader public. Public presentation, discussion, and awareness-raising regarding such research are essential. Living in and using historical buildings **–** especially for commercial purposes **–** entails a significant responsibility shared by both private individuals and public authorities. It is equally important for heritage professionals to continue compiling and disseminating recommendations and practical guidance for monument care. Training residents and establishing protection mechanisms are key steps toward ensuring the long-term sustainability of these cultural heritage sites.

**Modernist Tendencies in Georgian Sculpture (1920s-1930s)**

**Temur Kantaria-Jabadari,** **George Chubinashvili National Research Centre for Georgian Art History and Heritage Preservation**

When we talk about Georgian modernism, painting, graphic art, and scenography come to mind first in the visual arts. Sculpture shows these trends more slowly and in smaller amounts, especially in the first decade of the Soviet period. Back then, artistic expression was not strictly controlled yet, contact with the West was not completely cut off, and independent Georgian art was still developing **–** though under the influence of Russian avant-garde movements like Cubo-Futurism and Constructivism. These influences gradually appeared in Georgian sculpture too.

Compared to other visual arts of that period, Georgian sculpture has fewer surviving examples. Several reasons contributed to this: modernist and avant-garde art produced between 1921-32 was officially condemned under Soviet rule. In addition, sculpture as an art form developed more slowly in Georgia, and growing ideological pressures meant that only a small number of modernist works survived. That is why it important today to study these pieces **–** to recover what remains of modernist sculpture and understand it within its context in Georgian art. This will help clarify the stages of development of Georgian sculpture and highlight modernist trends in our art history.

My research will focus first on the general stylistic trends and then on how different sculptors contributed to modernism. I will look at how much modernism appears in individual artists’ work and identify their personal styles. Overall, I want to show how modernist tendencies were present in Georgian sculptors’ work up until the 1930s.

Finding factual sources **–** especially newspapers and magazines **–** will help establish the local social and political background. This research will go hand-in-hand with formal and comparative analysis of the surviving works, helping to uncover their styles and authorship traits.

Even though secular sculpture only had a short run in Georgia before the 1930s, modernist tendencies continued to exist naturally despite Soviet restrictions. These roots go back to the years before Bolshevik occupation, within painting, graphics, and scenography. The sculptures that survive from this period show Georgian sculptors’ desire to explore modernist trends **–** even in their early Soviet works.

**Artificial Intelligence and Virtual Reality in Cinema: Technological Illusion or the Language of a New Reality?**

**Tea Chanturia, Shota Rustaveli Theatre and Film Georgia State University**

One of the defining features of the postmodern era and post-industrial society is the growing interest in Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Virtual Reality (VR). Against this backdrop, the number of academic works exploring these technological phenomena is rapidly increasing. These studies analyze how AI and VR technologies influence contemporary art and society. Of particular interest is the question: How do these technologies transform cinema, the forms of audiovisual culture, narrative structures, and the viewer’s experience?

The integration of AI and VR into audiovisual culture lays the foundation for a new cinematographic paradigm **–** the one in which not only the technological language shifts, but also the aesthetics, narrative logic, and modes of audience engagement. The traditional cinematic structure, where the narrative flows monologically from director to viewer, is being replaced by a more dynamic and interactive dialogue. In this emerging model, both human creative intuition and AI-generated forms interact symbiotically, offering a new perspective on authorship and co-creation.

**Research Focus:** This study explores the integration of AI and VR in contemporary filmmaking practices and analyzes their impact on authorship, narrative structures, and audience engagement. The primary focus lies in examining how these technologies reshape cinema as both an artistic and communicative medium, and how a new cinematic paradigm emerges through their influence.

**Relevance:** The rapid integration of AI and VR into cinematic practice demands new aesthetic and narrative frameworks. This research is especially relevant at a time when these technologies not only develop new visual languages but also redefine the relationship between creator, content, and audience.

**Problem:** Despite the growing application of these technologies, there is still a lack of theoretically grounded approaches to understanding their implications. The transformation of the author’s role, reconfiguration of audience experience, and emergence of adaptable and evolving narratives remain insufficiently explored. Without a critical understanding of these processes, there is a risk that the creative potential of AI will be either overly romanticized or reduced to mere technical functionality.

**Methodology:** This study adopts an interdisciplinary methodology, integrating contemporary media theory, film semiotics, and cultural analysis. It employs conceptual analysis and theoretical synthesis to examine technological and aesthetic transformations from a unified analytical perspective.

**Conclusion:** AI and VR transform cinematic techniques, language, narrative, and authorship through a collaborative fusion of human creativity and algorithmic intelligence. Contemporary cinema becomes a dynamic, multilayered process co-created by humans and machines, spawning a new cinematic language. This study integrates media theory, cultural studies, and film semiotics, analyzing AI- and VR-enhanced films to examine their effects on narrative, visuals, and audience interaction.

Ultimately, the aim of this research is to demonstrate that the emerging cinematic reality is not a tool for replacing the author but a framework for creative collaboration. From this symbiosis **–** where human intuition and technological capability meet **–** a new form of cinema arises: open, interactive, and constantly evolving.

**The Birth of the Georgian Film School and Independent Student Cinema**

**Rusudan Kvaratskhelia, Caucasus University**

**Ekaterine Kontridze, Shota Rustaveli Theatre and Film Georgia State University**

**Research Topic:** The course and diploma films created at Shota Rustaveli Theatre and Film Georgia State University are, as a rule, products of the educational process. The material covers a wide range of genres and themes. It reflects the creative exploration and professional development of future film directors, the specifics of topic interpretation, and often, even the events taking place in the country at the time.

The Theatre and Film University traces its origins back to 1924, when an artistic educational space was first established, laying the foundation for the Theatrical Institute in 1939. The film faculty began its existence in 1973. The first heads of the creative studios were film directors Tengiz Abuladze and Lana Ghoghoberidze.

However, according to the university’s archival materials, student films originated as early as 1957. In that year, Nana Mchedlidze, who later became a theatre and film director, defended her diploma with the short feature film “Fast Train.” Films were also made in 1964-1965. This activity was driven by the demands of the time **–** while the country had television and cinema, it lacked an educational space where young people could acquire the profession of film directing.

**Relevance:** It should be noted that the films made in the educational studio of the Georgian Theatre and Film Institute have not been studied, and no information about them is available. We have only now started working on the material shot over the past fifty years in the university’s educational-scientific archive (collecting and cataloging both information and student films).

The founding of the film faculty coincided with the so-called “Golden Age” of Georgian cinema (1960s-1980s). During these years, strong trends emerged in Georgian film, reflecting changing attitudes toward historical events. Cinema was expected to express a new spectrum of demands **–** this art form was required to show greater interest in humans and their inner worlds.

**Problem:** Today, the “student cinema” of that period is a fascinating and under-researched subject. Until then, films aligned with government ideology were mass-produced and awarded Union-level prizes. But suddenly, an alternative cinema emerged **–** youthful “student cinema”, modest in budget but free from ideological clichés. As a result, these films featured diverse themes, bold expressive forms, metaphorical storytelling, and often folk allegories.

**Methodology:** The research will focus on student films from the 1960s to the 2000s. A content analysis method will be used for the systematic examination of the material. A qualitative method will help identify trends within the topic. The theoretical framework will incorporate framing theory, which emphasizes selectivity and will help highlight key themes.

**Conclusion:** Today, it can be confidently stated that the decades from the 1960s to the 2000s in Georgian national cinema are marked by distinct artistic evolution, shaped by political, social, technical, national, and Soviet-era developments.

These same trends are evident in the thematic and aesthetic treatment of films made by students in the university's educational studio.

One can say that a base of professional cinematographers was formed in the directing faculty of the Theatrical Institute, now the State University of Theatre and Film, who later established and strengthened the “Golden Age” of Georgian national cinema.

**Reconstructing Artistic Space in 1960s Georgian Cinema (On the Edge of Realism and Conventionality)**

**Nino Kavtaradze, Shota Rustaveli Theatre and Film Georgia State University**

**Post-Stalin liberalization marked a watershed moment in Soviet culture and art.** Political changes in the early 1950s and the rapid easing of censorship brought about a qualitatively new cultural phenomenon: the emergence of Georgian cinema in the 1960s. This new wave introduced new voices, heroes, language, forms, and content –all of which reflected a deep search for a new cinematic language.

At the Film Studio “Georgian Film”, under the leadership of Rezo Kveselava, a generation of young filmmakers emerged with a unique artistic vision and innovative modes of expression. Whether intuitively or deliberately, they helped create what can be seen as a return to the spirit of the 1920s national cinema, but now framed within a distinctively modern, Western-oriented artistic space.

From today’s perspective, the artistic landscape of 1960s Georgian cinema represents an essential subject for research, reevaluation, and reinterpretation. For these filmmakers, cinema was no longer merely a “primitive mimesis” of reality or a reproduction of realistic settings. Instead, their works explored layered metaphors, poetic structures, and complex aesthetic values.

Film directors like Otar Ioseliani, Eldar Shengelaia, Giorgi Shengelaia, Mikheil Kobakhidze, Merab Kokochashvili, and Lana Ghoghoberidze created a remarkably original and distinct artistic space. Their films employed radically different stylistic approaches to depict reality or convey personal experience. This hybrid aesthetic –oscillating between extreme realism (“Falling Leaves” “The Great Green Valley”, “Alaverdoba”) and extreme stylization or conditionality (“The Umbrella”, “The Musician”, “Pirosmani”) – defined a new cinematic language.

Elements of stylization frequently emerged within realistic settings, enhancing the viewer’s perception of reality. Sergei Parajanov’s *“*The Color of Pomegranates” – although not Georgian – shares thematic and stylistic parallels with the Georgian cinematic movement in its poetic structure and innovative treatment of form and content. Parajanov’s artistic space unfolds through a vertical, rather than horizontal, conception of time and space. The film’s symbolic objects form a palimpsest of cultural memory, layered with archaic meanings, inviting the viewer into a mystical, highly metaphorical cinematic experience.

Alongside directors, cinematographers and production designers played an equally critical role in shaping the artistic identity of 1960s Georgian cinema. Their contributions defined the visual tone, mood, and atmosphere of these films. In both realistic and stylized works, they masterfully depicted everyday life, social environments, interiors, and urban (“Falling Leaves”) or peripheral settings (“Unusual Exhibition”, “Alaverdoba”), using rich color palettes and dynamic framing. Georgian cinematographers’ use of a “live camera” style helped fuse realistic visuals with poetic, symbolic aesthetics, producing a new kind of visual language.

From today’s point of view, studying the collaborative work of directors, cinematographers, and designers – the eternal triumvirate – offers fresh insight into the scale and meaning of this cinematic era. The National Archives of Georgia houses a wealth of primary sources from this period, including scripts, censorship edits, production notes, protocols, field records, and other visual materials. These offer invaluable resources for researchers.

The artistic space of 1960s Georgian cinema represents a hybrid of authorial vision, historical context, and cultural memory – a “space preserved in time”. The films of this era occupy a unique place at the intersection of reality and imagination, existence and poetry, conditionality and realism. Their significance extends beyond the Georgian context and holds an important place within the broader landscape of world cinema.

Based on archival documents, oral histories, and visual material, the outcomes of this research will be relevant to film historians, scholars, academic institutions, audiovisual experts, artists, and all those interested in Georgian cinema.

**The Representation of the Mountain Regions in Georgian Soviet Cinematography**
**Mariam Tchintcharauli, Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University**

**Research Topic:** The present study focuses on the analysis of Georgian Soviet cinematography from the 1950s to the 1980s, with particular attention to how the resettlement of mountain populations to the lowlands was represented in a propagandistic manner. The research explores how Soviet ideology was communicated through cinematic language and how film became one of the main tools to justify the depopulation of mountainous regions and promote the industrialization of the lowlands.

**Relevance:** Although the Soviet era is part of history, studying the mechanisms of Soviet propaganda remains highly relevant today. Understanding visual sources, particularly cinema, provides important insight into cultural traumas, shifts in identity, and the systemic violence that aimed to erase national traditions and ways of life. This topic is especially important in the context of ongoing demographic and social challenges faced by mountainous regions of Georgia, many of which still bear the legacy of forced resettlement.

**Problem Statement:** The study raises two main academic problems:

a) How did the Soviet authorities use cinema as a propaganda tool to justify the forced relocation of mountain populations?

b) To what extent did these films reflect the real social processes, and how did they distort them?

**Methodology:** The research is based on the method of content analysis. This involved a close examination of the plotlines, characters, and messages of several key films. Each film was analyzed to understand how mountain-related themes were presented, what messages were communicated to viewers, and how those messages aligned with Soviet ideological goals. Particular attention was paid not only to dialogue but also to visual style, symbols, and underlying meanings. This approach helped reveal how Soviet policy was reflected in cinema and how films served as tools of ideological influence.

**Conclusion:** The study demonstrates that Georgian Soviet cinema contains numerous examples of attempts to legitimize the forced resettlement of mountain communities. Films such as “They Came Down from the Mountains”, “The Youth of Sabudara”, “The White Caravan”, and “The Khevsurian Ballad” reveal clear propagandistic narratives, as well as shifts in cultural imagination. Later films from the 1980s, such as “The District Committee Secretary”, promote a different campaign – encouraging people to return to the mountains – yet they also remain within an ideological framework. The research highlights that cinema, alongside its artistic value, was also a powerful political tool. These visual sources are invaluable for studying the political priorities, propaganda strategies, and social engineering practices of the Soviet era. The conclusions drawn from this research may be applied in historiography, critical media analysis, memory studies, and interdisciplinary visual source research.

**Music Education in the 30s and 40s of the twentieth century *on the example of Khashuri Music School***

**Rusudan Takaisvili, The National Center for Teacher Professional Development / Vano Sarajishvili Tbilisi State Conservatoire**

As is known, the foundations of European music education in Georgia were laid in the 19th century, which culminated in the opening of the first Higher Education Institution in Caucasia in 1917 – the Tbilisi Conservatoire. At that time, several music schools operated in the central cities of Georgia. In the 1930s, other music schools and colleges joined them in the regions of Georgia.

The study examines the state of one of the institutions – Khashuri Music School, founded in 1933, during an important period in the history of Georgia – the 1930s-1940s of the 20th century. The relevance of the study is due to the fact that the archival materials allow us to clarify important issues of the history of the school, its role in the region, the atmosphere and relationships that developed in it, such as: facts of awarding scholarships to talented students, encouraging employees, as well as reprimands and termination of contracts. The problem of the research is the scarcity of information about regional music education in the specified period; it is also necessary to determine the degree of influence of the current situation in the country on the educational-artistic institution.

The study of the presented material, based on the case study, processing of archival documents, as well as in-depth interviews with representatives of the administration, employees and people associated with the school, makes it possible to identify previously unknown facts, as well as to summarize and draw conclusions about the situation in the musical and educational sphere of that time, including:

• Khashuri Music School was an important cultural center that changed its status in the 40s and appeared before us in the form of an educational institution;

• During World War II, its branch functioned in Borjomi;

• Prominent figures of the Georgian musical community taught at the school;

• The attitudes and atmosphere characteristic of a specific historical period also extended to a specific educational institution, one might say, to the artistic-educational institution.

To demonstrate the continuation of the tradition, the report presents the current state of the institution as The Association of Khashuri Music Schools – Khashuri, Surami and Kvishkheti branches – and their role in the cultural life of the region.

**Visual Language of Georgian Culture in the 1970s-1980s: The Analysis of the Pictorial Works by Irakli Parjiani, Levan Chogoshvili and Merab Abramishvili**

**Mariam Loria, Tbilisi State Academy of Arts**

**Research Topic:** This study explores the characteristics of the visual language of Georgian culture during the 1970s-1980s, with a particular focus on the visual arts – specifically painting – as reflected in the works of Irakli Parjiani, Levan Chogoshvili, and Merab Abramishvili.

**Relevance:** This period represents a significant stage of self-determination and the search for a new national identity. Visual art emerges as a vital domain where the relevance of cultural traditions and the influence of global processes are clearly expressed. In this context, personal and national processes of self-identification stand in opposition to the official ideological discourse and manifest a renewed sense of cultural consciousness through a distinct visual language.

**Problem Statement:** Soviet cultural policy limited forms of individual expression and sought to establish a unified aesthetic aligned with Soviet ideology across all republics. However, by the late 1970s, strong tendencies emerged within the local Georgian cultural scene, striving for new ways to express the self, spirituality, and national identity.

The central research question of this study is how to interpret the visual language that Georgian artists created in response to past experiences and global challenges. The key problem lies in understanding how these artists used visual language to resist Soviet restrictions, developing experimental and modern forms of both individual and national cultural self-expression – an essential process for the renewal of national identity.

**Methodology:** The research applies hermeneutic analysis based on Gottfried Boehm’s concept of the image as a form of thinking (*Bild als Denkform*). In addition, an interdisciplinary cultural studies approach is used, alongside visual interpretation of the internal structures of pictorial texts.

**Conclusion:** The paintings of Parjiani, Chogoshvili, and Abramishvili form an alternative visual language that opposes the uniformity of Soviet ideology through multilayered expressions of faith, symbolism, and spirituality. Their work reflects a profound search for personal freedom, cultural memory, and national identity within the visual cultural landscape of that period.

**The Capital, the Town, and the Village of the 1980s (At the Film Actors Theatre)**

**Manana Turiashvili, Theatrical Fund**

Through their work, every artist reflects a historical period – at times directly, at times through the prism of unfolding events, when history itself is still being written. In Mikheil Tumanishvili’s works from the 1980s, many individuals of that era are portrayed, those who were shaping history in various layers of society, whether in the capital, in towns, or in villages. Looking back from many years later, three of the director’s plays – “Bakula’s Pigs”, “Don Juan”, and “Our Town” – present three worlds and three new theatrical realities. These works offer us a generalized image of different social strata and the relationships between people living in urban and rural Georgia during the 1980s; an image, born in a specific country-Georgia, has been so deeply generalized that it can be said to have taken on a universal, human dimension.

Don Juan rises up against the hypocrisy of a certain segment of society, who, according to the play, was born to be a hero, but he could not become one – because the peaceful, privileged society of the 1980s capital had no need for the freedom of a single individual, and by killing Don Juan, they made their lives easier. Such a person had to be born in the privileged capital, where freedom and even defiance had more room to breathe. Tbilisi has always been an arena for all kinds of thought – progressive and innovative, regressive or already established patterns of conformism.

Relentless hostility between individuals is a common condition in every country, but it is something entirely different when you observe, within your own homeland, the psyche of people struggling for their daily bread, along with the various forms of submission to Soviet structures, which was reflected in the Film Actors Theatre production of *“Bakula’s Pigs”*, which remains part of the theatre’s repertoire to this day. The Imeretian village depicted in the play represents 1980s Georgia, where anonymous “*danoses” (*донос – *a denunciation)* were manifestations of human weakness in times of despair. The entire performance builds toward a single moment – when Galaktion, exasperated by Bakula’s uncontrollable pigs, sits down and diligently writes a “*danos”* to the higher authorities.

Even in Thornton Wilder’s play *“Our Town”*, adapted by Rezo Gabriadze, historical events are present. However, since in the 1980s one could not openly speak about real history, Georgia’s past is instead portrayed through the character of Archil – a drunkard, a broken man, and a symbolic figure. It is in this play that Rezo Gabriadze’s written text is heard, where his city is described as a double province of Europe and Asia, vanished from the map and sitting at the doorstep of progress.

Whether in the city or the village – unfulfilled lives, prematurely ended destinies, the marathon of “*danoses”* (denunciations), and a country sitting on the threshold of civilization – this was perhaps the fate of the Georgian people.

**“Intonational Archives”: Georgian Art Music and Regional Parallels**

**Gvantsa Ghvinjilia, Tbilisi State Conservatoire**

The presentation will examine a methodology for researching European-style compositional schools and their origins that emerged in the 19th and 20th centuries, using Georgian secular professional music as a case study.

In the 19th century, Georgian composers created the first instrumental pieces and romances using European musical notation and the functional (tonal) system. A key catalyst for Georgia’s re-integration into the European cultural space was its colonization by Russia in the 18th century, which introduced European-style instruments and notation. These early Georgian composers were only partially familiar with the layers of national folklore and even less so with church music. More significantly, they were unable to synthesize European harmony with the stylistic layers of national folklore and sacred chant. Their music was fully based on Russian and European models, while their national inspiration came primarily from urban folklore. As a result, their works display clear signs of epigonism. A defining marker in the formation of the Georgian secular compositional school was the organic synthesis of traditional national polyphony – both peasant and ecclesiastical – and the European tonal system. This synthesis gave Georgian compositional activity its distinctiveness and originality. It is only after the formation of such a compositional school that the scientific study of its origins becomes necessary.

As with many other nations – some geographically closer to Georgia, others more distant – such as Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkey, and Iran, etc., tracing the developmental path of a national compositional school involves considerable challenges. It is important to explore on what intonational foundations Georgia’s national compositional school was built, what methodology could be used to partially reconstruct this process, and whether this methodology could be beneficial to researchers in the aforementioned countries as they conduct retrospective studies of similar musical developments. Given the absence of notated secular music and the scarcity of information about the secular professional music that may have been cultivated at royal or noble courts, an alternative approach is required – namely, studying experience accumulated in other artistic fields, particularly those intonational streams that might intersect with music. These include: musical folklore, folk poetry and oral tales, court poetry, the syncretic art of court poet-musicians (mgosans), Romantic poetry, and urban folklore. Among these, poetry holds special significance because: (a) the intersection of poetry and music lies in intonation; (b) there was a tradition of sung poetry in Georgia; the versification of poetry during musical intonation contributed to the formation of characteristic rhythmic-intonational models. For this reason, poetry serves as a kind of intonational archive. Analyzing the specific features of Georgian poetic versification helps identify intonational currents that developed over centuries and, at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, helped shape the image of Georgian secular music – alongside influences from church music, folklore, and both Asian and European musical traditions.

This research methodology may prove useful – at least to some extent – for scholars in countries with comparable musical experiences, highlighting the broader relevance of the issue addressed in this presentation.

**International Promotion of Georgian Folk Polyphony: Foreign Ensembles as Stable Cultural Bridges**

**Natia (Anano) Khijakadze, Shota Rustaveli Theatre and Film Georgia State University**

Georgian folk polyphony, with its unique vocal structures and centuries-old traditions, has evolved into more than just a component of national heritage. Today, it functions as an active cultural element that transcends Georgia’s borders, establishing enduring cultural bridges in various countries. This study is based on interviews with both foreign and Georgian musicians, as well as materials from various festivals and symposia. These sources enable a comprehensive examination of the processes of global dissemination and promotion of Georgian polyphony.

Since the 1990s, several prominent foreign ensembles have emerged in North America and Europe, which consider the study, performance, and promotion of Georgian polyphony as their core mission. Notable examples include:

• Trio Kavkasia from the USA (established in 1994; members: Carl Linich, Alan Gasser, and Stuart Gelzer)

• Darbazi Ensemble from Canada (1995; director: Shalva Makharashvili)

• Marani Ensemble from Paris (1993; director: Tariel Vachadze)

• Kitka Women’s Vocal Ensemble from California (1979; directors: Shira Cion, Janet Kutulas, and Kelly Atkins)

• Maspindzeli from London (1999; director: Bernard Burns)

The success of these ensembles is not solely due to their musical excellence but also to their strategic collaborations and continuous exchange of experience. They regularly organize masterclasses, lectures, and concerts and frequently participate in international festivals and symposia in cooperation with Georgian performers. These collaborations have enhanced the international recognition of Georgian polyphony and encouraged scholarly analysis of its diverse aspects. Together with Georgian artists, they have developed rich and multifaceted programs that spark interest among new generations both abroad and within Georgia.

The primary goal of this research is to highlight the significance of Georgian folk song as a unique cultural code that is transmitted across generations and forms a global cultural network. In this network, mutual understanding, inspiration, and creativity converge. Foreign musicians and ethnomusicologists, with the support of Georgian performers, contribute to the development of Georgian polyphony, which in turn enhances both local and international awareness of its cultural value. As this dynamic process unfolds, it is crucial to evaluate several essential questions:

How effectively is the dissemination process being shaped?

How sustainable and long-lasting is the international representation of Georgian culture?

How can its resilience and developmental prospects be assessed in the distant future?

Dozens of Georgian choir leaders and directors of leading ensembles operating in Georgia were interviewed as part of this study. Their observations, collaborative experiences, and audience feedback formed the basis for the study’s conclusions.

The thesis concludes that foreign engagement with Georgian folk music is not merely ethnographic curiosity but a deep and sincere expression of respect and affection. This engagement is a critical factor in the ongoing development and elevation of Georgia’s folkloric heritage. These relationships support the preservation and renewal of Georgian polyphony both within the country and beyond its borders, including in occupied or lost territories. It is important to emphasize that, at present, no significant threats are detected, and Georgian culture continues to evolve, increasing hopes for its successful further promotion and strengthening.

As a result, Georgian folk song – through the participation of foreign ensembles – has become a solid, sustainable, and dynamic cultural bridge that unites nations and transcends linguistic boundaries. Through this bridge, Georgian polyphony has not only survived but has also achieved broad international recognition and established a platform for cultural dialogue that now connects people from many countries through a shared musical language.

**Art Directing of Mikheil Kalatozishvili’s movie “Jim Shvante” (“****Salt for Svanetia”)**

**Mariam Chorgoliani, Tbilisi State Academy of Arts**

The presented topic is part of the doctoral research “Georgian Modernist Film Design of the 1920s-30s”, which refers to Georgian avant-garde movie art direction, scenic composition, set design, costume, and makeup. For this, the 1928 film “Eliso” by Nikoloz Shengelaia, the artist – Dimitri Shevardnadze, the 1929 film “My Grandmother” by Kote Mikaberidze, the artists – Irakli Gamrekeli and Valerian Sidamon-Eristavi, the 1930 film “Jim Shvante” (“Salt for Svanetia”), by Mikheil Kalatozishvili, artist – David Kakabadze, the 1929 film “Saba” and 1931 film “Khabarda” by Mikheil Chiaureli, the artists – Lado Gudiashvili and David Kakabadze, are in the process of research and study. In this case, we present Mikheil Kalatozishvili’s film “Jim Shvante” (“Salt for Svanetia”) because we think that presenting this movie will present once again different aspects of Georgian modernist cinema in a different way.

In order to analyze the design of films, the paper will describe the scenes of the movies and the characteristic features of the artists. It is interesting to see the synthesis of the work of director Mikheil Kalatozishvili and artist David Kakabadze, these two artists with different aesthetics, which gives the films a special touch. It will also be investigated why Soviet propaganda films are considered as avant-garde and modernist.

In the Georgian scientific and artistic space, studies about Georgian cinema, its history, fine arts and modernist artists of this period occupy a large place; however, there is a small amount of scientific literature on Georgian cinema design less then scientific articles about it. Fortunately, there are the films themselves, archival documents, sketches, memories of contemporaries or direct participants. Therefore, the presented research is very relevant and combines cinema and design and will be interesting for those who are interested in these two fields of art.

That is why, in the process of working on the topic, finding and researching material, collecting and analyzing existing material, artistic-stylistic and comparative analysis methods of research allow us to freely compare Georgian films with the examples of world cinema of the same era, to properly appreciate the merits of the first Georgian cinematographers, so that Georgian cinema and its art can gain a worthy place in world culture.

**Documenting Ancient Tragedy on the Georgian Stage (1875–1921): Methodologies, Challenges, and European Contexts**

**Mariam Kaladze, Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University**

In Georgian theatre of the second half of the 19th century and the early 20th century, productions of ancient tragedies held a significant place.

The relevance of these performances was determined by several factors: they diversified the repertoire of Georgian theatre, resonated with the staging of ancient drama in contemporary European theatres, and thereby helped establish shared European values.

* This presentation aims to highlight one aspect of our project funded by the Rustaveli Foundation – *“Main Trends in the Reception, Translation, and Theatrical Realisation of Ancient Drama on the Georgian Stage at the Turn of the 19th-20th Centuries.”* Specifically, we will focus on aspects of collecting and processing archival material related to ancient tragedies staged on the Georgian stage during this period. Our research in this regard seeks to systematize archival documentation according to a unified principle, based on modern methodologies developed for cataloguing theatrical archival material in European theatres – particularly the methodology employed by the **APGRD (Archive of Performances of Greek and Roman Drama)** network.This methodology includes the documentation of the following data:
* The author of the play, title, staging troupe, date of the performance, and venue of the premiere;
* The director, translator, set designer, costume designer, composer, and choreographer;
* Cast list with performed roles, composition of the chorus, and identity of the coryphaeus;
* Archival materials: programme, play text, photographs, posters, tickets, invitations, audio/video/television recordings, costume sketches;
* Reviews, articles, responses, personal interviews (with appropriate source references);

Touring performances.

As part of this project, we have worked in the Theatre and Film Museum of Georgia, the National Parliamentary Library, and the archives of the Marjanishvili, Rustaveli, Kutaisi, and Batumi theatres. Throughout this process, we identified several challenges, particularly when archival material is incomplete or inaccurately catalogued and processed. An additional major challenge lies in the fact that many of these materials are over a century old and therefore require timely systematization and digitization using modern technologies.

These are precisely the issues we will present in our paper, while also demonstrating how essential they may be for the identification of specific performances.

Additionally, the presentation will examine the principles for cataloguing and classifying responses found in the Georgian press regarding ancient productions of this period. Such classification will facilitate a more in-depth study and evaluation of the theatrical critical discourse of the era.

We believe that, given the significance of ancient productions on the Georgian stage at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, our research will shed light on the challenges associated with locating and processing archival data related to these performances.

Moreover, the study will emphasize the necessity of systematizing Georgian theatrical material in accordance with modern methodologies developed in European theatre archives. A unified classification principle will make it possible for archival data on ancient tragedies staged in Georgia to be integrated into a broader European database.

**For the Classification of Manuscripts of the Ancient Georgian Collection – “Gulani”**

**Nestan Sulava, Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University / Samtskhe-Javakheti State University**

The subject of the research is the classification of manuscripts and codicological-textological issues of “Gulani”, the ancient Georgian collection. The report discusses the meaning of the name “Gulani”, its place among ancient Georgian manuscript collections, and the issues of its structure in the Georgian theological space. A fairly large number of “Gulani” and its editorial variant “Zhamgulani” have reached us, one manuscript was also called “Dzlispir-Gulani”, which is evidenced by the name and composition of the 1792 “Gulani” of David Gareja John the Baptist Monastery. According to the published descriptions of the manuscripts, their total number reaches 74. It dates back to the 12th-13th centuries, and its oldest example is the 267-page manuscript A-304, which lacks a chapter and the end, and which is called the Small “Gulani” in scientific literature. Scholarly works about Gulani are scarce, and some of them have raised the issue of its liturgical purpose (Tedo Zhordania, Ekvtime Takaishvili, Korneli Kekelidze, etc.). Each manuscript of “Gulani” differs in terms of structure, a feature that remains unstudied and highlights the necessity of analyzing and classifying these manuscripts.

The relevance of the research is based on 1. The structural diversity of “Gulani”, 2. It has not been studied in terms of codicological-textological and compositional aspects. In the Middle Ages, foreign travelers in Georgia, upon seeing the collection, assessed it as a huge collection kept in all monasteries, which is an exaggeration, since the manuscripts of the “Gulani” also differ in size. It contains all the liturgical books that were used during the liturgy throughout the year. They are: the Gospel-Quartet, the Acts of the Apostles, the Epistles of the Apostles, Psalms, the Books of the Week, the Times, the Powers, the Easter Hymns, the Paraclitike, the Fast, the Zatik, the List of the Varieties, the Prophecies, the Svinaksari, the Typicon//Regulations, the Lives and Words to be Read on Feasts//Sermons, the Quinclos//Chronicle, the Benediction, the Monumental Writing of the Creed, and others. Of the “Gulani” manuscripts, the most important are the Gulans of Mokvi, Khotevi, Gelati, Bedia, Tsaishi, Mtskheta//Svetitskhoveli, Martvili, Chali, Khobi, Davit Gareji and other monasteries, the Zhamgulans of Kanchaeti, Ruisi, which are of different composition and have not been studied; it is also necessary to determine why the manuscripts containing the same collection of names structurally differ from each other.

In the report, we will discuss: 1. The meaning and diversity of the name “Gulani”, which is confirmed in the form of “Gulvani” in the manuscripts preserved in the Kutaisi Historical Museum; 2. Purpose, because all theological and liturgical material was contained in one book, which, we believe, was also related to social and political-state events, and in times of need, it was more convenient to move or hide one book than the entire library; 3. The area of distribution, because the wills and notes of the “Gulans” testify that the customers of the manuscript book were not only the church-monastery, but also private individuals, mostly feudal lords, for example, the “Gulans” of Vakhtang VI, Mamia Gurieli, Giorgi Gurieli, Shoshita Eristavi, Iovane Jakeli, as well as Ambrosi Khelaia and others are known.

The problem of researching the “Gulans” includes several important issues. These are: 1. The abundance of manuscripts, which should be perceived as a positive phenomenon, because this, along with its popularity, also determines its liturgical value. 2. Accordingly, its research is necessary from both codicological and textual perspectives. The editors-copyists aimed to collect as much theological-liturgical material as possible and create a flawless collection. 3. The material in the manuscripts is not arranged in the same order everywhere, the copyists did not have originals of the same value and redaction, which mainly reflects the capabilities of different literary circles; nevertheless, each of them was a follower of the same theological-liturgical traditions, because the liturgical-canonical material could not and did not differ. 4. Each manuscript is accompanied by the most important colophons, according to which the place and date of copying, purpose, customer, identity of the copyist, original and its nature/quality, conditions, donations, social status of the copyist are determined, which requires traditional historical-philological, intertextual, hermeneutical studies; 5. The majority of the manuscripts of “Gulani” are decorated differently from each other, some of them are adorned with rich ornaments and miniatures, which testifies to the economical capabilities of the customer and requires multidisciplinary research; 6. We should consider the prototypes of “Gulani” as a theological-liturgical collection to be ancient Georgian manuscript collections, namely, lectionaries, multi-chapters, the Shatberdi collection, and feasts; 7. We consider “Gulani” to be a Georgian theological-liturgical collection, which was developed in Gelati Theological and Literary School in the 12th century. It differs from the collections established in Byzantine theological and liturgical practice, of which Korneli Kekelidze presumably named the pandects, but considered the clarification of the issue a future task; therefore, research in this direction is necessary. The discussion of each issue is a novelty and a new word in the study of “Gulani”. The issue has not been discussed in such depth before, and, we believe, the elaboration of the above-mentioned issues testifies to the originality of our work.

In the research, we rely on descriptive, analytical, traditional historical-philological, intertextual, multidisciplinary, and hermeneutic methods, without which the codicological-textological study of the manuscript heritage is impossible.

The conclusion states the results of the study, according to which the history of the “Gulani” manuscripts begins in the 12th century, when the oldest of the “Gulani” manuscripts that have survived to our time was created, and the area of active chronological distribution is the 15th-18th centuries. “Gulani” is a collection-anthology of theological-service and liturgical literature, which contains all the material that churches and monasteries needed to perform the liturgy throughout the year. Each church and monastery enjoyed the status of the owner of the “Gulani” treasure, and when copying a new manuscript, if necessary, it was used as the original for the new manuscript.

**Comprehensive Study of Fragmentary Liturgical Texts Preserved on Scrolls**

**Nino Megeneishvili, Shorena Tavadze, Korneli Kekelidze Georgian National Centre of Manuscripts**

The interdisciplinary study of manuscripts allows for the identification of a wider range of less explicit, yet equally important information within the manuscripts, alongside their content and illustrations. A comprehensive examination of manuscripts involves the systematization of complete information and the definition of all related components: textual-codicological analysis, archaeographic description, the identification of paleographic features and artistic value, the diagnosis of the structural integrity of the manuscript material, the development of preservation conditions, and preventive conservation. Through innovative, multifaceted methods and its multidisciplinary approach, such research facilitates the reconstruction, improved preservation, and conservation of medieval texts, and more broadly, lays the foundation for a deeper and more complete study of the manuscript heritage. The manuscript legacy has preserved a significant number of fragmentary manuscripts, including scrolls, covering an extensive chronological range and comprising thematically and materially diverse and intriguing texts.

The scroll is the oldest form of manuscript. There are 102 known scroll manuscripts preserved in libraries in Georgia and abroad. The most numerous among these are compositions of the hymnographic-liturgical genre – the Divine Liturgy (Georgian: Zhamistsirva), which are referenced in descriptions in two forms: *Kondaki* and *Zhamistsirva*. The founder of the Kondaki (Greek: κοντάκιον) is considered to be St. Romanos the Melodist, who lived and composed in the first half of the 6th century. According to tradition, he composed hymns dedicated to the Virgin Mary and other saints, which were called Kondaki. The structure of the Kondaki evolved over time. The term Kondaki was also used to refer to scrolls – that is, parchment sheets sewn together and rolled around a stick (kontos in Greek). However, it should be noted that many Kondakis in codex format are also preserved in manuscript collections, containing the order of various liturgies and prayers associated with different church rituals. In the 10th century, a compendium known as the Hieratikon was created for bishops, also referred to as the “Episcopal Kondaki”. Sulkhan-Saba Orbeliani defined the Kondaki as “a book of the Liturgy”. It is known that Georgian ecclesiastical tradition preserved several versions of the Divine Liturgy: The Jerusalem Rite, also known as the Liturgies of James, Mark, and Peter; The Constantinopolitan Rite, that is, the Liturgies of Basil the Great and John Chrysostom; The Liturgy of the Great Lent, or the Liturgy of Gregory Dialogus. The scroll-format manuscripts containing *Zhamistsirva* and *Kondaki* represent primarily the Liturgies of John Chrysostom and Basil the Great. Kondaki can also refer to short hymns that briefly describe specific feasts or significant events in the lives of saints.

However, this type of composition is not found in scroll-format manuscripts. The fragmentary liturgical texts preserved on scrolls have not been thoroughly studied and remain largely unknown to the scholarly community. These manuscripts are damaged, and in many cases, deciphering the text in the damaged areas is extremely difficult. It is therefore challenging to definitively identify which specific liturgies are contained in the preserved fragmentary texts. Georgia, as an early Christian country, had Christian followers from the first century onwards and thus began producing literature on Christian themes. Research of fragmentary manuscripts, including scrolls, reveals that despite their modest physical dimensions, these manuscripts contain rich and valuable textual material. Publishing and integrating these texts into academic discourse may lead to the discovery of previously unknown texts or editorial variants of known compositions.

**The Early Poems of Nikoloz Baratashvili: Who Is the Transcriber?**

**Teona Metreveli, Georgian-American High School LLC**

The conference paper was prepared within the framework of the project (Fr-23-10216 – “Publication of the Academic Two-Volume Collection of Nikoloz Baratashvili’s Works and Preparation of a Bilingual Chronicle of the Poet’s Life and Legacy”) funded by the Shota Rustaveli National Science Foundation.

The aim of the present study is to investigate the manuscript H 2684, which contains a selection of Nikoloz Baratashvili’s early poems, and to determine the identity of the individual who copied the collection. The manuscript is preserved at the Korneli Kekelidze National Centre of Manuscripts.

In 1924, Sergo Gorgadze published an article titled “Newly Discovered Chrestomathy and N. Baratashvili’s Early Poems” in issues 16-17 of the journal “Drosha”. In the article, the author provides a detailed description of a notebook discovered among manuscripts that were transferred by the government to the Historical-Ethnographic Society along with the Ekvtime Takaishvili Library. The notebook contains a four-part poetic anthology, featuring five poems attributed to Baratashvili. Among these, three – “The Rose and the Violet”, “The Daffodil and the Poppy”, and “A Caucasian Story” – were previously unknown and were published for the first time in that article. The remaining two – “The Nightingale on the Rose” and “Evening on Mtatsminda” – had already been included in earlier collections, as confirmed by variant analysis. Gorgadze noted the striking resemblance between the handwriting of the manuscript and that of Baratashvili himself. However, he acknowledged that such an attribution was difficult to confirm due to the imitative nature of transcribers’ scripts during that period.

The manuscript is dated no earlier than 1833, based on the watermark found on the paper, which led Gorgadze to associate it with the manuscript journal “The Flower of the Tbilisi Gymnasium”, edited by Mikheil Tumanishvili in collaboration with Baratashvili. Nevertheless, Gorgadze himself expressed uncertainty about the sufficiency of this connection as a basis for firm attribution.

A similar attribution was later echoed by Ivane Lolashvili, who identified Tumanishvili as the compiler of this collection – though he did not cite primary sources to support his claim (Nikoloz Baratashvili’s Works, Tbilisi, 1872, p. 164).

Based on the conclusions reached by comparing Baratashvili’s manuscripts, we will try to present our counterarguments regarding the existing opinion.

This study is timely and relevant, as it coincides with the preparation of a new academic edition of Baratashvili’s complete works, more than fifty years after the last comprehensive publication in 1972. The review of manuscript sources has revealed several important textual and bibliographic issues that warrant further scholarly attention and may substantially revise our understanding of Baratashvili’s poetic legacy.

For the publication of the new academic two-volume edition of Nikoloz Baratashvili’s works, it is of utmost importance to study the origin of the source of each poem and to determine the identity of their transcribers. Moreover, after the textological work carried out, there was a reasonable suspicion that the H 2684 manuscript does not represent the autograph of Mikheil Tumanishvili, because even with the naked eye, the difference between the calligraphy of this collection and his other manuscripts is obvious.

We also assume that the manuscript is very similar to Baratashvili’s autograph, and for attribution, we believe that it is necessary to conduct a proper scientific expert study.

We used the methods of source-based, biographical, historical-comparative, deductive and calligraphic analysis for the study.

When studying Baratashvili’s life and work, the study of collection H 2684 is of particular importance to clarify the identity of the compiler or transcriber of the manuscript collection. This information may be used in the preparation of the poet’s future academic two-volume work.

We believe that the results of the study will undoubtedly contribute to both the deepening of existing scientific knowledge about Baratashvili and the study of the history of Georgian literature of the 19th century.

**Archival Documents of 1919-1927 about Abkhazia and the Abkhaz Language**

**Sofiko Tchaava, Sokhumi State University**

Within the framework of the project “Representation of the Functioning and Scientific Research of the Abkhazian Language according to Archival Materials” (**FR-23-15212**; Head – Prof. **Teimuraz Gvantseladze**), which won the 2023 State Scientific Grant Competition for Fundamental Research of the Shota Rustaveli Georgian National Science Foundation and operates on the basis of Sokhumi State University, envisages the search for archival materials containing sociolinguistic content that reflect the functioning of the Abkhazian language in different periods.

To this end, we searched for several archival documents from 1919-1927, preserved in the National Archives of Georgia, which address the issues of the political status of Abkhazia and the teaching of the Abkhaz language. The first document is a letter sent to Sokhumi by Alexander Lomtatidze, the deputy of the Constituent Assembly of Georgia, an excerpt of which contains the following content: “The Constituent Assembly of the Republic of Georgia, at its session of March 21, 1919, listened with pleasure to the act on the autonomy of Abkhazia adopted by the People’s Council of Abkhazia at its session of March 20, 1919. From now on, a solid foundation is laid for the free life of the Abkhaz people in free Georgia. The historical, natural unity between the two fraternal nations has been restored to the horror of the enemies of democracy that have invaded the borders of our republic and for the benefit and happiness of the neighbor.” As we can see, the highest governing body of the Democratic Republic of Georgia supported the declaration of Abkhazia’s autonomy and considered this a prerequisite for the continuation of the natural unity between the two fraternal nations.

In 1919-1922, several letters were sent from Sokhumi to Tbilisi, according to which functionaries working in Abkhazia requested the appointment of scholarships or support for Georgian and Abkhazian students who were studying at Tbilisi State University. The materials containing these requests are accompanied by the names and surnames of the students, in some cases, indicating their specialties. Among the mentioned archival materials, the appeal sent to the Ministry of Education of Georgia by the Chairman of the Georgian National Council of the Sokhumi Region, Alexander Grigolia, on June 24, 1919, is of special significance. In addition to the above-mentioned issue, A. Grigolia reviews the history of Abkhazia from ancient times and, at the same time, speaks about the political orientation of the Abkhazians, namely:

“The whirlwind of history has thrown our Abkhaz brothers into the worst possible conditions. Beautiful Abkhazia first fell into the hands of the barbarian Ottomans and was trampled underfoot for two or three centuries; then it fell into the clutches of the greedy two-headed eagle and has been suffering from its destructive influence for 100 years. These beloved brothers of ours, these sons of Amirani, the rebellious Abkhazians, have been given a poison mixed with syrup for a whole century and their very existence has been destroyed. Accustomed to this strange poison for a hundred years, unfortunately, they still drink it with pleasure. Some of them treat their enemies as friends and, having become cold-hearted for centuries, look at their own brothers – the Georgians who came to their rescue – with hostility. Here lies the perversion of our fate, the terrible tragedy of our history! They embrace their enemies in their hearts, while they turn their backs on our loyal brothers... This is exactly the corner that should be given the most attention. It is precisely this side that has been sick for centuries, that needs a real healer today, a true spiritual teacher who should baptize it in the national essence of Georgia and share it with the life-giving Georgian culture” (**F. 1935, An. 1, N599, p. 17**). In the aforementioned letter, A. Grigolia requests the opportunity to study at the university and to appoint scholarships for talented Abkhazians and “children of Samurzakano”.

The archival materials we have found describe issues related to the teaching of the Abkhaz language at Tbilisi State University. Among them are documents reflecting Ivane Javakhishvili’s invitation of the appointment of Abkhazian educator Dimitri Gulia and a young scholar Simon Janashia as a lecturer of the Abkhaz language. For the first time, we are introducing into scientific discourse the “Abkhaz Language Program” compiled by S. Janashia, according to which this language was taught at Tbilisi University.

Thus, the archival materials we have obtained for the years 1919-1927, show that the attitude of the central government of Georgia and Georgian politicians living in Abkhazia towards Abkhazia, the Abkhazians, and the Abkhaz language was one of care and support. Javakhishvili’s introduction of the Abkhaz language at the State University, the appointment of Gulia and Janashia as lecturers, and his awarding of scholarships to students from Abkhazia are clear confirmation of this. In parallel, the evening held in Abkhazia in favor of Tbilisi State University and the grateful telegram sent by Javakhishvili in response are also a vivid example of the fact that the relationship based on respect and love was mutual.

**Color Metaphors as Tools for Evaluation (According to Georgian Political Discourse)**

**Tamar Guchua, Akaki Tsereteli State University**

This research [YS-24-546] has been supported by Shota Rustaveli National Science Foundation of Georgia

**Abstract:** The meaning of color terms is not always determined solely by the physical properties of light. Often, scientific knowledge has nothing to do with the associative meanings that people attach to a particular color term. Color perception and color metaphorization are distinct processes: while color perception is relatively consistent across societies, metaphorization varies significantly between cultures.

In political discourse, color metaphors serve to convey, through associative or figurative meanings, the speaker’s attitude toward a particular issue. Their main characteristics are conceptuality, dependence on cultural context, evaluation in terms of *good/bad* parameters, and reference to ideological polarization. The paper aims to analyze color binaries – such as *light/dark, white/black*, and *red/blue* – within the context of Georgian political discourse.

The research methodology includes processing a digital corpus of political periodicals, presenting illustrative materials, and conducting a conceptual analysis of specific cases. To study the process of color metaphorization, we consider it important to establish connections between (a) source and target domains and (b) specific words and their alternative meanings; and to identify what the oppositions of specific metaphors are associated with in Georgian culture, as well as how they are represented through good/bad evaluative parameters.

This approach to the problem will demonstrate that binary oppositions are grounded in positive/negative value dimensions and function as mechanisms of polarization (cf. *bright future, dark past, white sheet, black day, red regime, blue dream,* etc.). Color metaphors reveal ideological differences through linguistic constructions and establish semantic frames in which colors function not merely as decorative elements, but as structural components of political discourse that significantly shape the perception and emotional interpretation of a particular issue.

**Structural-Semantic Analysis of Curse Formulas in Georgian and Megrelian**

**Giorgi Jgharkava, Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University**

The interdisciplinary study of curse formulas with a fixed structure in language is of particular importance from both a purely linguistic and a culturological perspective. This is primarily due to the fact that, in addition to the peculiarities of the linguistic fabric of such collocations, external factors play a decisive role in revealing the speaker’s intention and illocutionary force. These factors include context and extralinguistic environment, rituals, and rules of etiquette, which, in turn, are dictated by national-cultural traditions. The analysis of the material under study is particularly significant for revealing the specifics of ethnography, which opens up new perspectives for typological research as well.

The aim of the report is a structural-semantic analysis of linguistic curse formulas prevalent in Georgian and Megrelian. This involves defining the parameters necessary for identifying curse formulas, creating a necessary framework model for qualifying and classifying empirical material, and subsequently isolating semantic groups – dividing linguistic formulas into semantic fields by considering special parameters.

The methodological framework of the research is based on traditional and modern research methods, such as: descriptive, statistical, and comparative (contrastive analysis); historical-comparative; synchronic and diachronic; distributional analysis; corpus-based and corpus-driven research methods. The research results are also noteworthy because, in the future, it will be possible, on the one hand, to analyze the empirical material of other Kartvelian languages and, on the other hand, to compare the picture of the Kartvelian linguocultural space with European and/or other Caucasian languages.

**Georgian Terminology Archive (Georgian Term Bank/GTB)**

**Lia Karosanidze, TSU Arnold Chikobava Institute of Linguistics**

**A** **trial version** of the [Georgian Term Bank (GTB)](https://termbank.ice.tsu.ge/ka/qtb/terminology) was published in 2025. This database has been in development at **Arnold Chikobava Institute of Linguistics, TSU,** since 2014.

In 2014–2015, the Department of Bilingual Dictionaries and Scientific Terminology at Arn. Chikobava Institute of Linguistics developed the concept for the Georgian Term Bank – an electronic collection of Georgian field terminological dictionaries.

According to this concept:

1. Georgian printed terminological dictionaries (translation, explanatory), produced under the Institute’s leadership, are digitised and compiled into a single electronic database;

2. Terminological research is carried out across various fields (in collaboration with specialised commissions).

1. Sub-databases for specific domains are developed;

4. The Georgian sectoral terminology is updated by researching old dictionaries and developing new lexical units;

 5. Neologisms are systematically created.

The Georgian Term Bank (GTB) employs a comparative and harmonized methodology to establish the so-called “matching” terms. Its aim is to serve as the central platform for Georgian sectoral terminological dictionaries, allowing users to search for terminology across different fields in Georgian and find their equivalents in other languages; access definitions, term histories, and related bibliographies, materials, notes, and protocols that reflect the ongoing terminological work at the Institute of Linguistics. For the first time, users can access the previously unpublished archives of the Institute; the structure of the Term Bank enables users to view historical Georgian terminology alongside modern terms. For example, terms confirmed in the works of Vakhtang VI appear alongside their contemporary equivalents.

This paper introduces the trial version of the Georgian Term Bank, outlines its development mechanisms, and discusses modern approaches to terminology work adopted by the Bilingual Dictionaries and Scientific Terminology Department at Arnold Chikobava Institute of Linguistics, TSU.

**Repetition and Functional Role of the Verb *svla* “to walk, to go” in Folk Tales**

**Maia Lomia, Ketevan Margiani, Ramaz Kurdadze, Nino Tchumburidze**

**Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University, TSU Arnold Chikobava Institute of Linguistics**

Folk tales are a culturally distinctive heritage marked by national identity.Their uniqueness and originality are primarily achieved through specific lexical-grammatical and stylistic means. As a genre of folk literature, tales are typically transmitted orally. Consequently, the structure of a tale preserves an archetypal linguistic code, which over the centuries has facilitated its memorization and oral transmission. The aim of this paper is to reveal the linguistic means used to structure (formulate and transmit) information in folk tales. The empirical material includes Georgian, Megrelian and Svan folk tales. For data analysis, statistical, historical-comparative, and distributional methods (both syntagmatic and paradigmatic) have been applied.

The research topic is relevant. The folk tale is a distinctive text compared to other folk genres; it is an oral narrative based on an invented story, the plot of which unfolds around the main character. The conflict is introduced and then resolved; the narration progresses with a distinct rhythm, intonation and other specific linguistic strategies, one of which is the repetition of the verb indicating walking.

Walking is one of the basic human activities. The lexeme *svla* “go, walk” is a neutral form. The Megrelian phonemic correlate of the Georgian root *val-* is *ul-* (cf.: ul-a “go, walk”. No common Kartvelian root is found in Svan. The lexical meaning of the forms containing the roots *val-/ul-* is quite general. Yet, as the language of folk tales is dynamic and the process occurs in time, the verb *svla* “go, walk” in fairy tales denotes the beginning and the end of movement, displacement of the main character. For instance:

Georgian: (1) **iara, iara, iara**, bevri **iara** tu c’ot’a **iara,** miadga ert mtas “He walked on and on until he reached a mountain;” (2) bevri **iara** tu c’ot’a **iara**, c’xra mta da c’xra zγva **gadaiara** da gavida gašlil adgilas “He walked on and on, passed nine mountains and nine seas and reached a valley.”

Megrelian: (3) **idu, idu, idu** do, kos vauc’xovrebu, tineri ardgiiša kimertu “He walked on and on until he reached an uninhabited place;” (4) **idu, idu, idu, iduni**, sumortušaraša kimertu “He walked on and on until he reached the crossroads.”

Svan: (5) **esxri, esxri** al mare i atasd ašxv mindors “This man walks on and on and comes across a field”; (6) **esγri, esγri** i sgād laxxvīd al māre “He walks on and on and again meets the same man”.

In the above-cited examples, the verb *svla* “to walk, to go” is repeated, and its functional role is to intensify the dynamic process, thereby enhancing expressiveness. Repetition is a universal stylistic device. It is one of the vital elements which adds emotion to folk language. The narrator uses it to strengthen the impact, especially when conveying complex psychological passages or when defining a character’s actions in a way that heightens the listener’s attention.

The findings of the research are valuable and relevant for linguists, literary theorists, psycholinguists, as well as specialists in other humanitarian fields.

*The research has been implemented within the framework of the grants project FR-24-1355, funded by the Shota Rustaveli National Science Foundation of Georgia (SRNSFG).*

**Ethno**-**Linguistic Analysis of Some Archaic Terms of the Pantheon of Svan Deities**

**Medea Sagliani, TSU Arnold Chikobava Institute of Linguistics**

The research was conducted in 2022 within the framework of the project funded by the Shota Rustaveli National Science Foundation of Georgia – “**Ethno-linguistic Aspects of Svan Religious Vocabulary”** (FR-22-7056)**.**

The Svan pantheon includes numerous “gods” and “deities”, most of which are of pagan origin, while some are Christian. However, pagan and Christian lexical elements are often intermingled and, regrettably, many of them are gradually being forgotten.

The report will present structural-semantic and etymological analysis of such archaic religious lexical units as **abräx**/**abrax**/**abräh**/**abrah** (LB.) “deity protecting sheep” **abərham** {deceš/detsesh} (US.) (1) “deity of the sky/sun,” (2) “deity of livestock and their keepers”, and (3) “deity who heals eyes”, taking into account extralinguistic factors.

Our main area of interest is to determine the genesis of Svan word **abərham**, which, based on the examination of existing academic sources and supplementary Svan materials, can ultimately be linked to the mythological hero Amirani. Over time, the word is assumed to have undergone various forms of transformation. For example: (1. Sv. **abər**-**ham** “deity of the sky/sun; healer of eyes” < \***amər**-**ham** < \***amər**-**han** < \***amir**-**han** < from Geo. word ამირან-ი Amiran-i “the hero of the Georgian folk epic” – through a series of phonetic processes (alternation of sonor consonants, reduction, development of sounds) or Sv. **abər**-**ham** < \***abər**-**han** < \***abər**-**ran** < \***abih**-**ran** < from Old Geo. form **amih**-**ran**-**i** (< amiran-i / Amiran-i) by implementing the following phonetic processes: consonant alternation, vowel reduction and metathesis), and eventually he reached the level of deity.

The research also revealed that Svan form of Amirani preserves a much more archaic (Georgian or Kartvelian) version than its Abkhaz prototype, **Abrskil**,which, naturally, has undergone multiple transformations. In addition to the Abkhazian form, the report will compare the Armenian epic hero **Mheri** and, of course, the Megrelian **Ber**-**skua** with Svan material under consideration, based on scientific literature and ethnographic materials.

**On the Issue of Teaching the History of Linguistic Doctrines at Tbilisi State University: A Comparative Study of the 1952 and 1966 Curricula**

**Natia Kentchiashvili, Caucasus International University**

This research presents a comparative analysis of two curricula for the course History of Linguistic Doctrines, prepared under the editorship of Professor Giorgi Akhvlediani at Tbilisi State University in 1952 and 1966. The analysis focuses on pedagogical, theoretical, and ideological shifts that occurred between these two versions within the broader Soviet intellectual framework.

**Relevance**: The topic is significant within the context of post-Soviet humanities and linguistic historiography. It highlights how linguistics as an academic discipline was shaped by ideological conditions and reflects larger processes of institutionalization, control, and later liberalization. It also addresses current discussions around the decolonization of curricula and rethinking Soviet intellectual legacies.

**Problem**: The central scientific question is how political ideology influenced the content and theoretical structure of academic disciplines, and what this tells us about the evolution of Soviet academic discourse. Specifically, how did shifts in political priorities affect the way linguistic knowledge was framed and delivered at the university level?

**Method**: The research is based on comparative curriculum analysis, supported by historical discourse analysis and terminological coding. It incorporates critical methodologies from Soviet intellectual history and curriculum studies to interpret changes in emphasis, terminology, and theoretical positioning.

**Conclusion**: The findings reveal that the 1952 curriculum was heavily influenced by Stalinist ideological imperatives, reflecting a rigid, dogmatic presentation of linguistic history. In contrast, the 1966 version exhibits signs of theoretical pluralism and academic liberalization. This transformation illustrates the gradual evolution of the Soviet scientific paradigm, moving from strict ideological orthodoxy toward a more nuanced academic pluralism. The results are relevant for scholars of linguistic historiography, Soviet studies, curriculum theory, and decolonial academic research.

26 September

Hall I

**Georgian Literature and Soviet Ideological Repressions (According to the Archive Materials of the Writers’ Union)**

**Ada Nemsadze, TSU Shota Rustaveli Institute of Georgian Literature**

After the establishment of the Soviet regime, the Georgian literature appeared under a strict ideological pressure. The repressions that started at the end of the 1920s continued throughout the later years, and fell as a new repression wave upon the people after the end of the Second World War. Simultaneously, arts and literature, among them, were under the ideological pressure.

One of the expressions of the soviet censorshhip was the public discussion of new fiction texts (before they were published) that was established at that time, in the process of which, alongside the positive aspects of the text, the presenting reviewer underscored and singled out those passages, episodes and literary characters that were unacceptable for the soviet literature, arts and generally, for the life of a soviet person. An author was directed to rectify the flaws so that the text was ideologically fully appropriate before reaching the mass readers.

The paper will discuss several such cases: the public discussion of Konstantine Gamsakhurdia’s “The Flowering of the Vine”, which was held in 1957; the public discussions of Grigol Abashidze’s “Lasharela” and Otar Chkheidze’s “The Shoal“ held in 1958. The paper will refer to the stenographic reports of these discussions at the sessions of the Witers’ Union that are preserved in national archives of Georgia. It will single out ideological markers and clichés that enable us to reconstruct the soviet cultural space of the 1950s.

The research of the soviet culture, the objective and critical consideration of the past are necessary procedures for the formation of modern open and democratic society. That is why, such studies are vital both for the development of our society and for the realistic and objective depiction of the history of Georgian literature.

**Sovet Repressions and Minorities: a Case of Greeks of Georgia**

**Eka Tchkoidze, Ilia State University**

**Nino Badashvili, National Archives of Georgia**

Greeks started moving from the Ottoman Empire (the Pontus Region) to different regions of Georgia since the end of the 18th century. This process became more intensive in the 19th century, after the Russo-Turkish wars, especially after Russia’s victory in August 1878. For settlement Greeks preferred Georgia’s littoral port-cities (Sokhumi, Batumi, Poti); however, they settled compactly in other regions (Tsalka, Borjomi) as well.

The period between 1921 and 1922 was ambivalent in terms of Greeks’ settlements in Georgia. On the one hand, the supporters of Social-Democrats preferred to leave the country after its sovietization (February-March 1921); and, on the other hand, after the defeat of Greece in 1922, many Greeks from Turkey settled in Georgia. During the years of Great Terror in the Soviet Union, Greeks, like other ethnic groups (e.g., the Poles) became a target of the state repression mechanism. Thus, many ethnic Greeks were executed. As a result, in the two volumes published by the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia (Tbilisi 2016) on repression victims of 1936-1938, “Greeks’ Case” (berdzenta saqme) is presented as a separate subchapter. Definitely, this process should be considered as part of the so-called “Greek Operation” («греческая операция»), which started in December of 1937 and lasted until March 1938. Mainly the Greeks of Krasnodar district and Eastern Ukraine were executed or exiled to Western Siberia. This decision was signed by N. I. Iezhov (1895-1940), the Secret Police Official of the USSR.

In 1949 Joseph Stalin signed a special decree, according to which Greeks of the three Transcaucasian republics (Georgia, Azerbaijan, Armenia) would be exiled to the Central Asian republics.

In the current paper we shall analyse all phases of Greek repressions in Georgia during Stalin’s governance. A special emphasis will be placed on understanding why they came to be regarded as such a threat to the Soviet authorities. This focus will contribute to a deeper understanding of the fate of minorities during the Great Terror. While the repressions of the Greeks have been well studied in Ukraine, Russia and the Central Asian republics. Examining this issue in Georgia will provide a significant additionpiece to the broader history of minorities under the Soviet regime.

**Repressions of Clergy in Georgia During the Soviet Period (According to the Data of Central and Local Archives).**

**Abesalom Aslanidze, State Agency for Religious Issues**

**Research topic:** The subject of the research is a review of the 2024 State Scientific Grant Competition for Fundamental Research (FR-23-13674) project – **“Repressions of Clergy in Georgia during the Soviet Period (According to the Data of Central and Local Archives)”,** funded by the Shota Rustaveli National Science Foundation of Georgia, which is being implemented at the initiative of the State Agency for Religious Issues.

In this direction, the Agency has already carried out the project **“Repressions on Religious Grounds in Soviet Georgia (According to the Data of the MIA Archive)”,** which resulted in the publication of the work **“Religious Repressions in Soviet Georgia”.**

The current conference topic envisages the second project conducted by the research team, which already includes the coverage of the research conducted on religious repressions and repressed clergy in Soviet Georgia (1921-1991) based on the data of the central and local archives of Georgia.

After the annexation of Georgia (1921), an atheistic religious policy against all denominations operating at that time began to be actively pursued in Georgia: hundreds of cult buildings and religious schools were closed. The basis for the persecution of clergy were the accusations of anti-Soviet and counter-revolutionary agitation-propaganda and other types of accusations. In the archives of Georgia, we mainly encountered several methods that the government used to repress clergy – confiscation of religious and personal property, intimidation, deprivation of the right to vote, and others (unlike the MIA archive). Based on the archival materials, we processed information about clergy who were repressed in all the above-mentioned forms and methods. At this stage, the Kutaisi Central Archive, Guria, Kakheti, Mtskheta Mtianeti, Khashuri Regional, Kaspi, Gori and Batumi archives have been fully processed.

**Relevance:** The relevance of the research and the report presented is primarily determined by the fact that very few materials about the repressed have been published in the scientific literature. This study, like the previous one, is also distinguished by the fact that the materials reflected in it comprehensively relate to all confessions and religious denominations repressed in Georgia during the Soviet period, about which the materials are preserved in the central and local archives of Georgia.

**Problem:** An important part of the report is the collection, analysis and presentation of the real picture of Soviet propaganda accusations against clergymen based on the retrieved materials. During the research, it became necessary to accurately identify and determine the surnames and names, religious rituals, customs, names of various denominations, and Soviet terminology. The task of the research is to create a more or less complete database of persons repressed on religious grounds.

**Method:** The scientific work is based on theoretical methodology: analysis of the cause-and-effect relationships, synthesis, comparison, searching and processing of documents in various archives of Georgia (resolutions, data on repressed persons, questionnaires, acts of deprivation of voting rights and confiscation of property, etc.). The study covers the religious affiliation of religious figures serving in different regions of Georgia, their roles in the religious life of that period, details and dates of their direct or indirect repression, which refers to various types of pressure on the clergyman – confiscation of real estate and movable property, depriviation of electoral votes, inclusion in the so-called “black list” and thereby excluding them from society, forcing to renounce the priesthood, closing or destroying religious buildings, etc.

**Conclusion:** As a result of working on the research topic, the clergy of various denominations repressed under the Soviet government in different years are revealed, once again confirming the colossal scale of repression. The outcomes of the study will be interesting not only from a scientific point of view, but also for raising awareness in society about the cruelty of Soviet repressions and the variety of persecution. It will also be useful for those interested in Georgian history, religion, or state policy research. The material, which will be published upon completion of the project, will be emotionally very difficult to perceive – how clergy and their families were persecuted, excluded, and left without any means of support, just because they believed in God.

**Society “Tsodna” and the 200th Anniversary of the Treaty of Georgievsk in Georgia**

**Mikheil Kartvelishvili, Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University**

This work was supported by Shota Rustaveli National Science Foundation “Transformation of Historical Thinking: From Soviet Georgia to Independent Georgia (1987-1991)”, (Project Number: FR-24-19560)

In April 1947, the Society “Tsodna” for the Dissemination of Political and Scientific Knowledge was established in the Soviet Union, which launched extensive work. Despite officially being called an independent organization; it is naturally superfluous to talk about it having any kind of freedom of action in a totalitarian state. Very soon, branches of this organization were created in the soviet republics, including Georgia, which initiated quite interesting and important activities in April 1947, the Society “Tsodna” for the Dissemination of Political and Scientific Knowledge was established in the Soviet Union, which launched extensive work. Despite officially being called an independent organization; it is naturally superfluous to talk about it having any kind of freedom of action in a totalitarian state. Very soon, branches of this organization were created in the soviet republics, including Georgia, which initiated quite interesting and important activities.

The goals and objectives of this organization were determined by the authorities from the very beginning. It was supposed to disseminate political and scientific knowledge among broad layers of society. It achieved this goal in two main directions: 1) by holding numerous public lectures and meetings throughout the country, and 2) by publishing scientific-popular brochures where information was printed in a language as understandable as possible for the general public.

The research topic of our work is to analyze how one of the significant events of the first half of the 1980s – the 200th anniversary of the Treaty of Georgievsk – was reflected in the activities of the Society “Tsodna”. Generally, it should be noted that in 1983, the 200th anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Georgievsk was celebrated on a grand scale in Soviet Georgia. A large number of scientific and popular science works were published, fiction and documentary films were made, and various academic and educational events were held. Naturally, the Society “Tsodna” did not lag behind, responding to this event with quite interesting and important activities, including the publication of two scientific-popular brochures, and the holding of both conferences and public lectures.

The relevance of our work is determined by several circumstances: firstly, the research problem is a scientific novelty and its study has not yet occurred in Georgian historiography; secondly, the Treaty of Georgievsk, as one of the most important events in the history of our country, remains an object of wide discussion to this day, and against this background, it is naturally interesting how it was analyzed in the Soviet past, against the backdrop of the activities of one specific organization.

The scientific problem presented in the work is directly related to the study of the specific events of the “Tsodna” Society, the involvement of scientists in it, and showing how the Soviet totalitarian environment affects the study of the issue, what influences it has on this process, and how this organization is encouraged after specific actions.

From a methodological point of view, the work is based on historical-cognitive and historical-critical methods, which allow us to analyze the era with maximum accuracy, clearly see the policy of the authorities, and the place and role of the scientific community in a totalitarian state.

In conclusion, the work summarizes the place and role of the Society “Tsodna” in the events dedicated to the 200th anniversary of the Treaty of Georgievsk.

**From the Periphery to the Center: Soviet and Post-Soviet Interpretations of Archil Jorjadze**

**Giorgi Tavadze, East European University**

The aim of the presentation is to analyze the reception of the prominent early 20th-century Georgian thinker Archil Jorjadze (1872–1913) during the Soviet period and in the first years of independence. It seeks to trace the interpretive trajectories of Jorjadze’s work and examine them in the context of broader social and political developments.

Although Archil Jorjadze’s name was not officially taboo during the Soviet period, his intellectual legacy was largely neglected. His works were never republished during the Soviet period, and very few scholarly works were dedicated to a systematic analysis of his thought. This neglect stemmed from the political dimension of Jorjadze’s views and his political biography: he was one of the founders and leaders of the Socialist-Federalist Party, the first Georgian political party. In addition, Jorjadze was an active publicist whose writings addressed significant issues such as the national question, federalism, the development of Georgian intellectual thought, the status of women, as well as problems related to literature, art, and philosophy. In his reasoning, Jorjadze did not rely on a Marxist-Leninist framework, which rendered his ideas unacceptable to the official Soviet ideology.

Thus, for official Soviet historiography, Archil Jorjadze was an intellectual *persona non grata*. Nevertheless, his name was occasionally mentioned in some publications released in Georgia during the Soviet period, including those accessible to a broader readership. However, because his writings were not reprinted after the revolution, Jorjadze remained an unknown thinker for many Georgian readers.

Interest in Jorjadze’s personality and work began to emerge more clearly in Georgian scholarship in the 1970s, though initially it remained confined to a circle of specialists. With the announcement of *perestroika*, however, Archil Jorjadze’s name – alongside those of many other Georgian intellectuals – returned from the margins of thought to the center of Georgian public life. During the rise of the national movement, renewed interest in his figure emerged, which was reflected in discussions of various aspects of his thought.

The analysis of interpretations of Archil Jorjadze will be carried out through discourse analysis, focusing in particular on the “classical” Soviet interpretation and its subsequent transformations – what was initially emphasized, whose perspective the dominant interpretation represented, what was highlighted or overlooked, and what came into focus later. In addition, the presentation will draw parallels with the “return” of other neglected thinkers of the Soviet period during *perestroika*, which will allow us to understand the reinterpretation of Jorjadze as part of broader social processes.

**A Historical Analysis of the Villages in the Telavi District Against the Backdrop of the Soviet System Crisis (1970s–1980s)**

**Tengiz Simashvili, Iakob Gogebashvili Telavi State University**

**Research Topic:** Through the study and analysis of archival materials, we conducted an investigation into the history of villages in the Telavi District during the final decades of the Soviet period.

**Relevance:** The history of Georgian villages in the Soviet period, particularly in the context of the 1970s and 1980s, remains one of the less explored subjects. The social and economic changes that occurred in the villages of the Telavi District during these years clearly reflect the systemic crisis that became increasingly pronounced in the late Soviet era. Analyzing the documentation of village councils allows us to understand how problems at the state level were manifested in the daily lives of rural population. This study is important not only for gaining a better understanding of this historical period but also for researching rural memory and contemporary regional identity.

**Problem Statement:** In the historiography of Soviet Georgia, rural topics have primarily been considered from statistical, economic, or ideological perspectives. As a result, social processes and changes at the local level have been superficially or altogether insufficiently covered in scholarly works. The example of villages in the Telavi District examined in this study demonstrates that during the 1970s and 1980s, the Soviet village faced a deep systemic crisis characterized by stagnation on collective farms, declining labor motivation, increased migration, and deterioration of daily life. These changes have been largely absent from contemporary research.

The problem lies in the fact that regional and village-level histories remain underdeveloped areas where the crisis manifestations of the Soviet system are studied only fragmentarily. This gap is particularly evident in archival documents concerning Telavi District villages, which provide valuable material on the real living conditions of the population during the Soviet era.

**Methodology:** To address the research problem, several complex historical methods were employed. The main focus was placed on comparative analysis, through which the social and economic conditions in Telavi District villages were examined in relation to other regional contexts. Additionally, a historical-retrospective approach was used, allowing the study of the subject as a process unfolding over time and identifying the influence of past events on the realities of the 1980s. The chronological method helped specify the dynamics of changes within the period, while supplementary analytical approaches aimed to deeply analyze trends based on archival documents and oral histories.

**Conclusion:** During the 1970s and 1980s, a profound crisis of the Soviet system manifested in the villages of the Telavi District, marked by a sharp increase in social problems. Detailed analysis of archival materials and other primary sources enables the precise identification of changes that fundamentally altered the structure of rural life and the everyday realities of citizens. This study is significant for further research into the regional history of the Soviet period and for a deeper understanding of socio-economic processes.

**Musical “*Perestroika*” in the USSR: The First Rock Music Festival in the Soviet Union – “Rhythms of Spring: Tbilisi-80”**

**Nikoloz Sarajishvili, The Centre for Contemporary History**

In contemporary Western historiography and social or humanitarian sciences, the study of music as a social and political phenomenon is quite actively underway. In this regard, a distinguished place is occupied by, on the one hand, the musical boom of the 1960s, when various subcultures were even created on this basis; and, on the other hand, how Western music spread in the Soviet Socialist Republics and the countries of the “socialist camp”. Unfortunately, no research has been conducted in this direction in Georgia, and the literature on this topic fits into several books written in a popular (mostly memoir) style and the same number of articles. In this situation, it should be noted that Georgia was one of the most progressive Soviet republics, where Western music spread through illegal channels and musical bands were created that tried to follow Western musical trends. Georgian SSR held a distinguished place in this regard. It was specifically in Georgia, particularly in Tbilisi, that the first rock festival on the scale of the entire Soviet Union was held in March 1980, in which bands from almost all union republics participated.

The aforementioned issue has not been the subject of discussion in Georgian reality. As the only event, we should mention our own book, which was published in 2024: “The Tbilisi Baptism of Soviet Rock Music: Tbilisi 1980 Musical Festival”, while in the West, interest in this issue is great.

Regarding the research topic, it should be noted that sources are limited in quantity. The main supporting material consists of press from the contemporary period and memories of festival participants in various forms. Unfortunately, only festival posters have been preserved in the archive. After the “scandal” that occurred at the festival, it was decided to destroy the video recording that was supposed to capture the festival proceedings, and further recording was prohibited.

Given the thematic nature, the research is interdisciplinary, which is expressed in the fact that the final research can be used in various scientific directions. Besides the fact that the aforementioned topic is interesting for historians, it will also be an important source for musicologists, Americanists and Europeanists, and the broad public interested in Soviet and cultural studies. Given that we extensively used periodicals in the work (Soviet propagandist, official and unofficial self-published journals and newspapers), the work should also be relevant in the field of journalism. Since the emphasis of the work is on how the official government fought against specific circumstances, it should be interesting from a political science perspective as well.

**Ossetian Separatism – Under the Name of the Struggle for Independence (The War in the Tskhinvali Region in the 1990s, Based on Archival Materials)**

**Gvantsa Kakitashvili, National Archives of Georgia**

Ossetian separatism, as it emerged in Georgia’s Tskhinvali Region during the 1990s, represents an externally supported effort to separate part of a sovereign state’s territory and establish a so-called independent political entity. This process was not merely an internal conflict, but rather a manifestation of broader geopolitical interests and intervention.

The presented research focuses on the period following the dissolution of the Soviet Union, during which Georgia was re-establishing its independence. Amidst a fragile state-building process, Georgia was confronted with severe ethnopolitical tensions, one of the most acute being Ossetian separatism.

This section of the study analyzes the socio-political and external factors that contributed to the escalation of the conflict. These include the artificial aggravation of ethnic tensions, foreign interference, and the institutional weakness of the central government.

The research explores the circumstances that made military confrontation unavoidable. It examines Georgia’s response, the role of international actors, and how the country once again found itself facing direct military intervention by Russian forces under the pretext of an internal Georgian-Ossetian conflict.

Despite the existence of numerous studies on the topic, this research is grounded in primary archival materials – specifically, the stenographic transcripts of sessions of the Supreme Council of Georgia. These sources allow for a more nuanced and accurate reconstruction of the political and legal context of the period, as well as the internal mechanisms of the conflict. The objective of this work is to present a chronological and analytically sound account of the conflict, supported by primary source evidence. The study aims to fill existing gaps in historical understanding and contribute to a more comprehensive and informed discourse on the Ossetian issue within the framework of Georgia’s contemporary political reality.

**Initiatives and Concepts for the Resolution of the Georgian-Abkhaz Conflict (1992–2002)**

**Giorgi Butskhrikidze, Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University**

In the 1980s, the Georgian national movement intensified, prompting the Soviet authorities to counter it with various measures, including the encouragement of separatist movements. The “Lykhny Assembly” of 18 March 1989 marked the apex of Abkhaz separatism and represented a continuation of the renewed separatist wave that had been gaining momentum since the 1950s, actively supported by Soviet governmental structures.

The war in Abkhazia stands as one of the most tragic and transformative episodes in Georgia’s recent history. Initially instigated by Soviet authorities and later supported by the Russian Federation, the conflict inflicted profound human and economic losses upon the nascent Georgian state. Approximately 30,000 civilians lost their lives, while around 300,000 people became internally displaced. Substantial casualties were also suffered by the Abkhaz civilian population. Backed by the Russian government, Abkhaz separatists and their allies committed acts that amounted to ethnic cleansing – arguably genocide – against ethnic Georgians.

Under the leadership of Vladislav Ardzinba, the separatist authorities of the Abkhaz ASSR pursued a deliberate policy aimed at secession from Georgia. Taking advantage of the collapse of Georgia’s legitimate government on 6 January 1992 and the resulting legal vacuum, the Abkhaz leadership began steering the region away from the Georgian political space. This coincided with the campaign led by the so-called Military Council against supporters of President Zviad Gamsakhurdia, many of whom sought refuge in Abkhazia. On 14 August 1992, Georgian armed units legally entered Abkhaz territory, only to be met with armed resistance by separatist forces – an event that marked the beginning of the war, which lasted until 27 September 1993. However, crimes against the Georgian population in the region persist to this day.

Today, in the context of Russia’s continued occupation of Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali region (so-called “South Ossetia”), and following its recognition of their “independence” in 2008, it is essential to examine the concepts and proposals put forward by both the parties directly involved in the conflict and by third-party actors. From the period preceding the war to its conclusion and into the decade that followed, various initiatives and conceptual frameworks emerged for resolving the conflict. These came from political and civil society actors, individuals directly involved in the hostilities, and members of the international community.

This study explores the key initiatives and concepts proposed between July 1992 (prior to the outbreak of full-scale hostilities) and the end of 2002. It highlights the major proposals and evaluates their relevance to conflict regulation and resolution. The analysis aims to identify the comparatively optimal frameworks that could be acceptable to both parties and to clarify the objectives and positions of other stakeholders engaged in the peace process.

Both primary and secondary sources are utilized, including working drafts of relevant documents. This approach allows for a comprehensive examination of the evolution of specific peace proposals, the discussions surrounding them, and the degree of consensus (or lack thereof) achieved. The research applies a critical methodology, incorporating source criticism and the principle of historicism, which enables us to trace the development of historical processes from their origins and to assess their interconnection with broader dynamics.

Within the scope of this study, we analyze and synthesize both the pre-war context and the documented steps and positions adopted by the parties in the decade following the conflict. It is worth noting that many of these initiatives remained at the level of draft proposals and were never implemented in practice.

**De-Sovietization of Toponyms in Georgia (1989-1991)**

**Giorgi Arkania, The Centre for Contemporary History**

In the second half of the 1980s, the processes of Perestroika and Glasnost began in the Soviet Union, which had a direct impact on Georgia. The national liberation movement emerged from the underground and began to operate initially in an informal form. Later, through elections, it was able to bring an end to Soviet rule in the country and restore Georgia’s state independence.

The collapse of the Soviet system was a complex and large-scale process, accompanied by a transformation in thinking. Previously banned literature began to be published, censorship was gradually relaxed and eventually abolished, and prohibited documents and films were made public. The sacralization of the Soviet system and communist ideology was dismantled, and a gradual deconstruction process began. This extended even to geographical names. There arose a need to abandon names assigned during the communist rule and to restore the original historical names. This became particularly evident starting in 1989, when the process of Perestroika entered an active phase, and in Georgia, the national liberation movement became the dominant political force. For instance, on July 6, 1989, by decree of the Supreme Council of the Georgian SSR, Soviet-era names of the following cities were abolished and their historical names were restored: Gegechkori (now Martvili), Makharadze (now Ozurgeti), Orjonikidze (now Kharagauli), Tsulukidze (now Khoni), and Tskhakaia (now Senaki).

The research topic of the article is the de-Sovietization of toponyms – that is, the process of reverting from Soviet forms to original place names, along with an exploration of the causes, course, and outcomes of this process.

Almost every study related to Soviet-era research remains relevant in the context of Georgia, as the Soviet period represents the country’s recent past, and society continues to grapple with its legacy. In the specific case of toponyms, remnants of Soviet heritage still persist, and the de-Sovietization of certain geographical names has not yet taken place.

The main question addressed by the article is what preceded the de-Sovietization of toponyms and what compelled the Soviet authorities to formally lead this process themselves.

In terms of research methodology, the article is based on the principle of historicism. The topic is examined within its specific historical context and through the dynamics of various historical events. The process of source analysis involves identifying and selecting relevant materials, verifying facts, and cross-checking them with other sources. Both primary sources (such as official documents) and secondary sources are used during the research process.

The article concludes with a summary that addresses the central research question, its relevance, and the methods employed. The results of this research can be utilized by historians, cultural studies specialists, school teachers, and the general public.

**How did the Transformation of Historical Thinking Take Place in Georgian School Textbooks (1987-1991)?**

**Gigi Gioshvili, Caucasus University / The Centre for Contemporary History**

The main research problem is how the assessment of historical events, personalities, and facts underwent transformation during the period of 1987-1991 in the Georgian school textbooks, coinciding with the *Perestroika* and the rise of the national liberation movement.

The Soviet totalitarian system exercised full control over all spheres of life, including the intellectual environment. Historical science, holding a significant place in the formation of historical and collective memory, was evidently no exception. Throughout its existence, the Soviet system maintained strict control over all printed materials through an extraordinary censorship committee. However, the situation began to change in 1985 with the assumption of leadership by Mikhail Gorbachev in the Soviet Union. Under his tenure, a new course was announced, focusing on “publicity and democratization”, aimed at altering the existing reality and granting certain freedoms to society. This transformation had an impact on all areas of thought and, naturally, historical science was no exception. Fundamental changes occurred in previous attitudes. For instance, during this period, a new interpretation of the Democratic Republic of Georgia (1918-1921) and related issues, events, and personalities emerged. Attitudes toward various secular and clerical figures, previously taboo due to Soviet ideology or negatively evaluated, underwent significant revisions. Moreover, there was an innovative reassessment of Ilia Chavchavadze’s life and character.

Since 1989, many other topics have been revisited and reconsidered, such as the issue of political parties at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, the anti-Soviet uprising of 1924, and the relations between Georgia and Russia (especially the Treaty of Georgievsk, the annexation of 1801, and the treaty of May 7, 1920). For the research It is interesting how all of these events were reflected in Georgian school textbooks and whether historical thinking underwent a transformation.

The changes also affected the assessment of individuals associated with the communist government. One of the most significant transformations was the reevaluation of the role and importance of history as a scholarly and educational field, manifested, on one hand, in the growth of a patriotic/nationalist tone and, on the other hand, in the emphasis on its role in the strategic development of the country. In this regard, it is interesting how quickly school textbooks changed or how they transformed historical thinking.

The scholarly study of this issue remains relevant in several aspects. Firstly, it sheds light on the extent of changes that events within the empire can bring about from a historical perspective. Secondly, studying these issues remains relevant because Russian imperial forces are still actively attempting to distort historical events to serve their political interests. The novelty of our conference topic lies in the fact that the historical thinking of those textbooks in this particular chronological period and the changes and innovations occurring within it have not yet been subject to in-depth scholarly research. Therefore, the issues to be studied in our project will contribute distinctively to the Georgian scholarly landscape.

The research itself is interdisciplinary because it includes the study of historical thinking and the historical and collective memory derived from it. In addition to the classical historiographical approach, content analysis is required. Methodologically, it is important to utilize the historical comparative (comparativist) method because the research problem necessitates the study of changes developed over time, which naturally entails a number of changes.

In summary, the historical revaluations taking place during that period had a great impact on the society of that time. Within the framework of the research, we will be able to demonstrate how the transformation of historical thinking took place in school textbooks in 1987-1991.

**History and Perspectives of the European Constitution: Georgian Scholar Mikheil Muskhelishvili, Author of the Draft Constitution of the European Union**

**Lela Saralidze,** **Regionalism Research Institute**

**The topic of the research** involves studying the drafts of the European Constitution and presenting the contribution of a Georgian scholar. The European Union is a supranational political and economic union of 27 member states with a population of about 449 million people. The agreement to establish a common constitution for Europe is still considered an unimplemented international treaty. In 2004, a draft European Constitution was developed with the aim of simplifying the institutions and strengthening the role of the European Union. Although the constitution was adopted in many European countries, it was not approved in referendums in France and the Netherlands. On May 29, 2005, the French people (55%) and the Dutch people (61%) rejected the draft constitution. The population was sceptical about the goals of European integration. Some feared the end of liberal Europe or, conversely, the end of nation states.

The debate on a European constitution is older than the European Community itself. The first drafts of a European constitution emerged from the enthusiasm of the post-war federalist movement and reached their apotheosis at the Hague Congress in May 1948. Although at that time they were still considered to be merely ideas initiated by certain private associations, their value as a source of inspiration for subsequent institutional or official projects is quite considerable.

**The relevance** of the work lies in the presentation of the contribution of the Georgian scholar to the development of the idea of ​​European integration. Mikheil Muskhelishvili, who works at the University of Strasbourg, is the author of the draft European Constitution together with the French constitutionalist Gaston Stefani. European historiography, discussing constitutional projects, names the “Federal Constitution of the United States of Europe” by François de Menthon, created in June 1948, as the first. What is **new** is the fact that Mikhail Muskhelishvili’s draft constitution was created earlier, in March 1948. It should also be noted that preparations for the creation of a draft constitution for Europe were first carried out under the leadership of Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi. In September 1947, he organized a European Congress in Gstaad (Switzerland), at which it was decided to draft a European constitution of a federal or confederal nature. Moreover, based on the draft Constitution of a Federal Europe drawn up by Michel Mouchel and Gaston Stephan, François de Menthon sent his final text to Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi in June 1948.

**The task** set in the article presupposes the comparison of draft constitutions and the drawing of relevant conclusions, which will allow to reveal the contribution of the Georgian scientist.

To solve the scientific problem, historical-comparative and empirical **methods** were used, which implies a critical analysis of the research material. A comprehensive method of processing archival, press materials, reports of political figures at international conferences, political monitoring, and analysis of data from international treaties was used.

**The results** of the study will make a significant contribution to the process of European integration, which is the choice of the Georgian people. The results of the study will be of interest to scientists, politicians, international relations specialists and the reading public.

**School and the Reinterpretation of History in Francoist Spain**

**Zaal Gogenia, Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University**

In the field of education, the first thing that Francoism did was to quickly dismantle the Republican school in order to create a new system of ideological indoctrination that would serve Francoism.

The regime began a purge of teachers, from primary school teachers to university professors. This was followed by the cleaning of school libraries, removing all books that did not correspond to the new national-Catholic ideas.

Since the ideological foundation of the Francoist school was the Catholic Church and the Falangist ideology, after having eliminated the free and democratic spirit in the schools of Republican Spain, the regime developed a project for educating adolescents with the new prevailing values, that is, the Falangist and National Catholic ideology.

Seeking to reform the entire social base, the Falangists understood that education played a key role in achieving this goal, so the formation of the national spirit was entrusted to a single party – Falanga Española or nationalist movement. The Falangist, in turn, led the Youth Front, which was the party’s instrument for overseeing the education of Spaniards from an early age.

Spanish history was a key subject in educational institutions, a history marked by Catholicism and the idea of the greatness of the homeland.

Of course, the first thing they had to do was to break with everything related to the Marxist interpretation of history, which was quite popular in Europe at that time. And for this they adopted the methodology of historicism, imbued with Falangist ideology.

The methodology was based on various premises: first, it distinguished the individual as opposed to the collective. The actors of history were great personalities or great tyrants. In contrast to the materialistic view of history, they advocated that spirituality was and remains decisive in the life of individuals and nations.

The history of Spain is marked by great events and great people. Viriato, Cid Campeador, Pelayo, Hernán Cortés, José Antonio Primo de Rivera and others. There was an inviolable and sacred history of Spain, but, on the other hand, transversality was not enough, a special topic was developed – “The formation of national spirit” – which is called to glorify all these values.

The conquest of America occupied an honorable place in this sacred history. During Francoism it was interpreted as a sacred and inviolable stage, one of the signs of the identity of the homeland. And, as surprising as it may be, this apologetic and legitimizing legend dominated practically until the 21st century. It considered the conquest as the heroism of fighters, heroes and saints who extended the dominion of civilization and Christianity.

In all textbooks, General Franco’s coup d’état is presented as one of the greatest events in Spanish history.

Of course, the last and greatest event in Spanish history could not have been anything other than the famous national uprising carried out by the army, the Falange and the Traditionalists, led by Franco. For example, one author wrote that from that date the history of Spain continues in its course, which leads to the fulfillment of national historical goals. Later, when the same author touches on the topic of the uprising, he already speaks not of a coup d'état or a military pronunciamento, but of an armed uprising of the people against a government that had betrayed Spain.

The authors of the Young Front even repeated in 1971 that the uprising put an end to a long period of instability in Spanish history that had begun since the Cortes of Cadiz.

It is clear that for many decades one of the goals of Francoism was to reinterpret the military uprising of 1936. It tried to present it as an inevitable phenomenon that arose not from a military coup but through popular revolution. No matter how unbelievable it may sound, for 36 years, young people believed the unbelievable by claiming the same thing.

**The Legal Status of Women according to the Decrees Issued by the Franco Regime in 1939-1941**

**Elene Chirakadze, Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University**

In the modern world we can clearly see how big the problem of gender equality is. Paradoxically, in many leading, civilized states, this issue is still on the agenda and has not been fully resolved. Gender research has become particularly relevant in the 21st century.

The above topic deals with the legal status of women in Franco-era Spain, which if we could sum it up as succinctly as possible, would be limited to this phrase: “A boy will look at the world, and a girl will look at home.” This phrase shows how the Franco dictatorship summed up the roles that women and men were supposed to play in Spanish society.

This sentence already clearly outlines the reality in which women had to live throughout the dictatorship. Before the beginning of the Caudillo’s rule, women’s movements were clearly progressing in the country, and feminist ideas were beginning to be voiced and there were attempts to implement them. However, there have been significant changes in women’s rights, even in terms of access to jobs or civil services. The issue of women’s participation in politics has become especially relevant in the whole world today, which has determined our interest in the history of gender. This article presents the struggle for women’s rights in Spain during the Franco dictatorship. The topic is interesting because there is a scarcity of Georgian historical sources. The thesis is based on textbooks, research papers, press materials, methods which are used in historical science, documentaries, and then-created posters on this subject. Moreover, it is based on works that are mostly in English and Spanish. The aim of the paper is to assess and present the status of women against the background of the social, political and military situation in Spain in the 30s and 70s of the 20th century.

However, the Spanish civil war ended with the victory of the fascist forces, and it was after the establishment of the regime of General Franco that the development of women’s rights began to be hindered, and even its regression took place. The authorities returned the female sex to the state of the nineteenth-twentieth centuries when there started a wave of repressions and prohibitions. In the new reality, women’s normal lifestyle was limited only to the family, legislation and regime subordinated the fate of women to father and husband. The male gender was a privileged part of the regime. Women’s organizations were banned, many of them went to prison, many of them began to adapt, etc. The Catholic Church also contributed to the creation of such a reality, as it supported Franco from the beginning and opposed the process of women’s emancipation.

From the 1960s, the weakening of Franco’s regime began and industrialization processes took place in the country, requiring active engagement with the Western world. All this led to the correction of the situation by legislation, therefore, the condition of women also improved, they got access to many services and some restrictions got removed.

**The Ideological Moment of Textbooks about the Tskhinvali Conflict**

**Manuchar Guntsadze, Caucasus University**

After the freezing of the Tskhinvali Conflict, it is important to examine how this issue is taught and what ideological elements are reflected in the textbooks. It is also interesting to compare the school textbooks of Georgia, Russia, and those used in the so-called “South Ossetia” – both in terms of factual content and evaluative perspective.

In this regard, attention is focused on the officially approved textbooks used in Georgia, as well as the official textbooks in Russia and the so-called “South Ossetia”, which are used to educate the new generation and through which they learn facts and how to perceive them. Clearly, this plays a significant role in shaping their thinking, perceptions, and ideology.

The presentation discusses such aspects, including an analysis of the accuracy of historical facts and the highlighting of subjective assessments, which help to clarify the underlying attitudes and the purpose behind the creation of these textbooks.

**The Burdiashvili Family**

**Zurab Chkonia, East European University**

**Research Topic:** This paper studies and analyzes historical sources about the Burdiashvili family, including cameral descriptions, family lists, church books, scientific literature, Georgian legal monuments, materials from government service development, and online resources.

**Relevance of the Research:** Researching the Burdiashvili surname – as well as any surname – is of special importance, as this process serves as one key to studying the country’s history.

According to the information available to me, the Burdiashvili surname has not yet been researched, nor has any scientific publication been issued on it.

**Problem:** According to the data I have, there is no unified version of the origin of the Burdiashvili family within the family itself. Not only is there no consensus about the surname’s origin, but neither in Shilda nor in Chumlaki – where the Burdiashvili family is compactly settled – has any oral tradition survived that indicates which of the two villages is their oldest place of residence.

It was necessary to determine the origin and kinship ties of the Burdiashvili family, their earliest place of residence, migration processes, areas of settlement, etymology, historical sources about the surname, and their social status.

**Research Methods:** The study uses descriptive, historical-comparative, cause-and-effect, and system analysis methods.

**Conclusion:** The study identifies the origin of the surname, the earliest historical sources referring to it, and the earliest period mentioned in records. It establishes the settlement areas, migration processes, population numbers, and social background.

It was determined that the oldest place of residence of the Burdiashvili family was the village of Mchadijvari, located in the present-day Dusheti Municipality.

It was also established that the Burdiashvili surname appears in Georgian historical documents as early as the first quarter of the 15th century.

Ancient historical sources confirming the Burdiashvili family’s presence in Kakheti were identified.

It is confirmed that one branch of the Burdiashvili family – specifically the Mchadijvari branch – belonged to the noble class (aznauri) and were aznaurs of the Mukhran-Batoni nobility.

It was determined that to this day, the Burdiashvili family mostly resides compactly in the village of Chumlaki (in Gurjaani Municipality) and the village of Shilda (in Kvareli Municipality). They are first mentioned in these villages in the first quarter of the 18th century.

A hypothesis is presented about the surname’s having a single origin, although opposing theories are also discussed.

**Georgian Surnames in Fatsa**

**Saba Kalandarishvili, Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University**

Georgians living in the Fatsa District of Ordu Province, Turkey, are descendants of Muslim Georgians who migrated from Kobuleti as a result of the 19th-century Muhajiroba. They continue to maintain linguistic, cultural, and historical ties with their ancestors and their historical homeland. In the context of contemporary globalization and cultural change, it is particularly important to study and document cultural elements that play a key role in preserving identity and cultural memory. In diasporic communities, the surname serves as such a cultural marker.

This paper focuses precisely on Georgian surnames in Fatsa, where an ethnographic study examines the Georgian surnames residing in Fatsa and their cultural and representational significance as one of the main markers of sense of belonging to a group. The ethnographic study of Fatsa, as one of the diasporic centers, and the activation of this topic in academic discourse are consistently relevant, as it represents a novelty in the Georgian academic space. The study of the presented research questions was carried out from the perspective of anthropological research, which involves the use of anthropological research methods. Accordingly, the study is based on ethnographic observations, semi-structured interviews, and participant observation conducted during fieldwork.

The paper concludes by presenting the socio-cultural significance of Georgian surnames, specifically individual issues of forming a sense of belonging to a group and self-representation within society.

**An Atypical settlement form in Mountainous Adjara (On the Example of Bako)**

**Tamaz Phutkaradze, Elguja Gogiberidze, Adjara Archival Department**

Georgian ethnological science shows a special interest in the issues of settlement forms, structure and morphology. Despite the abundance of existing research, interest has not faded and intensive scientific study of these issues is still underway. This is understandable, because the study of settlement structure issues is also given special importance for the study of social life, economic and cultural conditions. From an ethnological point of view, mountainous Adjara, especially the village of Bako, where, under the influence of natural or socio-economic factors the modern picture of the settlement was formed over a long period of time, deserves the attention of researchers.

Bako settlement has an uneven, focal character subject to vertical zoning compared to the plain zone. It is separated from neighboring villages by ravines and ravines and leaves the impression of a city-type town. Bako is an ancient unit, an urban-type settlement. The emergence of a settlement type that is not specific to the mountains should be related to the following factors:

**a. Bako may have been a summer residence of the begs, where their serfs lived without land (the begs also had a residence in Nigazeuli);**

**b. It is not excluded that Bako was originally a city-type settlement, the population of which participated in the construction of the Khikhani fortress.**

The settlement pattern, planning, and its morphological and economic features suggest that the mountainous Adjara village of Bako may be attributed to a plain-type settlement of Western Georgia.

When discussing the issue of settlement types, it will not be uninteresting to clarify the linguistic characteristics of some of the villages of the gorge (specifically Bako, Mtisubani, Skvana, and part of Tkhilvani). In these villages, the general Georgian features of life and culture have been carefully preserved.

So what caused the linguistic peculiarity in only these four villages? This issue, due to its delicacy, has not been the focus of researchers’ attention. The reasons for linguistic peculiarities require an answer, which should be based on joint research by linguists, ethnologists and historians.

Hall II

**The Main Paradigm of Georgian Historical Thinking in the Context of the “Tergdaleulians” National Project at the End of the 19th and the Beginning of the 20th Centuries**

**Dodo Chumburidze, The University of Georgia** *–* **Tamaz Beradze Institute of Georgian Studies**

1. The national-social project developed in the 60s demanded a new interpretation of the history of the Georgian nation. It placed the national-liberation movement of the *Tergdaleulebi* in opposition to various aspects of the imperialist-colonialist policies of the Russian Empire and framed its continuation with new content and form as the beginning of a new stage in Georgian history. This process unfolded within both national and international contexts. The idea of “Ilia’s Way” meant the use of peaceful methods – strengthening of national identity with cultural identity, activation of the historical past of Georgian people. It was supposed to present those historical heroes who especially contributed to the formation of Georgian statehood (Vakhtang Gorgasali, David the Builder, Giorgi Brtskinvale, etc.). The external context of the idea of the “Ilia’s Way” – this was a European orientation, the acquisition of new scientific achievements through education, the introduction and application of new ideas and ideologies. Many critics arose for those kings and historical heroes who hindered the unification of the country and damaged state interests (George VII, Erekle II, George XII, Giorgi Saakadze, etc.). The authority of David the Builder, George Brtskinvale, the kings of Kartli Luarsab and Simon and others came to the fore. The issue of European orientation included those Georgian figures who were objects of universal criticism at one time due to their adoption of the Catholic faith or loyalty to it (Vakhtang VI, Sulkhan-Saba Orbeliani, Anton I, Timothe Gabashvili, etc.), were presented by new historians as national heroes. The time has come for a new interpretation of events, a different definition of heroism or behavior of people in the service of the country.

2. The relevance of the issue is due to the need to revise the interpretation and critical analysis. For example: if Polievktos Karbelashvili and Kirion II sharply criticized the church policy of Russia in Georgia, then Dimitry Purtseladze praised it and considered the period of the transition of the Georgian Church under the authority of the Russian Synod to be a “golden age”. Both Polievktos and Kirion knew the merits of Erekle II well, but sharply criticized him for concluding the Treaty of Georgievsk and dividing the kingdom into principalities, believing that by doing so the king contributed to the inspiration of the counrty’s disintegration and, as a result, made it easier for Russia to conquer the weakened state.

3. We consider the main research problem of the article to be the definition of the historian’s main criterion for a positive or negative assessment of events. Such a criterion, first of all, should be the correct determination of the extent to which the king or hero contributed to the statehood, unity and strengthening of the country.

4. To solve the scientific problem, we will consider various, still controversial issues, diverse assessments of historical figures and events given by researchers of the period in question – Dimitri Purtseladze, Tedo Zhordania, Polievktos Karbelashvili, Niko Khizanishvili, Niko Mtvarelishvili and Kirion II. For this, we will use the generally accepted method of comparing and contrasting their works, analyzing sources and scientific interpretation.

5. As a result of the study, the different ideological orientations of historians, which have had a great influence on the further development of Georgian historiography. It is especially important to introduce the outcomes of the research into the studies of new and contemporary history, into university textbooks.

**A Totally Different Ilia: Constructing the Anti-Hero in Georgia’s Marxist Periodical “Kvali” (1893–1904)**

**Ketevan Epadze, Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University**

**Research Topic:** This study examines the formation of Ilia Chavchavadze’s image within the ideological discourse of Georgian Social Democrats, mapping the representational trajectories that preceded his canonization in the national historical narrative. Conflicting interpretations emerged regarding his literary work, political role, and his death, indicating that negotiation over his figure was already underway during his lifetime and continued after his assassination. Crucially, Ilia Chavchavadze was not uniformly constructed as a heroic figure; rather, he was embedded within two opposing cultural patterns – the hero and the anti-hero. These divergent frameworks produced varying representations across different social strata and ideological communities in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

**Relevance:** In contemporary Georgian national discourse, Ilia Chavchavadze is positioned as an undisputed national hero, emblematic of key moments in the development of Georgian national identity, most notably, the articulation of a national project in resistance to Russian imperial hegemony. Nevertheless, the intricate and contested process by which his public persona was historically constructed – mediated through practices of selective remembrance and ideological reinterpretation – has received limited attention in academic scholarship. This study seeks to address this lacuna by analyzing the discursive negotiation of Chavchavadze’s legacy, with particular emphasis on the unsuccessful attempts by Georgian Marxists (Social Democrats) to reframe him within an anti-heroic pattern.

**Problem Statement:** Cultural patterns serve as foundational frameworks through which societies construct and interpret their social realities. Embedded in various forms of collective medims, these patterns shape the ways in which historical events, figures, and narratives are understood and given meaning. Among the most enduring of these narrative structures are the patterns of the hero and anti-hero. They play a central role in the narration of national history and are widely recognized within a specific cultural context. These patterns, though variable in form, are consistently associated with periods of transformation. The heroic figure is typically endowed with qualities such as moral integrity, commitment to justice, courage, and selfless devotion to collective goals – traits that enable the hero to address and overcome historical challenges. In contrast, the anti-hero is defined by the absence or inversion of these traits: he acts in self-interest, lacks moral direction, and fails to align with the needs or aspirations of the collective. This study applies the anti-hero pattern to analyze how the image of Ilia Chavchavadze was constructed in the imagination of Georgian Marxists. It seeks to explore how, given the historical and ideological context of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Chavchavadze’s figure was reinterpreted through an anti-heroic lens. The research investigates the specific characteristics attributed to this anti-heroic representation.

**Methodology:** The primary source for this study is the newspaper *Kvali*, affiliated with the Georgian Marxist (Social Democratic) movement. Founded in 1893 by Giorgi Tsereteli, a prominent publicist and representative of the *Tergdaleulebi* generation, *Kvali* served as a key platform for left-wing intellectual discourse until its closure by government decree in 1904. The temporal scope of this research aligns with the active publication period of the newspaper.

The analysis focuses on journalistic writings by Georgian leftist intellectuals in which Ilia Chavchavadze is a central subject of discussion. The selected texts critically engage with Ilia Chavchavadze’s ideological stance, literary contributions, and public activity. The study specifically examines the rhetorical and symbolic strategies employed by the authors to frame Ilia Chavchavadze within a particular interpretive model. Attention is given to the extent to which these representations align with the cultural pattern of the anti-hero and how this model was articulated and adapted in response to the specific historical context of the time.

**Conclusion:**Prior to his canonization within the Georgian national narrative, Ilia Chavchavadze’s public image was the subject of significant contestation among various social and ideological groups. Georgian Marxists (Social Democrats) depicted him as a “modern aristocrat” and a “reactionary conservative” who remained passive during moments of sociopolitical transformation and prioritized personal stability over collective national interests. From their perspective, Chavchavadze’s ideological stance was outdated, lacking both progressive vision and revolutionary impetus. Although this anti-heroic interpretation gained some traction within labor movement circles, it ultimately lacked the ideological and institutional support necessary to rival the emerging hero narrative.

Over time, shifts in historical context, political power structures, and cultural memory practices contributed to the decline of the anti-heroic model. It was gradually displaced by a heroic representation of Chavchavadze that emphasized national unity, moral authority, and resistance to imperial oppression. This model continues to dominate Georgian public discourse to this day.

**Reflection of the Guria Peasant Movement in the Georgian Press (1905-1906)**

**Irakli Iremadze, Ilia State University**

The peasant revolutionary movement commencing in 1902 represents a significant juncture in Georgia’s modern history. This sustained resistance against the imperial regime was orchestrated by self-organized Gurian peasants, with the participation of social democrats, laborers, and students. Concurrently, peasant movements manifested across various Georgian regions; however, the Gurian movement distinguished itself by its scale and duration. The Gurian peasants articulated specific grievances pertaining to land lease arrangements, land prices, demands for political enfranchisement, and the reform of existing taxation systems (Jones, 2018). The movement culminated in 1905, during which the imperial regime experienced a substantial erosion of control within a considerable portion of the Ozurgeti District.

Characterized by a degree of inclusivity, the Gurian peasant movement encompassed peasants, educators, students, workers, petty traders, and notably, women. Female peasants actively engaged in rural assemblies, discussions, and negotiations alongside their male counterparts. The movement garnered considerable attention, drawing interest from Russian intellectuals, including Leo Tolstoy, and European journalists who documented the Gurian peasant movement in their writings.

Georgian historiography has also addressed the Gurian peasant movement, incorporating accounts from its leaders, such as Grigol Uratadze. However, Soviet-era historiography often associated the movement’s nucleus primarily with Menshevik faction leaders, which resulted in a potentially skewed representation. Furthermore, Bolshevik leaders tend to be foregrounded, and their contributions are sometimes amplified.

Contemporary Georgian press, particularly the daily newspapers “Iveria” and “Tsnobis Puroebi” (News Sheets), extensively covered the Gurian peasant movement. These publications not only provided direct reports and discussions but also served as a primary repository of information regarding the movement, functioning as a central platform for its documentation. Journalists frequently dispatched articles directly from the field to the respective editors.

This research aims to analyze materials published in the Georgian democratic press concerning the Gurian peasant movement of 1905-1906, with a focus on comparing assessments from different ideological perspectives. This objective necessitates the examination of Georgian-language journals and newspapers from 1905-1906 to gather relevant materials and conduct a content analysis based on the periodicals’ periodicity, ideological values, and thematic focus. The collected data will then be comparatively analyzed across periodicals to identify points of convergence and divergence.

**Shalva Amirejibi and His Political Beliefs during the 1905-1907 Revolution**

**Nodar Chkhaidze, Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University**

Shalva Amirejibi is known to the public as a writer, journalist, politician, and one of the leaders of the 1924 anti-Soviet uprising. After the defeat of the uprising, he left Georgia and lived in exile in France. Mention of his name, like that of other emigrants, was of course forbidden and only became possible from the late 1980s, after censorship in the USSR weakened. Since then, many researchers have studied Shalva Amirejibi’s biography; nevertheless, several aspects of his life remain unclear.

Amirejibi’s activities during the 1905-1907 revolution are comparatively less studied. The aim of this paper is to clarify which groups Amirejibi supported, what activities he engaged in during the revolution, what kind of transformation his views underwent, and how his revolutionary activity ended.

**The Search for a Model of Church-State Separation in the Democratic Republic of Georgia (1918–1921)**

Irina Arabidze, TSU Ivane Javakhishvili Institute of History and Ethnology

In the Democratic Republic of Georgia (1918–1921), the relationship between the state and the church was the subject of complex and multifaceted discussions. Extensive materials on this issue are preserved in the archives of the Patriarchate, the National Archives, and in contemporary periodicals.

Against the backdrop of secularization and related reforms initiated by the Democratic Republic, tensions between the state and the church were not uncommon. These included the confiscation of land, buildings, and historical or spiritual heritage, as well as the removal of religious instruction from the secular education system.

In 1919, under the commission of the Catholicosate Council, a list of issues for discussion was prepared by two prominent clergymen — Archpriests Korneli Kekelidze and Kalistrate Tsintsadze. One of the most significant topics on that list was the separation of church and state, along with the legal regulation of this process in the context of the socio-political environment of the time. The clergy actively reflected on various aspects of future church-state relations in their writings. This article examines several key proposals and perspectives developed during that period.

The Constitution adopted on February 21, 1921, officially established the separation of church and state and explicitly defined the principles of religious freedom and equality for all citizens. It prohibited the privileging of any religion and the allocation of state funds for religious purposes. This period marked a transitional stage: while the church endeavored to protect its historical rights, the state was building a new democratic and secular order. However, sources from this period indicate that, alongside mutual confrontation, secular authorities also acknowledged the cultural and historical significance of the church. The analysis of projects concerning church-state separation in the Democratic Republic of Georgia offers a broader perspective on the nature of these relations.

This issue is not only of historical relevance but also provides valuable insight into how the role of the church in the cultural development of society was understood at the time. Furthermore, it allows for reflection on how historical experience can inform the construction of a fair and democratic society today. To explore this topic, I employed historical-critical analysis, normative legal analysis, and a comparative approach.

Studying the legal documents and proposals discussed in the article contributes to a deeper understanding of the Democratic Republic’s political model, offers an evaluation of its constitutional legacy, and provides historical context for the development of secularism, religious freedom, national self-awareness, and state-building ideologies.

**The Search for a Model of Church-State Separation in the Democratic Republic of Georgia (1918–1921)**

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**Women’s Education Issues in the Schools of the Svaneti District (At the end of the 19thcentury and in the 20s of the 20thcentury)**

**Nato Shavreshiani, TSU Arnold Chikobava Institute of Linguistics**

In the schools of Svaneti established under the Tsarist Empire, the educational process was significantly hindered by the Russification curriculum, the introduction of the “Lushnu Anbani” (Svan alphabet), and the prohibition of Georgian. According to a note by Besarion Nizharadze, the history of the aforementioned schools in Svaneti begins in 1847: “There was one school in the village of Becho,” he writes. Unfortunately, the author does not specify what type of school it was. In 1864, in the village of Pari, in feudal Svaneti, the Society for the Restoration of Orthodox Christianity in the Caucasus built a one-story, three-room school at its own expense. In the same year, 1864, the Society opened a school in Mestia, but it did not start operating until 1871. In 1871, the Mestia school was functioning, with a sufficient number of students. In 1872, the Pari school also opened, and a teacher was appointed. However, teaching was conducted using the “Lushnu Anbani,” which parents opposed, leading to students soon abandoning the school (Gelovani 2003:349). It is unknown whether these schools were for boys only or coeducational, as no information is available.

The first women’s educational department in Svaneti was established at the end of the 19thcentury: “In 1891, a primary school opened in the village of Cholashi, which in 1895 had 100 students and 4 teachers. According to researcher A. Charkviani, a women’s department was later added to the Cholashi school, where handicrafts such as weaving, embroidery, and sewing were taught. Parish schools were also established in Lakhamula” (Gelovani 2003:351–352).

According to Ali Davitiani’s memoirs – “Schools and Education of Svaneti in Ancient Times” – two types of schools existed in Svaneti at that time: ministry schools and church schools. In Mulakhi and Latali, ministry schools were located next to girls’ schools, where only girls studied and learned embroidery and similar crafts alongside other subjects” (Davitiani, 1949:11). Ali Davitiani’s memories are reliable, as he served as Head of the Education Department of Upper Svaneti in the early 1920s (until May 13, 1922-1923) and was actively involved in Svaneti’s cultural and educational affairs, as confirmed by documents preserved in the National Archives of Georgia.

“The Below Bali Svans were more resistant to girls’ education, whereas the Above Bali Svans started educating not only boys but also girls earlier. Girls studied alongside boys and were even sent to other cities for further education at the state’s expense” (Davitiani, 1949:27).

In this diary, he details girls’ education in Svaneti, highlighting the obstacles and social attitudes from the late 19thcentury to the 1917 October Revolution. Education in the 1920s is documented in official records of Georgia’s People’s Commissariat of Education, some signed by Ali Davitiani, head of Upper Svaneti Education Department (1922–1923).

Based on the archival documents, the report will examine women’s education in Svaneti during the 1920s.

**The Influence of the Zhordania-Chkhenkeli Polemic on the National Discourse of Georgian Social Democracy**

**Bondo Kupatadze, Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University**

**Research Topic**: There are many discourses in Georgian political thought (“the struggle of fathers and sons”, “the polemic of Ilia Chavchavadze and Noe Zhordania”, “the polemic of Ilia Chavchavadze and Archil Jorjadze”), which influenced the course of Georgian socio-political thought. However, the polemic between Noe Zhordania and Akaki Chkhenkeli on the national issue occupies a special place in terms of importance and is unfairly forgotten. In Georgian Social Democracy, Noe Zhordania published the first publications on the national issue in the theoretical context of the example of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in the 90s of the 19th century. Akaki Chkhenkeli develops this issue in a series of articles in the newspapers “Iskra”, “Imedi” and “Khomli” in 1906-1909. The brochure “Nation and Us” by “Anchin” Kut. 1915 is a summary of this theoretical discourse and the criticism of “An” (Noe Zhordania). In response, Noe Zhordania publishes a series of articles “Our Disagreement” (newspaper “Contemporary Thought”, 1916).

**Actuality:** The national issue, specifically the topic of Georgian autonomy, becomes relevant in Georgian left-wing political groups after the first Russian Revolution. The political ideas formed as a result of this polemic played a significant role in the events of 1917-1918 in the Caucasus and subsequently in the formation of the political system of the Democratic Republic of Georgia.

**Problem:** The main questions posed in the presented report is: What was the essential difference between the views of Noe Zhordania and Akaki Chkhenkeli, how much did this difference affect the ongoing political processes and what kind of influence did it have globally on the recent history of Georgia?

**Method:** To solve the scientific problem, the method of empiricism is used in the research. Based on printed material (newspaper articles, brochures...), the difference between Noe Zhordania’s and Akaki Chkhenkeli’s views on the national issue and its transformation in time is analyzed using a comparative method (a. Transcaucasian regional self-government with a guarantee of minority languages; b. National-cultural self-government; c. Broad territorial self-government).

**Conclusion:** The discourse of Noe Zhordania and Akaki Chkhenkeli on the national issue is important for understanding the ideology of the Georgian left-wing movement in general.

**The League of Nations and the Republics of the South Caucasus**

**Otar Janelidze, Ilia State University – Institute of Political Science**

The Paris Peace Conference of 1919, inspired by U.S. President Woodrow Wilson’s vision of “promoting international cooperation and achieving international peace and security”, led to the creation of the first universal intergovernmental organization – the League of Nations. In the aftermath of the First World War, several small states emerged from the ruins of the empires, often referred to as “young democracies”. Among them were the Democratic Republic of Georgia, the Democratic Republic of Armenia, and the Democratic Republic of Azerbaijan, all founded in May 1918. Each of these states strove to secure a place on the newly redrawn political map of the world shaped by the victorious powers.

Georgia submitted its application on 21 May 1919 through its delegation at the Paris Peace Conference, Armenia followed on 13 May 1920, and Azerbaijan on 1 November 1920. The three republics expected that League membership would provide security guarantees, protect them from Bolshevik Russia, and strengthen their independence. Georgia appointed Evgeni Gegechkori as its representative to the League, Armenia selected Alexander Khatisian, and Azerbaijan designated Alimardan-bey Topchibashev.

The League’s competent bodies examined these applications in detail but ultimately rejected them. For Georgia, the principal obstacle was the absence of de jure recognition. Armenia’s admission was hindered by the unratified Treaty of Sèvres, which recognized its independence, and by the extensive borders defined by President Wilson, which League members were unwilling to guarantee. By November 1920, Soviet rule had been established in Armenia, ending its independence. Azerbaijan’s application was submitted after its government had fallen to Soviet forces in April 1920, rendering its mandate invalid. Admission of the South Caucasian republics was also hindered by the Soviet Russian factor, the absence of political unity in the region, mutual territorial claims, and ongoing conflicts. The rejection of these applications and the indifference of the victorious Allied powers facilitated Bolshevik Russia’s conquest of Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan, leading to their incorporation into the Soviet state.

This subject constitutes a relevant scholarly problem, important both from a historiographical perspective and in terms of statehood. More than a century ago, Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan sought membership in a global international organization; today, they continue to strive for a place in the wider family of civilized nations.

The paper will explore, for the first time, the international background and local context of the South Caucasian republics’ relations with the League of Nations. It will draw on archival documents, periodical press materials, memoirs, and specialized literature. The problem will be addressed through traditional historical research methods, including historicism, historical-comparative analysis, retrospective inquiry, and descriptive analysis. The conclusion will note that the indifference shown by the victorious Allied powers towards Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan, and their refusal to admit them to the League of Nations, significantly facilitated Bolshevik Russia’s conquest of these republics and their incorporation into the Soviet empire.

**The Transcaucasian Muslim Spiritual Administrations** **(“Mashikhat”) in the Years 1918-1920**

**Nani Gelovani, Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University**

In this presentation, based on new archival documents and scholarly literature, the formation of the successor institution to the Shiite and Sunni Spiritual Administrations of the Muslims of Transcaucasia – the “Mashikhat of the Muslims of Transcaucasia (Shiites and Sunnis)” – is analyzed. This institution, established in 1872 in Tbilisi (then Tiflis), the administrative center of the Caucasus Viceroyalty, existed until 1917 and remains almost entirely unstudied in Georgian historiography.

For almost half a century, these Muslim Spiritual Administrations (Shiite and Sunni) operated in Tbilisi, without any openly expressed resistance from either Muslims or Christians. Prior to the formation of distinct national identities, both Azerbaijani Muslims and Christian Georgians demonstrated tolerance toward the Muslim Spiritual institution based in Tbilisi. Tbilisi was the administrative and cultural center of the Caucasus, home to a significant indigenous Azerbaijani population.

Between 1845 and 1917, Tbilisi was the seat of the Caucasus Viceroy. After the Russian Revolution of 1917, it became the seat of the Transcaucasian Provisional Government, which in the spring of 1918 established the Transcaucasian Federation, also headquartered in Tbilisi. It was in the former Viceroy’s Palace in Tbilisi that the independence of the three Transcaucasian republics – Georgia, Azerbaijan, and Armenia – was declared between May 26 and 28, 1918. Subsequently, the question arose of removing Muslim organizations from Georgian territory. As a result of the changed political circumstances, the leaders of the Transcaucasian Muslim Spiritual Administrations themselves began to consider leaving Tbilisi, which was no longer considered part of their “national territory”. On August 10, 1918, the Azerbaijani Ministry of Public Education and Religious Affairs decided to relocate both Spiritual Administrations. The leadership – Sheikh al-Islam Muhammad Fishnamaz-zadeh and the acting Mufti Mustafa Efendizadeh – moved to Ganja. On September 1, 1918, the Shiite and Sunni Spiritual Administrations of Transcaucasia, through the efforts of their leaders, voluntarily united into a single administrative body – the *Mashikhat*. After the capital of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic was moved from Ganja to Baku, the unified Muslim Spiritual Administration (Mashikhat) relocated along with the Cabinet of Ministers to Baku.

Archival documents provide information about the rights and status of Shi'a and Sunni religious leaders (Sheikh al-Islam and Mufti), the areas of activity of the *Mashikhat*, and the reasons for its dissolution.

The methodological basis of this research is founded on the principles of historicism, scholarly objectivity, and consistency, which require a critical approach to archival sources and an analysis of the *Mashikhat’*s activities within the broader historical context.

The organizational unity of the followers of the two main branches of Islam – the Mashikhat – later (in 1944) served as the foundation for the establishment of the Spiritual Administration of Muslims of the Transcaucasus (both Shi'a and Sunni), which existed until 1991.

**Social Insurance System in Independent Georgia (1918–1921)**

**Tengiz Verulava, Caucasus University**

**Topic:** This study examines the formation and development of the social insurance system during the period of the Democratic Republic of Georgia (1918-1921). The research aims to analyze the historical processes that led to the institutional and organizational foundations of social insurance, including the unification of hospital funds, the role of trade unions, and the models for providing medical assistance. The study also explores the factors that hindered the full consolidation of this system.

**Relevance:** In light of renewed interest in the concept of the welfare state, revisiting Georgia’s historical experience is particularly relevant. The Democratic Republic of Georgia represented the first attempt to establish a fair and solidarity-based system of social protection under Georgian statehood. Despite its brief existence, the Republic’s social policies – including insurance, the institutional strengthening of trade unions, and mechanisms for medical support – form a valuable historical foundation for current reform efforts. Reconnecting with this historical legacy is essential to ensure that contemporary social challenges are not detached from the country’s national memory.

**Problem:** The core scientific problem lies in determining to what extent it was possible to institutionalize a functioning social insurance system within a fragile state marked by scarce resources, war, and political instability. The study questions whether a comprehensive insurance model was ever fully implemented or remained largely at the level of political vision and experimentation. At the same time, the research seeks to identify the major obstacles to this process – legal, financial, and administrative.

**Method:** The study is based on historical-documentary analysis, relying on primary sources (including the works of L. Elbakiani and B. Chumburidze, archival documents, and trade union materials). Content analysis is used to identify key themes such as forms of insurance, the role and function of hospital funds, models of governance, and financing mechanisms. Comparative analysis is also applied to examine parallels with other European social-democratic contexts, especially the experiences of Germany and the Russian Empire.

**Conclusion:** The study concludes that the Democratic Republic of Georgia initiated a significant foundational phase in the development of social insurance, most notably through the establishment of the Tbilisi General Municipal Hospital Fund. Trade unions played a key role in promoting democratic participation and introducing principles of self-governance into the system. However, full institutionalization was impeded by war, financial crisis, and the short lifespan of the state. These findings may serve as a historical basis for informing current debates and reforms in Georgia’s social policy and insurance systems.

**The History of the Activities of the Deputy Georgian Jews in the Democratic Republic of Georgia**

**Otar Nikoleishvili, Akaki Tsereteli State University**

In the history of the Democratic Republic of Georgia, in addition to Georgian public and political figures, a great deal of merit has been given to representatives of ethnically non-Georgian ethnic groups, including Georgian Jews living in our country. As is known, on May 26, 1918, the National Council unanimously approved the Act of Independence of Georgia, which was signed by 88 members of this Council. On March 12, 1919, the newly elected Constituent Assembly re-approved this document with a minor amendment, which was signed by 13 additional persons. Among them were two Georgian Jews, Joseph Eligulashvili and Mose Davarashvili. Even though only a few episodes from the social and political activities of these two individuals are cited in the presented work, we think that through them we can clearly see the important role that Georgian Jews played in the state reconstruction process of our country at that time.

**Diplomatic Relations Between Japan and Georgia (The years 1918-1923)**

**Mariam Gunia, Central Archive of Audio-Visual Documents at the National Archives of Georgia**

Diplomatic and cultural relations between Japan and Georgia are not long-term, but two nations, throughout the years, were interested in one another. The subject of this report is to highlight the history of Georgian and Japanese diplomatic relations based on the documents which were found in the Central Historical Archive. A chronological timeline is – the years 1918-1923.

The research method involves examining various archives, collecting all relevant documents and reviewing them. In connection with this report, several archival collections were examined, including the records of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the personal archives of Noe Ramishvili, Noe Zhordania, Evgeni Gegechkori, Karlo Chkheidze, Constituent Assembly of Georgia, and others. The research revealed a number of documents related to Japan, such as private correspondence, telegrams, and official statements. The materials are presented in three languages – Georgian, English and French. The foreign-language documents are in the process of being translated for this report.

I will provide several examples of the documents prepared for inclusion in this report: the Secretary General of the Paris Peace Conference addressing the head of the Georgian delegation, Nikoloz Chkheidze, to inform him about Japan’s de facto recognition of the Georgian government (alongside Great Britain, France, and Italy); a letter from Akaki Chkhenkeli to the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Japan in France, Mr. Ishii, concerning the Soviet occupation of Georgia; and private correspondence between Konstantine Gvarjaladze and the Japanese High Commissioner, Uchida.
Although some researchers may already be familiar with these archival materials, it is important to bring them together and review them in order to better represent the history of Japan-Georgia diplomatic relations.

**The Newspaper “Guria’s Voice” as a Primary Source for the History of the 1921 February-March War**

**Malkhaz Matsaberidze, Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University**

**Research Topic:** In March 1921, the Ozurgeti local self-government launched the newspaper *Guria’s Voice*, which saw only three issues published (on March 6, 9, and 12). It depicts daily life in Georgia during the final stages of the February-March 1921 War.

**Relevance:** The 1921 February-March War, despite the works published on this subject, still calls for deeper research and comprehensive study. The newspaper *Guria’s Voice* constitutes a largely untapped and significant source that offers valuable insights into diverse aspects of the history of the war.

**Problem:** This study examines the 1921 February-MarchWar from the perspective of the Guria Region in Georgia, which, together with the Batumi area, constituted the final support of the Democratic Republic of Georgia.

**Method:** To address the scientific problem, content analysis was applied as the primary method, allowing for a detailed examination of the information and factual material presented in the newspaper issues. The accuracy of its content was verified through cross-referencing with other historical sources and the existing scholarly literature on the war.

**Conclusion:** An analysis of the newspaper *Guria’s Voice* reveals several key aspects that contribute to a deeper understanding of the 1921 February-March War: 1. New facts regarding the course of the war: a/ A chronicle of hostilities occurring in early March; b/ Surnames of Batumi Guard fighters who died in the war; c/ Statements made by several communists residing in Guria regarding leaving the party; 2. One of the first memories of the ongoing battles to defend Tbilisi and the departure of the Georgian army from Tbilisi (the article “War Diary” was published in all three issues of the newspaper with continuations. Its author is a staff member of the newspaper *Ertoba* (Unity) under the pseudonym “Mokhutsi” (Old Man); 3. Assessment of the ongoing war (leading articles in all three issues, article “Why Are They Coming”); 4. The hopes of the fighting country: a/ Information of support from Western countries; b/ Support for Kemalist Turkey, which the West requested Georgia’s help for; c/ Dashnak uprising in Armenia; d/ Rebellions in Azerbaijan; e/ Uprising in Soviet Russia. Some of these reports were incorrect or exaggerated, but they helped to encourage the citizens of a country engaged in an unequal war.  5. Domestic life of Georgia: a/ The course of mobilisation; b/ Condemnation of deserters and fight against them (“Voice of the Georgian Mother”, “To the Men of the Service Army”), punishment of violators of order; c/ Heroic steps taken to defend the homeland; 6. Patriotic appeals.

The results of the study can be applied to subsequent research on the 1921 February-March War.

**Evacuated Artifacts of the Tiflis Ecclesiastical Museum (1921): According to Archival Sources**

**Khatuna Kokrashvili, The University of Georgia - Tamaz Beradze Institute of Georgian Studies**

The Tiflis Ecclesiastical Museum operated from 1888 to 1921. It was one of the first museum institutions in the Caucasus, staffed entirely by local, primarily Georgian scholars. The museum played a key role in collecting monuments of Georgian culture, describing historical sources, and consolidating research in Georgian studies. Its unique collection remains an invaluable resource for the study of both Georgian and global Christian heritage.

This research focuses on the part of the museum’s collection that was taken abroad in 1921, during the Bolshevik invasion and the fall of the Democratic Republic of Georgia. The paper examines the challenges faced by the museum in its final years, particularly in early 1921, when the Red Army entered Georgian territory. Between February 19-25, 1921, battles were fought near the outskirts of Tiflis. A few days before the city fell, the Georgian government considered a temporary evacuation plan, which involved transferring part of the national treasure to Kutaisi. However, due to rapidly changing political circumstances, the government was forced to leave the country. The national treasure was evacuated first to Batumi, then to Istanbul, and finally to France, where it was stored in the Banque de France vault in Marseille. Fortunately, in 1945, it was returned to Georgia and incorporated into the collections of state museums.

The evacuated treasure included items from various museums of Tiflis (Museum of the Historical and Ethnographic Society, Museum of the Society for the Spreading of Literacy among Georgians, Art Gallery, Georgian Museum, and Ecclesiastical Museum), as well as artifacts from the monasteries of Gelati, Martvili, and Khobi, the palaces of Zugdidi and Borjomi, and the government treasury. Due to the urgency of the evacuation and political instability, no detailed inventory accompanied the exported items.

This study is based on archival documents discovered in the National Archives of Georgia. Their comparative analysis reveals specific details about the evacuation of the Ecclesiastical Museum’s collection. These documents are being published and introduced into scholarly circulation for the first time. Cross-referencing them with museum catalogues, academic literature, and historical context allows for the identification of specific artefacts that were taken abroad in 1921. The archival material largely corresponds with the inventory compiled in 1927 by a special commission of the People’s Commissariat of Education of the Georgian SSR, led by Vukol Beridze. The Russian version of this list is preserved in the National Archives, while the Georgian version was published in 1931 in a study by Gaioz Devdariani and reprinted the same year in the newspaper Komunisti (No. 45 (3000)). This information is echoed in a letter from People’s Commissar of Education Akaki Tatarashvili to Lavrentiy Beria, which includes detailed inventories of the treasure.

The uncovered documents serve as an alternative source that enriches and supplements the history of the Ecclesiastical Museum. They contribute to expanding the documentary base, and open new perspectives for studying the museum’s collection.

**On a Matter Related to the Restitution of Treasure from Russia to Georgia in the 1920s**

**Ketevan Asatiani, National Archives of Georgia**

**Research Topic**: Despite the particular interest in antiquities within Georgian scholarly circles, the histories, movements, and trajectories of old manuscripts, reliquaries, crosses, and icons, as well as other artifacts, remain largely to be studied.

In general, in the 18th-19th centuries, the intensification of both sanctioned and unsanctioned archaeological activities, the collection of antiquities, travel, scholarly conferences, and academic publications came to be regarded not merely as matters of intellectual necessity, but also as fashionable undertakings. In conquered Georgia, this process exhibited a dual trajectory: expeditions, instigated by various local and central authorities, sought primarily to identify, inventory, and study treasures preserved in the regions, while simultaneously the systematic looting of churches and appropriation of ecclesiastical property took root – following the abolition of the autocephaly of the Georgian Church, numerous churches and monasteries were closed, and all mechanisms for safeguarding, preserving, or recording existing assets collapsed. Among those plundered were the monasteries of Gelati, Mtskheta, Alaverdi, Bodbe, Jumati, Shemokmedi, and Udabno, among others.

The process continued with renewed intensity in the twentieth century. Today, part of the treasures is preserved in Georgian museums and research centers, another part has been dispersed abroad, and the largest share has been lost.

The first significant repatriation of treasures, which had been removed from the country at various times, occurred in 1922-1923, a process that was also publicly acknowledged.

This report aims to study and introduce into scholarly discourse a specific document preserved in the National Archives. The document concerns the repatriation of Georgian antiquities from Russia to Georgia and is significant from multiple perspectives.

**Relevance**: Over the past decade, the histories of various types of antiquities and artifacts have become the subject of numerous monographs, articles, and research projects. However, a significant portion of documents and sources related to Georgian antiquities remains largely unexplored. The present report represents an effort to study an additional source and to present new findings to the scholarly community and the public.

**Problem Statement:** This report is part of a major scientific project currently underway at the National Archives, which focuses on the identification and study of documents related to antiquities. During this research, it became evident once again that documents concerning both the export and import of treasures from Georgia at various times remain insufficiently studied. This pertains not only to well-known museum exhibits, manuscripts, and archival materials but also to artifacts that have not survived to the present day.

**Methodology**: An empirical research approach was employed, utilizing the methodology of source collation and analysis.

**Conclusion**: Numerous scholars have examined both the treasures returned from Russia to Georgia in the 1920s, and the process of their repatriation. However, the document preserved in the National Archives and presented in this report contains entirely new information concerning the chronology of the repatriation issue. Additionally, the report will present an identified portion of the exhibits and archival documents listed within the document.

**From the History of the First Georgian Numismatic Collection**

**Maia Pataridze, Ilia State University**

In 1844, a fundamental work was published in Saint Petersburg: Numismatic Facts of the Georgian Kingdom (Numizmaticheskie fakty Gruzinskogo tsarstva) – “Numismatic Facts, or Ancient Coins of the Kingdom of Georgia,” in Russian, French, and Georgian. Its author was the Georgian prince living in Russia, Mikheil Petre’s son Baratashvili (Barataev) (1784–1856). This was the first large-scale study of Georgian coins, and Mikheil Baratashvili is justly considered the founder of Georgian numismatics and its scholarly terminology. The material basis of this work was a coin collection that Baratashvili assembled during his brief stay in Georgia.

Baratashvili was born in Russia, in the city of Simbirsk, in the family of General-Lieutenant Peter Mikheil’s son Baratashvili, the governor’s deputy of the region. His grandfather, Meliksedek (Mikheil) Baratashvili, had followed the entourage of King Vakhtang VI of Georgia (1675–1737) to Russia in 1724. When the king died in 1737, the Russian government strictly demanded that they either enter Russian service or return to their homeland. Meliksedek Baratashvili did not return. Mikheil Baratashvili was born on January 25, 1784, in the family of Peter Meliksedek’s son Baratashvili and would later become a prominent figure in many fields. Between 1820 and 1835, he served as the head of the Simbirsk district nobility and subsequently of the Simbirsk governorate nobility.

In 1835, Baratashvili began service at the Ministry of Internal Affairs. In 1838, he was awarded the title of Deistvitelnyi Statsky Sovetnik, and in 1839, he was transferred to the Ministry of Finance. By assignment of this ministry, in 1839 he managed to be posted in Georgia, where he was appointed Head of the Customs Department of the Transcaucasian District, serving in this position for almost three years with the rank of civil general. A record of his appointment is preserved in the National Archives of Georgia. It is also known that he lived in Tbilisi in the house of the Shadinovs, for which the Ministry of Finance’s Department of Foreign Trade paid a monthly rent of 25 maneti.

During his brief stay in Georgia, Baratashvili managed to gather a unique collection of Georgian coins scattered across the country, which later became the foundation not only of his seminal work but also of future research by other scholars.

As mentioned, Baratashvili spent less than three years in Georgia. On November 20, 1842, by supreme decree of Alexander II, the position of Head of the Customs Department of the Transcaucasian District was abolished, leading to his release and subsequent retirement. After parting permanently from Georgia, he published his fundamental work. Mikheil Baratashvili spent the last years of his life in his estate in Simbirsk, where he eventually died after a prolonged illness on July 31, 1856, at the age of 72. He was buried in the monastery cemetery of Simbirsk.

After his death, Baratashvili’s personal numismatic collection underwent a curious journey. His heirs, after the father’s death, decided to place the collection. Initially, they approached the Caucasian Museum in Tbilisi, but according to the archives of the Georgian National Museum, the museum’s administration refused to acquire it. The refusal was due to a negative expert report by I. Bartolome. Consequently, in 1871, the scientist’s children contacted the Imperial Hermitage in Saint Petersburg. However, there too, due to the same conflict with I. Bartolome, M. Brose issued a negative report, and Baratashvili’s collection did not enter Russia.

The collection was soon acquired in Germany and, from 1874, took its place in the Münzkabinett of the Bode Museum in Berlin.

To examine and study the collection, in 2012, as a senior researcher at the Georgian National Museum and under the International Fellowship of the Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation, I visited the Münzkabinett in Berlin. The main goal of the fellowship was to describe and study Mikheil Baratashvili’s collection.

In the museum’s inventory, I found a record stating that on November 6, 1864, the collection of Georgian coins belonging to Prince Mikheil Baratashvili, described in his 1844 publication, had been received. It also noted that the coins were stored in two securely sealed cardboard boxes. The collection had been delivered to the museum by V. Martinson from Kazan, who was likely an intermediary between Baratashvili’s heirs and the museum.

The record did not indicate the number of coins. Later, in 1877, the Münzkabinett published a work on its collections, noting that the Eastern collection included the Georgian coins acquired from Baratashvili, which the scholar had described himself in his work. The collection numbered 350 coins. It was the most extensive collection of Georgian coins, including the earliest and most remarkable Sasanian-type coins with Georgian inscriptions.

**The “Treasure” of St. George of Lomisi at the Georgian National Museum**

**Mamuka Kapianidze, Nino Datunashvili, Georgian National Museum**

**Teimuraz Jojua, Ilia State University**

**Research Topic:** A total of 43 artifacts are registered in the collection of precious metals at the Georgian National Museum (specifically, in the historical and ethnological collections of the Simon Janashia Museum of Georgia) under the museum inventory number 9-1930/1-43. A note in the museum ledger records: “These items were considered the property of the inhabitants of S. Kvemo-Mleta (Dusheti District), entrusted for safekeeping to a resident of the same village, citizen Giorgi Burduli, from whom they were confiscated by court decision on March 7, 1930; and, according to the residents’ wishes, were transferred to the Georgian Museum by the court. (See copy of court ruling No. 1/201-30, Ethnographic Department, Dusheti).” This collection includes the following items: 24 silver cups, 1 silver pitcher, 1 vigil lamp, 1 jewelry box, 10 rings, 1 cover, 1 cross, 3 buttons, and 1 amulet “shana”.

In addition to this collection, on March 26, 2018, the fund of precious metals received a donated item – a silver vigil lamp with a Georgian *Asomtavruli* inscription – gifted by citizen Giorgi Rurua, based on act No. 4, dated 26.03.2018. The inscription reads: “O Chief Martyr of Lomisi, protect Vache Mtchadasdze, Amen.”

This collection represents the “treasure” donated to the Church of St. George of Lomisi, the study of which began several years ago. Two scientific articles have already been dedicated to the silver cups with Georgian inscriptions. At present, this study presents research into the remaining items in the collection, with particular attention given to the silver vigil lamps bearing Georgian inscriptions. On one of them, as previously noted, the donor is mentioned as Vache Mtchadasdze. According to paleographic analysis, this vigil lamp dates to the 14th-15th centuries. The donor of the second one is identified as Ketevan, daughter of Konstantine Mukhranbatoni (1744-1808), daughter-in-law of King Erekle II of Kartli-Kakheti (1720–1798) and widow of Prince Vakhtang (known as “Vakhtang the Good,” 1742-1760). She was also the guardian of Prince Vakhtang (Almaskhan), son of King Erekle (1761-1814). The vigil lamp bears the following inscription: “O Great and Invincible Martyr, Warrior of the Lord George, you who were clothed with suffering through the shedding of the blood of the incarnate Son – I, Ketevan, daughter of Konstantine Mukhranbatoni, wife of King Irakli, your humble servant, donate this silver vigil lamp, a small offering to the Church of St. George of Lomisi, as an expression of my heart’s plea, that it may burn as a candle, so that you may grant fertility to King Irakli’s son, Prince Vakhtang – sons and daughters – and may you bestow miraculous and eternal blessings from above. Grant also unto me, your servant, a share in your grace for the salvation of my soul. July 21, in the year 1789, by the grace of God.” The paper will also include brief biographical notes on the individuals mentioned in these inscriptions.

**Relevance:** The inscriptions on previously studied silver cups have revealed material confirmation of historical sources and documented data. For example, a cup donated by the Eristavi of Saridani describes the fortification of Kekhvi Fortress in Saridani and a four-month siege led by Erekle II and Teimuraz II in 1746. Another cup donated by Prince Vakhtang references the oath of the soldiers from Aragvi upon learning of Agha Mohammad Khan’s second invasion in 1797. The mention of historical figures and now-extinct noble families in these items enables new research opportunities and supports existing data with tangible evidence. For instance, we gain new insight into Prince Vakhtang and Princess Ketevan of Mukhrani. The latter pleads with St. George of Lomisi to grant fertility to her foster son. At that time, Prince Vakhtang was 28 years old and had been married for five years to Mariam Andronikashvili, daughter of Davit – his second marriage. It is known that they remained childless.

**Issue:** The study of inscriptions on donated artifacts reveals their value as reliable historical sources, clearly reflecting both historical events and the demographic issues of the royal family. Additionally, the inscription on one of the vigil lamps documents a noble surname that existed in the Middle Ages but has since disappeared. Structurally, this lamp closely resembles another one from the 13th-14th centuries discovered in the Church of Saints Kvirike and Ivlita in Draneti – an artifact once considered unique by scholars G. Laghiashvili and G. Patashuri, until the museum acquired the vigil lamp donated by Vache Mtchadasdze.

**Methodology:** Research on the treasure donated to the Church of St. George of Lomisi has been ongoing for several years. The items and their stamps have been identified. Special attention has been given to the study of inscriptions, which have confirmed historical events and facts. Comparative materials were gathered and analyzed alongside the existing collection.

**Conclusion:** The history of the treasure donated to the Church of St. George of Lomisi – and the study of each item – allows for the confirmation of already known historical events through material evidence. It also sheds light on lesser-known demographic issues of the royal family, making them more accessible to researchers. Importantly, this work helps strengthen existing archaeological findings with parallel data and inspires further study – even pointing toward the potential discovery of a new Georgian goldsmithing school.

**On the History of the Treasury of** **St. George Church of Mta (Leknari) and the Tao-Klarjeti Goldsmithing School**

**Nana Burchuladze, The University of Georgia**

The report discusses the unique monument of Georgian *repoussé* art of the 11th century, of which only one photo print has survived to this day. The topic is relevant to the extent that the monument itself was lost during the looting of churches and monasteries in the 1920s, and the photo depicting its fragments appears in public space for the first time. The photo shows three unequal-sized silver plates attached to a horizontal board, on which two scenes from the Life of St. George – “The Destruction of the Idols” and “The Miracle of the City of Lasia” – are depicted.

Despite their damage, it is clear that they are parts of the horizontal arm of a big wooden pre-alter cross and were made by a highly skilled professional artist. This estimation belongs to to Giorgi Bochoridze, who described these fragments in the newly built church in the village of Tsknori before it had been looted. According to him, they were brought there from the ruined church of St. George of Mta (also known as “Mtatsminda” or Leknari Church), located on the border of Racha and Imereti.

Bochoridze saw other fragmented items also belonging to Lekrani Church in the newly built church of the village of Dzmuisi. Some of them depicted images of holy warriors and a scene from the Life of St. George – “The Distribution of Property to the Poor”. Like the plates seen in Tsknori, they were also made by a master of the highest qualification. Moreover, the “Distribution of Property” composition bore a donor’s inscription with a name of Melchizedek Ishkhneli, who held the episcopal see of Ishkhani in the first half of the 11th century.

The plates seen in the churches of Dzmuisi and Tsknori are given special attention in Nikoloz Zhgenti’s piblications dedicated to St. George Monastery of Mta (2014, 2023). The author separately discusses the inscribed “icon” of Melchizedek Ishkhneli, dates it to the first half or the middle of the 11th century, and believes that it belonged to the pre-altar cross, created in Tao-Klarjeti, which must have been brought from Ishkhani to Leknari in the 16th century.

Indeed, the images of the plates of Tsknori Church clearly reveal the iconographic-stylistic signs and technical features characteristic of the 11th century Tao-Klarjeti goldsmithing school.

The closest parallel to the Tsknori plates seems to be the 11th-century icon of the so-called St. Simeon Stylites of Laghami, which was commissioned by Anton Tsagereli (formerly Ishkhneli) for St. Simeon Church built by him in Ishkhani. The most famous monuments of Georgian repoussé art of the 11thcentury are also closely related to the aforementioned works, such as the icons of St. Barbara of Iel, St. George of Labechina and the Virgin Mary of Tsageri. Among them, the icon of St. Simeon and the plates of Tsknori are so similar that they may have been made by the same master – the Goldsmith Pilipe.

The study of the Tsknori fragments, taking into account the iconographic features of the plate with the “Distribution of Property by St. George” in Dzmuisi, convinces us that they were parts of the same cross. This cross represented an “elite” monument of Georgian art of the highest category – the one comparable to which is difficult to find in all of Byzantine art. This unique artefact, created in Ishkhani, visually demonstrates how close the political and cultural ties were between the Georgian Kingdom and the Byzantine Imperial Court in the first half of the 11th century.

**Noblewoman’s Attire in the 5th-18th Centuries Georgia**

**Nino Datunashvili, Georgian National Museum**

Despite the growing interest in the history of Georgian clothing in recent years, there is still no comprehensive study that presents the history of Georgian attire from the 5th to the 18th centuries in a unified historical context. In particular, the evolution of noblewomen’s clothing during this period remains understudied.

Our goal is to study and present the costume of a noblewoman from the given period through interdisciplinary research, based on information preserved in written sources, historical portraits of individuals depicted in works of art, and artifacts. This will also take into account the political, socio-economic, and cultural context of the country during that time.

One of the earliest written records about Georgian women’s clothing can be found in the 5th-century hagiographic text The Martyrdom of Saint Shushanik. The work describes elements of Shushanik’s attire, including a dzadza (a type of dress) and a cloak referred to as *Antiochian palekarti*. Also mentioned is a silk fabric known as chichnaukhti. A type of head covering worn by women is named the *kubasti.*

The earliest known example of women's clothing that has come down to us is a headdress discovered in a stone tomb in Mtskheta, dating to the 4th-5th centuries. Its shape resembles that of a traditional Khevsurian *sataura* (head covering). Remnants of a silk-faced dress and a linen shroud from the 5th-7th centuries were found in the city of Rustavi. According to palynological research conducted in the tomb of a wealthy woman in Bagrati Cathedral, dating to the 8th century, the deceased was dressed in a blue, collared gown. In the portico of Dmanisi Sioni, gold-threaded textile fragments were discovered on a woman’s remains in an earthen grave from the 12th-13thcenturies.

Discussion of women’s clothing in the early Middle Ages is also made possible through representations preserved in relief artworks. Early portraits have survived on the mid-6th-century stelae of Samtsevrisi and Brdadzori, as well as on fragments of the capital of the Ukangori stela. A particularly rich source of imagery is the stone cross of Kataula, dated to the late 8th-early 9th centuries, which depicts five female figures. From the 11th century onward, female figures begin to appear in monumental painting. An especially large number of female portraits are found in 16th-17th-century monuments. For the 18th century, depictions of noblewomen in examples of easel painting provide a vivid image of contemporary dress. The 17th-18th centuries also stand out for the abundance of written sources providing information about Georgian women’s clothing.

From the 5th to the 18th centuries, Georgian women’s clothing underwent a number of transformations. Both the number of elements in the attire and the types of garments themselves changed over time. In the 6th century, two main costume sets are identified. The first consists of a long-sleeved dress, a cloak fastened at the left shoulder and falling perpendicularly across the front of the body, and a diadem. The second set includes a long-sleeved, ankle-length dress, a cloak that almost completely wraps around the body, and flat footwear. For head coverings, women used either the cloak itself or a double-layered veil. In the 8th-9th centuries, noblewomen’s clothing still consisted of similar elements, though the cloak was now worn more loosely over the shoulders. In the 10th century, a new feature – a belt – appears in the costume. The main part of the cloak now falls behind the back, while its narrow ends cross over the chest.

By the 12th century, a new component, the pesvedi (a type of undergarment), was added to the traditional costume set. Compared to earlier periods, dresses made of more luxurious, patterned fabrics with decorative cuffs came into use. Hairstyles typically included two braids, one hanging on each side of the face to shoulder length. In the 13th-14th centuries, women wore a lechaki (headscarf) tightly wrapped around the neck, with a s*hublsakravi* (forehead band) placed on top. A new dress type emerged – the double-sleeved gown. One sleeve, reached to the elbow, while the other, a false sleeve, extended from the armpit to the hem of the dress. Starting in the 15th century, cloaks with false sleeves became common. From the turn of the 15th-16th centuries, dresses with bodices that were half-open or fully open to the waist, and buttoned-up undergarments (*pesvedi*) came into use. From the 16th century onward, fully open-front dresses and heeled shoes came into fashion. Notable changes appear in the 17th century. Dresses mostly featured front openings and became slightly shorter in length. The chest areas of both dresses and cloaks with false sleeves were decorated with buzments (a strip of fabric). Alongside heeled shoes, women also began wearing heeled slippers. Crowns were often worn atop the lechaki. Hats were introduced, and braid styles changed in both length and number. New types of jewelry appeared, including necklaces, pendants, and hair adornments. The color palette of garments became more diverse, with floral motifs dominating fabric ornamentation. By the 18th century, Georgian women are depicted wearing traditional Georgian dresses, chikhtikopi (headscarf), and a wide variety of jewelry.

**The Miracle of Saracens from the Life of St George and its Representation in Medieval Georgian Art**

**Ekaterine Gedevanishvili, Giorgi Chubinashvili National Research Centre for Georgian Art History and Heritage Preservation**

The paper focuses on one of the most well-known miracles from St. George's life: the punishment of the Saracens by the icon.

The earliest images of this episode and its iconographic versions (the Pavnisi and Ikvi murals) are depicted in Georgian art. On the basis of the analysis of these images, the author presents the historical and theological interpretation of the subject, supposing that, alongside the anti-Muslim message, the subject reflects the issue of icon veneration in the current history of Georgia.

**New Data on the Layers and Artistic Style of the Wall Paintings of the Church of St. George in Gelati**

**Nino Chikhladze, The University of Georgia – Tamaz Beradze Institute of Georgian Studies**

The architectural design of the domed Church of St. George in Gelati, which represents a variation of the inscribed cross type widespread in the 12th-13th centuries, was studied in the 1960s and is dated to the mid-13th century. The western portico of the church, which is open in the center with an arch and has small, enclosed chambers in the northern and southern corners, is considered to be a later addition. However, this extension was completed by the end of the 13th century, as the preserved wall paintings in the southwestern annex bear the stylistic features of that same period.

According to the iconographic program of the wall paintings, the annex likely served as a chapel containing the tomb of the donor. The accompanying inscription – “Antoni” – provides a basis for hypothesizing the identity of this historical figure. Although fragments of the original layer of wall paintings from the time of the church’s construction are still visible in parts of the interior, it is likely that this *Antoni* was not the patron of the primary decorative layer.

Based on recent studies of the church’s final phase of wall paintings – supported significantly by research conducted by a team of conservators – it was determined that the interior contains not two, but three distinct layers of artistic decoration. Alongside small fragments from the original period of construction, there are pieces painted on a different type of plaster with a stylistic approach more closely aligned with the wall paintings of the 1570s-1580s, suggesting a connection to the restoration and renovation of Gelati after the 1510s.

This raises the question: what prompted the repainting of the church within such a short time span? One possible answer lies in the decision of Evdemon I Chkhetidze, Catholicos of Abkhazia (1565-1578), who may have commissioned the embellishment of the Church of St. George in Gelati after it became a cathedral church. It is noteworthy that based on the study of artistic style the post-Byzantine paintings organized under Catholicos Evdemon’s patronage stand out for their refined execution and creative approach, even among similar works from the same period. A highly skilled team of artists worked on the church, successfully conveying the patron’s retrospective vision and desire to revive the grandeur of Gelati’s past.

**The Veneration of the Relics of the True Cross According to Medieval Georgian Written Sources**

**Nino Chichinadze, Ilia State University**

The veneration of holy relics is a significant phenomenon in Christian religious practice. Relics associated with the earthly life of the Savior and their veneration are an inseparable part of medieval religious and ideological systems. The theological meaning of the Cross – the central symbol of Christianity, the instrument of the Lord’s Passion, and the sign of salvation – was formed as early as the apostolic era. The discovery of the Cross of Golgotha in Jerusalem and the establishment of venerating its relics are linked to Queen Helena, the mother of Constantine the Great.

Starting from the second half of the last century onward, numerous scholars from various countries and academic disciplines and traditions have studied the veneration of the relics of the True Cross. However, Georgian material – both written and visual – has been less represented in the academic discourse. The works of medieval Georgian ecclesiastical art and written sources shed more light on various aspects of the history of the veneration of the True Cross. Considering these materials can further enrich the already known facts and histories regarding the veneration of relics of the Cross.

This presentation discusses well-known sources, though the episodes involving the veneration of the relics of the Cross in most of them have not yet been thoroughly studied. My presentation is part of a larger ongoing research project dedicated to the veneration of the relics of the True Cross and their dissemination in Georgia.

In the medieval Georgian literary tradition, the veneration of the True Cross – and specifically, the relics of the Cross of Golgotha – appears in various contexts. Information about the relics and particles of the True Cross is preserved in texts and writings of different periods and character, among which particular attention should be paid to historical chronicles and hagiographic narratives, which explicitly present the confessional and ideological dimensions of the relics of the True Cross.

Authors include episodes of veneration of the holy relics of the Wood in their narratives, following the literary genre and the ideological intent of the text. The presentation analyzes the symbolic and ideological meanings of the references to the relics of the True Cross within the overall structure of the texts. The sources recount pilgrimages to the relics of Golgotha in Constantinople, miracles performed by the relics of the Cross, and theological reflections related to the Cross.

Georgian sources provide valuable material for analyzing the topography of the spread of the Cross relics, their function, and their “audience”. In the Lives of Saints, the relics of the True Cross are mainly associated with monasticism and asceticism. The possession and bestowal of the relics of the True Cross will also be discussed in the context of social status and power. Alongside the universal significance of the Cross, the sources surveyed in the presentation also highlight the specific features of the local cult of the Cross.

Georgian written sources highlight the theological, political, and cultural significance of the True Cross. The texts show the living experience of how people venerated the Cross and its relics, which were deeply connected to the religious life of the medieval period.

**Revisiting the Functional Interpretation of the Three-Church Basilica**

**Nodar Aronishidze, George Chubinashvili National Research Centre for Georgian Art History and Heritage Preservation**

The present paper aims to once again shed light on the functional essence of a unique group within Georgian Christian architecture – the so-called “Three-Church Basilica”. We will briefly present the main theories concerning the origins and functions of this architectural type:

1. The most widely accepted and disseminated interpretation of the “Three-Church Basilica” belongs to Giorgi Chubinashvili. According to his view, the emergence of this type is linked to specific liturgical requirements – namely, the necessity of performing multiple liturgies within a single day. According to canonical regulations, only one liturgy may be held on a single altar per day. Chubinashvili argues that this necessity led to the architectural solution of housing “three churches” within a single space. He further asserts that the genesis of this type originated in Georgia and developed under the influence of local, indigenous culture. In his interpretation, the Three-Church Basilica represents a transformation of the commonly spread Byzantine basilica model within the Georgian context, influenced by centuries-old Georgian architectural traditions.

2. Niko Chubinashvili questioned the validity of the term “Three-Church Basilica,” arguing that not all monuments of this type exhibit three distinct sanctuaries with individual altars. Based on this observation, he challenged both the terminology and the functional interpretation of the structures as three independent churches. Instead, he proposed that these are single-nave, hall-type churches, accompanied by various annexes – either contemporary or later additions. It is worth noting that our project’s foreign consultant, Annegret Plontke-Lüning, shares this perspective and has published scholarly work supporting this view.

3. Another theory, presented by Nino Silagadze and Teimuraz Dundua, suggests that the prototype for the Three-Church Basilica may be traced back to Roman Mithraic temples.

4. A separate hypothesis, advanced by Guram Kipiani, connects the emergence of this architectural form in Georgia with Zoroastrian (Persian) fire temples, whose presence in Georgia is historically documented.

5. J. Baltrušaitis has proposed a different approach altogether, asserting that these structures are not “Three-Church Basilicas” per se, but rather “partitioned basilicas,” representing an artistic reinterpretation of the basilica form.

Despite existing studies on individual monuments of this group and the availability of limited scholarly literature, a comprehensive classification, a unified chronological framework, and a full monographic study have yet to be undertaken. Furthermore, both Georgian and international academic discourse have produced widely divergent interpretations concerning the origins, functions, liturgical configurations, primary sources, chronological assessments, and general classification of these churches.

The relevance of this subject is underscored by several factors. Notably, there is a growing interest in the so-called “Three-Church Basilica” within international scholarly circles, as evidenced by recent studies conducted by foreign researchers. Moreover, in the context of medieval ecclesiastical architecture, the Three-Church Basilica represents a uniquely Georgian architectural phenomenon with a distinct developmental trajectory and an enduring artistic identity. It is characterized by spatial-planning originality, functional specificity, structural consistency, and an internal logic of architectural evolution. This type should be understood as a natural and coherent outcome of the historical and artistic progression of Georgian ecclesiastical architecture, offering critical insights into the overall development of the national building tradition.

In light of the above, this study revisits the full spectrum of scholarly perspectives on the Three-Church Basilica developed over time and offers our own interpretative contribution to the ongoing academic discourse.

**Deer Represantations on Sasanian Glyptic (Based on Collections Preserved at the Glyptic Fund of the Simon Janashia Museum of Georgia)**

**Ketevan Ramishvili, Simon Janashia Museum of Georgia – Georgian National Museum**

**Helen Giunashvili, Ilia State University**

The cult of a *deer* has existed in world civilizations since time immemorial; therefore, deer images are revered throughout the ancient world – in Anatolia, Egypt, Crete, the Balkans, India, China, Iran, etc. The deer was the main totem of religious cults. Its cult has been widely known and very popular in the South Caucasus and Georgia since ancient times.

The objects of our research are Sasanian glyptic monuments – gemstones and intaglios on which images of a deer are very often found. Considering that the Georgian population of that time generally used seals, and among them imported Sasanian seals as amulets to ward off the evil eye and bring happiness, the deer is also presented as an object of the cult and a creature related to ancient beliefs and symbols. Thus, the demand among the Georgian population for seals depicting deer was quite high.

In Sasanian glyptic monuments, deer are frequently depicted with their legs folded and heads turned to their backs. But they also may be standing or calmly walking or presented in a lying position.

The male deer is distinguished by its big, branched horns. It lies down with its body to the right, and its head is turned towards the back. The male deer horns are conveyed by several vertical branches raised from one main horizontal axis. Intaglio gemstones can also depict the “royal” deer, which is decorated with baubles; maybe a pair of deer running behind each other; as well as a deer with a head fixed between two wings, etc.

Female deer have horns that are relatively short and sharp, making it difficult to distinguish them from other ungulates.

Our article discusses selected Sasanian gemstones and seals preserved at the Glyptic Fund of the National Museum of Georgia, on which deer are represented. In the article, their description, attribution, and dating are given.

As described in the material, deer representations can be seen on ellipsoid, spherical seals and convex faceted gemstones, as well as on flat-form intaglios embedded in conical and low cylindrical frames.

The Sasanian glyptic monuments found in Georgia, depicting deer and other animals, are quite numerous, which should be explained by the intensive political, economic, and trade relations between Sasanian Iran and the kingdom of Kartli (East Georgia) in the Early Medieval period.

**The Murals of the Church of the Holy Archangels in Kaishi: Preliminary Observations**

**Elisabeth Ugulava,** **Art Palace of Georgia – Museum of Cultural History**

The monumental paintings of medieval Svaneti not only reflect Christian ideology but also embody a unique cultural and ethnographic narrative, wherein a synthesis of local artistic consciousness, religious experience, and everyday traditions give rise to distinctly original pictorial ensembles. Within this context, the examples that emerge from the Svanetian school of painting stand apart not only from the general Byzantine canon but also from other regional Georgian artistic centers, due to their stylistic and iconographic particularities.

In analyzing the topos of Svanetian monumental painting, it is crucial to acknowledge the dual function of the church interior – not only as a site of religious ritual but also as a locus of social and cultural gathering. This duality is most evident in the treatment of iconographic programs, which respond to the architectural articulation of space by establishing a vertical hierarchy: the upper zones are conceived as celestial realms, while the lower registers depict saints, patrons, and donors, thereby constructing a visual model of the Christian cosmos.

Key characteristics that define the Svanetian visual language include a schematic approach to composition, graphic line-based modeling, contour-defined figures, and a restrained yet varied chromatic palette. This stylistic identity is further emphasized by exaggerated, even deformed physiognomies that sometimes reveal local, ethnographically rooted features: low foreheads, oval faces, large eyes, pronounced noses, and distinctive bodily proportions. Ethnographic influence is particularly evident in the depiction of garments and ornamental motifs. Saints are often shown wearing stylized versions of traditional Svan clothing – closed robes, long belts, and conical headgear – blending the sacred and the vernacular. Such visual strategies reduce the perceived distance between the divine and the viewer, anchoring abstract theological content in the tangible fabric of daily life.

From this perspective, the Church of the Holy Archangels in Kaishi stands out as a significant manifestation of the Svanetian school and offers a localized interpretation of late Palaeologan art. Today, only the 10th-century hall church remains in the now-abandoned village of Kaishi, located on a forested mountaintop. The church contains two layers of mural painting: the original program likely dates to the 12th-13th centuries, with later additions made in the 14th century. Frescoes survive both on the interior and the exterior, although the latter are heavily damaged and difficult to identify with certainty.

The conch of the sanctuary contains a typical Svanetian Deësis – Christ flanked by the Virgin and John the Baptist – while the lower register features apostles with prominently placed archangels, an iconographic deviation from the standard. The vault painting is lost. On the south wall, St. George and St. Theodore appear mounted on horseback. The west wall presents a notable arrangement: its upper register mirrors the compositions found in the churches of Tsvishi and Lagami, with the Transfiguration in the lunette, the Crucifixion and Myrrh-bearing Women below, and an unusual third register showing the Visitation alongside a Galaktotrophousa – the Virgin breastfeeding the Christ Child – rare in Georgian mural cycles.

The wall paintings in Kaishi are executed with a sense of expressive freedom and naïve elegance, devoid of rigid or coarse forms. The subdued, earth-toned palette and vegetal ornamentation further connect the ensemble to the nearby churches of Tsvishi and Lagami, suggesting the operation of a single workshop. These stylistic and iconographic parallels call for more systematic art-historical and methodological investigation.

**Iconographic Peculiarities of the Chartali Metalwork Icons: Local Interpretations of the Christian Canonical Tradition**

**Nino Tabutsadze, Georgian National Museum**

**Research Topic:** The current research in respect of the Chartali metalwork icons collection is being conducted within the framework of the scientific project “Multidisciplinary Study of Unknown Medieval Chased Icons from the Simon Janashia Museum of Georgia,” supported by the Shota Rustaveli National Science Foundation. The project is authored and led by Dr. Nino Kebuladze.

The Chartali collection is a fascinating and underexplored ensemble within Georgian medieval Christian art. It consists of icons and numerous fragments made from thin silver sheets, partially or fully gilded; discovered in the village of Chartali (Mtiuleti Region) among the ruins of a hilltop Holy Trinity Church. Today, the collection is housed at the Simon Janashia Museum of Georgia, part of the Georgian National Museum.

The complex is of particular interest due to its iconographic peculiarities, stylistic and technological features, palaeographic evidence, and the rare occurrence of such a concentration of repoussé icons in a region not previously known as rich for similar heritage.

**Relevance:** At this stage, it appears that the icons – including representations of the Deesis, Virgin and Child, Archangels, and Christ in Glory – have no exact parallels in Georgian, Byzantine, or Eastern Christian traditions. Only some individual elements show resemblance to known examples.

Several details stand out for their dual iconographic and stylistic significance: the starry repoussé background in the Deesis icon; a lantern or candle in the Archangels’ icon; an unusual rendering of Christ in the Christ in Glory icon; and stylized treatment of the eyes of Christ and the Archangels. While they derive from traditional schemes, these elements take on a distinctive, stylized character. As such, the collection likely represents a unique phenomenon in Georgian medieval Christian metalwork.

**Problem:** A central research question is how to explain the emergence of such a cohesive artistic vision and unique iconography in the absence of clear parallels parallels in Georgian or Byzantine traditions, and even in a broader context. This raises further issues of classification: Are these local creations or modified imports? This question is central to the issue of “stylistic isolation” and requires analysis based on an interdisciplinary approach.

**Methodology:** Over two years, the project conducted comparative analysis across Georgian, Byzantine, Western European, and Eastern Christian visual traditions. This included the study of extensive photoarchives and archival documents, museum collections, church treasures, and multilingual scholarly literature. Other media – panel icons, wall painting, stone reliefs, manuscripts and textiles – were also examined.

**Conclusion:** Following the statement outlined by Giorgi Chubinashvili, that the principal repertoire of iconographic programs and ornamentation was developed during the 11th century and continued, with modifications, into subsequent centuries, it can be concluded that the early iconographic schemes and widespread ornamentation employed in the Chartali icons are a late echo of that earlier repertoire. Despite possible outside influences, the core visual language and technological characteristics of the Chartali icons clearly reflect the Georgian artistic tradition. In this sense, the iconographic peculiarities found in the collection most likely represent modified forms of traditional schemes.

**Geometric Analysis of Several Georgian Ornaments**

**Shorena Pkhakadze, Lela Akhvlediani, Akaki Tsereteli State University**

**Research Topic:** The report is devoted to an interdisciplinary analysis of the form and structure of several distinctive Georgian ornaments. The study includes four samples: the reliefs of the western gate of Nikortsminda, the geometric decor of Bagrati Cathedral, the ornamental strips of a manuscript from the era of Vakhtang VI, and one sample of goldsmithing. Both their artistic and cultural significance and mathematical structure are taken into account: repetitive forms and shapes, parallel translation, axial and central symmetry and combinations of various types of reflections, golden section. All this indicates the geometrically sophisticated vision of the masters who created them. They made geometry a part of Georgian art. The aim of the research is to consider the ornament not only as a decorative element, but also as a structured visual language.

**Relevance:** The relevance of the research is due to the fact that Georgian ornament is less analyzed within the framework of the geometric paradigm. At a time when the digitization of cultural heritage, 3D modeling and architectural reconstruction are a matter of attention, it is necessary to study ornaments not only in the artistic, but also in the geometric direction. Geometric analysis of Georgian ornaments is a kind of intersection point of traditional art and exact sciences, which gives more aesthetic and scientific charm to Georgian ornamental art.

**Problem:** The main research problem is to study the structure of Georgian ornaments in such a way that it becomes possible to classify them geometrically and use them in the future in the direction of reconstruction.

**Method:** The research methodology is based on the visual-typological classification of ornaments (artistic part) and the principles of mathematical analysis: symmetry analysis, proportional analysis, golden section, constructive geometry and geometric transformations.

**Conclusion:** In conclusion, it can be said that Georgian ornament is not only an aesthetic form, but also an expression of geometric thinking. Geometric analysis of historical Georgian ornaments makes it possible to model visual systems, which is very important both for the study of cultural heritage, as well as for the development of modern design, architecture and digital technologies. The results of the research can be used in the restoration of architectural samples and algorithmic reconstruction of Georgian decor.

**Hidden Stories: Notes and Narratives from Private Archives (Based on the Archives of Nika Agiashvili and Ambako Chelidze Preserved in the Museum of Literature)**

**Ia Ghadua, Giorgi Leonidze State Museum of Georgian Literature**

The archive of Nika Agiashvili, preserved in the Museum of Literature, is quite extensive and diverse. Much of it has been published and is therefore known to the general public, but there are still completely unknown marginal notes found on personal letters, as well as on poems and memoirs written by others.

For many years, Nika Agiashvili worked at various publishing houses. It is from this period that we have letters and autographs reflecting the works of others, on which he made personal notes. Most of these notes reveal unknown details of various literary processes; some are impromptu thoughts, others humorous recollections. Some items even feature two notes – one written later.

One particularly interesting example is the autograph of Lado Asatiani, the poem *“Go to Svaneti, Poets”,* which he sent to Nika Agiashvili with the following note: *“This morning, since 6 o’clock, something stirred in me. I wandered through Avlabari, Ortachala, and Didube. I sat like a lunatic in the infernal machine [the tram or bus], thinking with my eyes closed. Then I came home and wrote this. As always, I decided to bring it to you* – *you are my first reader, my first and last. You know that I write and exist for only a few people. So, I end this foreword here, because a blind man stands at the gate singing: ‘Life is a prison, property is a prison, love is a prison* – *then what is truth…th…th… I don’t know what truth is.’ I couldn’t have written a better preface. I wish I were that blind singer. Lado Asatiani.**”*

Also preserved in the archive is another autograph by Asatiani – his poem *“It Calls”,* with the author’s note:
*“To Nikoloz Agiashvili* – *this poem I wrote at your request, Nikoloz (Kolare) Agiashvili! In the summer season... Lado Asatiani, 1937, Kutaisi.”*

Among other materials, the archive holds a letter from Givi Meladze, in which he returns a translation of Aristos Chumbadze’s work to Nika, stating that it requires more than editing. Next to it is Nika Agiashvili’s own note: *“Givi Meladze was the editor of the Georgian translations of Gustave Flaubert. He rejected Aristos Chumbadze’s translation of Sentimental Education and returned it to the publisher. We then appointed another additional editor, and only then did the work proceed to publication. In the meantime, Aristos passed away, and correcting his translations became easier for us. Nika.”*

Such notes, which often describe intriguing behind-the-scenes processes, have never been published and are therefore unknown to the wider public. Similarly unknown are the memoirs stored in the archive of Ambako Chelidze regarding the events of 1905, titled: *“On the Slaughter of the People at the City Administration Office.”*

That same notebook includes *“A Short Memory of the Great Stalin”* and an additional note written in violet ink on a separate sheet titled *“Around Metekhi Prison”.* The archive also contains a statement written by Ambako Chelidze to Joseph Stalin on November 25, 1935, in which Chelidze is forced to defend himself for having accidentally read a Menshevik newspaper.

These stories, preserved in personal archives and unknown to the public, often contain details without which the evaluation or understanding of certain events, stories, or entire eras would be incomplete. That is why we believe it is important to bring them to light.

**Guram Asatiani’s Epistolary Dialogue: An Archive of Love *(Based on Guram Asatiani’s Archive Housed at the Museum of Literature).***

**Mariam Anjaparidze, Giorgi Leonidze State Museum of Georgian Literature**

The archive of Guram Asatiani, housed at the Museum of Literature, is extensive and diverse. A significant portion is dedicated to personal letters, with epistles to Manana Kikodze holding a special place. This correspondence remains largely unknown to the public, making its study particularly relevant for contemporary Georgian literary criticism.

The exchange of letters with Manana Kikodze began immediately after Guram Asatiani fell in love with her at first sight. He hoped she would reciprocate, and these letters, filled with astonishing sincerity and tenderness, offer a glimpse into their intimate relationship. Asatiani constantly worried about not boring *“Manana”, “Mananiko”, or “my dear”.* After meeting her, he envisioned his entire existence dedicated to her happiness. He expresses this devotion, writing: *“If tomorrow you smile at me again, if I feel that warmth again, then the purpose of my entire remaining life will be to transform my whole being so that I am at least a little worthy of you.”* These lines reveal not just a personal vow but a profound, self-sacrificing understanding of love. As a renowned literary critic and scholar, Guram Asatiani composed these letters over many years, documenting a significant part of his life. Most unveil unknown details of their relationship; some are spontaneous, others reflect his emotional state. They encompass a wide spectrum of human emotions: pain, sadness, joy, anticipation, fear, and love, illustrating the complexity and depth of their bond. In one letter, he reveals intense inner turmoil, stating*: “...this jumble, I think, will let you know what state I’m in. Maybe soon I’ll start howling like a jackal,”* highlighting the intensity of his feelings, a common companion to the profound experience of love.

Many of these letters are particularly insightful, as Asatiani describes his feelings, thoughts, and vision for their future. Each contributes to a unique epistolary dialogue, expressing deep affection and tracing the evolution of their connection. This is not merely personal correspondence; it is an archive of love, reflecting a deep emotional bond spanning time and space, filled with anticipation and hope. The letters frequently include literary and philosophical reflections, further illuminating Asatiani’s persona as an intellectual. He notes in another letter*: “With your patience, acquire your wife,”* underscoring the anticipation and faith central to their relationship.

Preserved in his private archive and currently undisclosed to the public, these letters often provide crucial details without which a complete assessment of Guram Asatiani’s personality or his literary legacy would be impossible. They offer invaluable insights not only into Asatiani himself but also into the personal relationships and emotional landscape of that era. Furthermore, these epistles reveal the enduring power and intricate nature of human love, demonstrating how a singular, immense feeling can define a person’s existence, give it meaning, and inspire creativity, even through time and adversity. Therefore, studying these letters in depth is essential to gain a comprehensive understanding of a great Georgian intellectual’s life, the hidden world of the human soul, and the significant issues of that period, often solely preserved in personal correspondence.

**Author Attribution through Graphematic Studies**

**Tea Tvalavadze, Giorgi Leonidze State Museum of Georgian Literature**

The advent of digital technologies has significantly transformed research in the humanities, offering new tools and methodologies for textual analysis and archival studies. In Georgia, the integration of digital approaches into the humanities is a relatively recent development. However, this methodological gap is now being addressed through interdisciplinary initiatives, among which graphematic research occupies a noteworthy place. The present paper explores the application of graphematic analysis to the authorial attribution of manuscripts by Galaktion Tabidze and his brother, Abesalom (Prokle) Tabidze – two prominent literary figures of early 20th-century Georgian culture.

The need for such research arose from the existence of a large volume of unsigned, undated, and stylistically ambiguous manuscripts preserved in the Museum of Literature archive and in the Tabidze family’s private collection. These materials, written in Georgian and Russian, include poetry, prose, essays, translations, and memoirs. In many cases, the handwriting is inconsistent or not immediately attributable, raising the question of whether the texts belong to Galaktion Tabidze in an early and less-studied phase of his career, to his brother Abesalom, or to an entirely different author. Since handwriting, like style, evolves over time and can reflect both individual and collective characteristics, superficial observation is insufficient for attribution.

To address this challenge, we constructed three digital corpora for analysis: the first includes verified manuscripts by Galaktion Tabidze; the second comprises authenticated writings by Abesalom Tabidze; the third contains unidentified texts with uncertain authorship. These corpora span both Georgian and Russian language materials. The research employs a dual-methodological approach, combining manual graphematic examination with automated digital analysis, and is further enriched by biographical context.

The study focuses on identifying consistent graphematic parameters that distinguish the two brothers. These include: the configuration and angle of letters; specific letterforms (such as “L”, “M”, “K”, “J”); connective ligatures (e.g., “da” - “and”); rare combinations like “KE,” “LT,” or abbreviations such as “P-D” (as in “First”); the spatial distribution of text (including word and line spacing); and the structural use of punctuation (commas, periods, emphatic dashes, and repeated dots).

The results indicate both convergences and divergences. Similarities likely stem from shared educational background and calligraphic training. However, clear differences emerge in execution and rhythm: Galaktion’s handwriting is marked by emotional intensity, dynamic stroke variation, and a lack of consistent punctuation – traits that correlate with his expressive poetic style. In contrast, Abesalom’s manuscripts display more regularity, textual balance, and structural clarity. These features, when analyzed in tandem with linguistic and stylistic evidence, enable a grounded attribution of authorship.

This study demonstrates that graphematic analysis, especially when applied to visually and stylistically similar texts, can be a decisive tool in authorial identification. Moreover, it affirms the broader academic value of integrating digital methodologies into philological and archival research. Given Galaktion Tabidze’s cultural importance, the ultimate aim is to ensure the accurate identification and classification of his written legacy, to enrich his bibliography, and to bring previously unknown texts into scholarly circulation. In doing so, the research also contributes to the development of a new methodological model and algorithm for attribution, potentially applicable in other literary and linguistic contexts.

**Graphematic Studies: Methodology, Approaches and Technologies**

**Maia Ninidze, Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University**

Primary sources of the greatest part of fiction and non-fiction texts, created through the millennia of the world history, are manuscripts. Therefore, it is very important for cultural heritage studies to use the newest scientific methods, approaches and technologies in the scientific fields investigating them.

Association for Textual and Editorial Studies and Digital Humanities carries out investigations that are oriented at solving different textual problems by means of creating digital manuscript databases and studying them. Various interdisciplinary methods and technologies are used for dating, attribution and other purposes.

Undated manuscripts of a particular author can be dated by means of constructing rich databases of his handwritten texts, classified according to time intervals of their creation. The problem is that there are fewer dated manuscripts in almost all archives than undated ones, and dates indicated on the manuscripts may refer to the creation of the text and not to the particular copies. It should be noted that insertions in the text that may have been made later, are useless for this kind of investigation. As graphematic studies are based on statistical principles, databases should be constructed very accurately. After their creation, specific features are identified and encoded, special charts of the unit (individual and tied letters) development and a code-book are created. In the end undated manuscripts, processed in the similar way, are compared to these data to reveal the greatest similarity.

When the research is oriented at the author identification of anonymous texts, before creating the databases, interdisciplinary research should be carried out to specify the approximate date and make a list of potential authors. Then manuscript databases should be created for each of them. This time the greatest similarity will reveal the author of the manuscript. If the author of the text and of the handwriting is the same person, the result will refer to both. Inline insertions and deletions in the handwritten texts generally confirm that they are holographs. If the handwriting does not belong to the author, graphematic studies may identify only the person whose handwriting it is, but the author identification needs further interdisciplinary investigation.

As we can see, a graphematic study uses different methods and technologies according to its research purposes. However, it should be noted that for each particular purpose there are two main approaches: half-automated and automated. The methodology described above, belongs to the former. As for the fully automated approach, it uses special algorithms and binarized manuscripts for the identification of the “nearest neighbor”. If the purpose of the research is dating of undated texts, the program reveals greatest similarity with the database of the particular time interval; but if the research aim is the author identification of an anonymous text, it points to the database of the particular author. The best results are achieved when both approaches are applied in coordination. Taking into account this principle, we have dated tens of texts by Georgian writers and have identified a number of anonymous authors.

**The Development and Characteristics of an Individual’s Handwriting as a Supplementary Methodological Source for Attribution**

**Maia Jangidze, Association for Textual and Editorial Studies and Digital Humanities**

**Research Topic:** A person’s handwriting, a grapheme characteristic, is uniquely personal. Although the evolution of letterforms and writing systems is shaped and stylistically limited by the demands of different historical periods, every author – while outlining graphemes – retains both the ability to intentionally vary letter shapes (to highlight authorial idiosyncrasies by breaking symmetry, adding decorative elements, modifying or simplifying components) and the influence of their own manual technique as a purely physical capacity. These two factors – conscious stylistic variation and the neuromuscular execution of handwriting – together determine the uniqueness of grapheme formation.

**Relevance:** The relevance of this research lies in its entirely novel approach: graphemic analysis of handwriting. Unlike content-based or semantic analysis, this method focuses on the technical features of writing. The handwriting process differs significantly between individuals with varying cognitive abilities. The amplitude of handwriting variation is especially wide in individuals engaged in intensive writing work. One such figure is Galaktion Tabidze. His creative activity spans over five decades, and his handwriting reflects the stages of his intellectual and psychological development. Although his letterforms gradually evolved over the years, certain unique graphemic characteristics, those which determine attributional consistency and allow for reliable author identification, remain consistently visible.
This writing system, as embodied by Galaktion Tabidze’s hand, has cast doubt on the authenticity of a notable number of archival units within his personal archive, many of which reveal differences, to varying degrees, from the poet’s typical handwriting.

**Problem Statement:** Accordingly, this paper addresses a highly relevant problem: the proper attribution and identification of questionable manuscripts found in Galaktion Tabidze’s personal archive. During the investigation of one such group of manuscripts, several letters signed by Galaktion’s brother, Prokle (Abesalom) Tabidze, provided clues suggesting that the unattributed texts – literary works, translations, and essays – might have belonged to him.

Since these manuscripts date from an early period, it is impossible to determine authorship based on content alone, whether they were written by Galaktion or by his brother. The issue is further complicated by the striking similarity between their handwriting (even in their use of decorative elements). Preliminary comparisons reveal that the handwriting of Galaktion and Prokle Tabidze resemble each other in several aspects, which is understandable given their close relationship.

**Methodology:** This presentation is based on the method of graphemic analysis, which involves the study of descriptive characteristics of manually written graphemes. The approach aims to identify consistent patterns and tendencies in the graphemic features of a single author’s handwriting. In this case, the method is applied to two corpora: (1) texts definitively authored and signed by Galaktion Tabidze, and (2) texts of uncertain authorship. The final conclusion is reached by systematically comparing these two micro-databases.

**Conclusion:** Through a step-by-step methodological framework, including the verification of graphemic findings by other integrated approaches, we aim to address one of the fundamental challenges of textual scholarship – authorship attribution. This task holds even greater value in our case, as it contributes to the correct identification and classification of materials in Galaktion Tabidze’s personal archive.

**Historical Archetypes of Davar’s Image**

**Phridon Kardava, Adjara Archives Administration**

One of the most distinctive and intriguing figures in The Knight in the Panther’s Skin is Nestan-Darejan’s aunt, Davar. Davar is a key character in the poem; it is her outburst of negative, kaji-like energy – an entity seemingly endowed with chthonic power – that triggers the protagonists’ ten-year-long journey filled with misfortunes, suffering, and perilous adventures.

Rustaveli’s signature literary style is evident in the way he presents characters through a mirrored duality. This is particularly striking in the portrayal of the Indian aunt as a kind of anti-“self” of the aunt from the Kingdom of Kajeti.

Dulardukht, the aunt who resides in the Kingdom of Kajeti, is inherently a positive figure. After her brother’s death, she cares for and protects his children. However, in the end, her domain collapses and merges with Gulansharo. The aunt from Kajeti, as the ruler of an evil kingdom, is ultimately perceived as a negative character.

In Georgian history, a well-known historical figure is Queen Tamar’s aunt, Rusudan. She was a political figure, diplomat, and queen, the daughter of King Demetre I, and the caretaker of Queen Tamar and Rusudan.

This study attempts to present this historical figure as a dualistic prototype and archetype for both Davar and Dulardukht.

**The Concept of Past in the Creative Works of Georgian Romanticists**

**Khatuna Kalandarishvili, Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University**

One of the most important tendencies of 19th century Georgian literature is its capacity for special interest towards the historical past. This is one of the defining traits of Georgian writing from this period, which was defined by the philosophy of Georgian Romanticists in addition to the writers of the 1860s. It was precisely the views of Georgian Romanticists that laid the foundation for the paradigm shifts within the Georgian reality, later associated with the writers of the 1860s. Therefore, internalizing their philosophy is imperative from the perspective of studying the development of the Georgian societal mentality.It is often noted that one of the specific signs of Georgian Romanticists is idealizing the past, which is often born from the feelings of hopelessness towards the future. On the one hand, this impression is reinforced by the political realities that served as essential preconditions for the emergence of the Romantic literary movement in Georgia; while, on the other hand, it is a fact that the Georgian Romanticists showed a wide interest regarding our country’s past in their creative works. The themes and issues from Georgian history play a major part in their literary legacy (it is worth noting that when discussing Georgian Romanticism, we mainly base our arguments on the creative legacy of Alexandre Chavchavadze, Grigol Orbeliani, and Nikoloz Baratashvili, since, as it has been mentioned, taking all of their works together might not exhaust the idea of Georgian Romanticism, but it still illuminates the general tendencies). Although, stating that Gregorian romanticist poets idealize the past is more of an expression of feelings rather than reality. The deep analysis and the research of intent regarding Georgia’s historical past within their works sheds light on the fact that the statements made towards them idealizing the past are baseless. It is impossible to draw equivalence between the interests of Georgian Romanticists regarding the history of their motherland and a simple strife towards idealization. Idealizing any epoch – or, more generally, the past – unconditionally necessitates focusing only on its positive aspects in order to construct an image of perfection. However, the works of Georgian Romanticists provide no basis for such an interpretation. Of course, the past of their homeland was important to them, and frequent references to it often served as an expression of patriotic feelings. At the same time, recollections of the past may have functioned as a means of alleviating their spiritual pain, rather than as attempts at idealization. A close reading of their works reveals that their purpose was different and far more profound: directed toward the present and the future, their ultimate goal was to reconstruct the historical psyche of the Georgian people and to strengthen contemporary Georgian society. By demonstrating that, despite centuries of hardship, Georgian history contains countless examples of hope, resilience, and cultural as well as moral development, the Romanticists illuminated the inner potential of their people to face nobly any challenge posed by historical reality.

Establishing a relationship with history, studying, analyzing, and learning from the past is imperative for any society of any era. Correctly understanding the of Georgian Romanticists’ attitude towards history sheds new light on their creative works in the eyes of Georgian readers, illuminating their individual literary profiles and helping us more precisely determine their place in the history of Georgian literature.

**Sergei Meskhi’s “Native Stage and Native Theatre”**

**Saba Metreveli, Shota Rustaveli Institute of Georgian Literature, Tbilisi State University**

After entering the public arena, Sergei Meskhi’s works addressed many national and urgent issues, including Georgian theater. He understood well the role and place of stage art in the process of shaping Georgian society. His thoughts constantly revolved around Georgian theater not merely as a form of entertainment, but as a cultural phenomenon – as an instrument with serious influence on national consciousness, as a moral forge, as one of the most tangible means for shaping the human soul through aesthetic lens.

In the 19th century, Georgian theater was at the forefront of the national liberation movement. Due to Tsarist Russia’s anti-Georgian policies, the Georgian language, which had been banished from schools, found refuge on the stage of Georgian theater. Gradually, theater became essential and necessary for the broad masses. It was no longer the privilege of a private elite group – it reached both villages and cities equally, and, most importantly, the “fashion for theater” began to spread and establish itself.

In these circumstances, Sergei Meskhi demanded the presence of a “good director” for the production, asserting that talking about a successful performance without a director was nothing but an empty dream. He spoke about this even before the establishment of a professional permanent troupe.

One of the significant events in Sergei Meskhi’s biography was undoubtedly the fact that he himself took on the task of staging performances. Despite his busy schedule and numerous obligations, he assumed the role of director – this happened in the spring of 1875. Initially, he presented Molière’s *Scapin the Schemer* to the public and was tasked with preparing two more performances by summer.

Georgian theater could not have developed without national dramaturgy. The primary concern of the Georgian intellectuals of the 60s was to awaken and elevate the national spirit of the Georgian people. Naturally, the environment, characters, problems, and daily life reflected in foreign plays were neither very interesting nor easily understandable for the Georgian audience. Sergei Meskhi directly defined the thematic focus that was both interesting and necessary for the Georgian viewer. His formulation was as follows: old plays no longer meet the tastes and demands of contemporary Georgian society – the audience seeks the depiction of newer, more current aspects of life on stage. Enriching the repertoire was therefore tied to the development of national dramaturgy and original Georgian drama. Sergei Meskhi saw the creation of so-called “people’s plays” as a necessity. In his view, translated or adapted plays failed to convey the true essence of Georgian character.

Before the restoration of professional theater, Meskhi’s writings and reviews on Georgian theater were specifically aimed at convincing and preparing the public for the establishment of a professional theater and a permanent troupe – what he himself termed “the Georgian permanent stage”.

**Alexander Orbeliani’s Memoirs on the History of the Orbeliani Noble Family**

**Maia Tsertsvadze, Georgian Technical University**

A few years ago, the first academic five-volume edition of the works of Alexander (Puplia) Orbeliani (1802–1869) was published under the general editorship of Rostom Chkheidze. Orbeliani was a multifaceted Georgian intellectual – poet, prose writer, playwright, publicist, historian, and one of the leaders of the 1832 anti-imperial conspiracy. This landmark cultural event made accessible to a wide readership many of his texts that had previously remained in archives, now critically edited and prepared for scholarly use. These texts open valuable new avenues for literary, historical, and cultural research.

Alexander Orbeliani was a descendant of the royal family of Kartli-Kakheti – a grandson of King Erekle II (1720–1798) and son of Princess Tekle (1776–1846). Alongside his literary works, his memoirs occupy a prominent place in his legacy. These autobiographical writings offer vivid depictions of early 19th-century Georgian society, portraits of royal and noble families, and events witnessed either by Orbeliani himself or by his close circle. Given the relative scarcity of official historical documents from this period, such first-person narratives – memoirs, letters, and diaries – are of particular historical value.

Our conference paper focuses on the history of one of the most powerful noble houses in Georgia – the Orbeliani (Kaphlanishvili) family *–* based on several of Alexander Orbeliani’s memoirs, including *‘From the* *Kaphlanid Branch* *– Jambakuriani-Orbeliani’, ‘Some Notes on the Orbelianis,’* and *‘My House and Ancestors.’* These sources offer insights into the family’s political, ecclesiastical, and cultural roles, particularly in the regions of Kvemo Kartli and Tbilisi during the 18th and 19thcenturies.

Members of the Orbeliani family were often closely connected to the royal court and held high-ranking positions such as generals, stewards, court dignitaries, secretaries, and clerics. They were active participants in the 1832 conspiracy and frequently appeared in Georgian literary works as characters, addressees, or dedicatees (e.g., in the writings of N. Baratashvili, G. Orbeliani, P. Ioseliani). Therefore, every newly discovered biographical detail from these memoirs contributes to a deeper understanding of their legacy. Special attention is also paid to oral traditions regarding the family’s origins, as recorded by Orbeliani based on accounts from his ancestors. Integrating such material into contemporary scholarship is essential for a fuller reconstruction of the family’s history.

This research applies a complex methodological approach, combining historical-comparative, biographical, and analytical methods. It builds upon the work of notable Georgian historians (I. Bagrationi, E. Takaishvili, I. Megrelidze, G. Jamburia, I. Lortkipanidze, M. Qavtaria, R. Topchishvili, I. Chikovani, among others) and contributes to both the historiography of Georgian noble families and adjacent disciplines.

Orbeliani’s memoirs are not only valuable genealogical records; they also reflect a transitional epoch during which the Georgian aristocracy sought to maintain dignity and identity within the realities of the Russian Empire. Despite their subjective tone, these texts provide a rich and informative source for understanding the lifestyle, social functions, and political positioning of the Georgian elite in the 19th century.

**Akaki’s Banned Publicistic Writings (Censorship and Self-Censorship)**

**Julieta Gabodze, TSU Shota Rustaveli Institute of Georgian Literature**

Censorship relentlessly targeted Akaki’s work both during his lifetime and after:
*"In my life, whether awake or in dreams, one thing frightened me most and will follow me to the grave like a blazing fire. I speak of censorship."*

Who knows how many of the writer’s texts fell victim first to Tsarist Russian censorship, and later to the even harsher Soviet regime. Fortunately, a portion of his writings has been preserved in archives and pre-revolutionary periodicals.

In this presentation, we will discuss those publicistic writings by Akaki that were published during his lifetime but did not survive Soviet censorship.

The reasons for censorship varied. For instance, in one article, Akaki discusses the type of the new Georgian intellectual and mentions Grigol Robakidze, praising his public lecture on Nietzsche. The piece was published in 1911 in the newspaper *“Temi”*, but after Robakidze was denounced by the Soviet regime, Akaki’s article was likewise suppressed by censorship. As is well known, Akaki published several critical essays in his lifetime, especially opposing distorted theories concerning Georgian-Armenian cultural relations. These writings, too, were excluded from Soviet editions of his works.

To protect himself from censorship, Akaki often resorted to self-censorship. A classic example of this is in “*Gantiadi”* (*Dawn*), where he replaced the name of Dimitri Kipiani with a generic phrase – instead of “Dimitri’s grave”, he wrote “the grave of the one who sacrificed himself”.

Examples of self-censorship are also abundantly preserved in the writer’s manuscripts housed in archives, many of which clearly bear traces of authorial editing. Through this method, Akaki was able to publish some of his writings.

The publicistic article *“Nadughi”* (“*Temi”*, No. 14, 1911) addresses the issue of Georgia’s demand for independence (autocephaly). Based on the surviving manuscript drafts, it appears that Akaki initially wrote two separate articles under the common title *“Thoughts”* – one concerning social classes and the other addressing relations with Russia. However, due to the reactionary climate of 1905-1906, their publication became impossible. Later, Akaki revised both pieces. In an effort to evade censorship, he replaced Rustaveli’s aphorism *“Better to die than live in disgrace…”* with Vorontsov’s phrasing: *“To become Russian in spirit and heart, while remaining Georgian in language, faith, and nationality.”* The self-censored and carefully edited version was submitted for publication in 1911 under the neutral title *“Nadughi”*. The strategy worked, and the article was published.

Despite the author’s efforts, some writings still could not escape censorship – for example: *“Truth”*, “*Imereti in Flames During the Unrest”*, *“Chaotic Thoughts of a Georgian in Europe”*, *“Bitter Reflections”*, *“Haters of the Georgians”*, and others.

All of these publicistic writings are scheduled for publication in volumes XIV-XV of the academic 20-volume edition of the collected works of Akaki Tsereteli.

**The Significance of Textual Scholsrship for the Study of Galaktion Tabidze's Fixed Poetic Forms**

**Levan Beburishvili, Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State Univeristy**

Among Georgian poets, Galaktion Tabidze is particularly distinguished by the wide variety of fixed verse forms of both European and Eastern origin found in his work. One of the pressing tasks of contemporary Georgian literary studies is to develop a comprehensive understanding of Galaktion’s poetics, which is inextricably linked to the identification and analysis of these fixed poetic forms within his oeuvre.

This issue cannot be fully examined by relying solely on printed editions of poems. In order to identify fixed verse forms in Galaktion’s poetry, a complex textological analysis of his manuscripts is essential. Due to ideological constraints, from the 1920s onward, Galaktion began to obscure the presence of European fixed verse forms through unconventional graphic structuring of lines, which significantly complicates their identification.

As a result of textual scholarship research, we have identified nine previously unrecognized examples of the French ballade and sonnet forms (including the poems: “No One Can Outdig a Highlander”, “The Wind Roared Loud”, “Sunrise Over the Sea”, “Yesterday”, “The Secret of the Khomli”, “You Who Rise on the Heights”, and others). This finding clearly demonstrates the importance of a comprehensive analysis of the poet’s autographs for the detection and study of fixed poetic forms.

**Peritextual Elements in the Early Poetry of Galaktion Tabidze: Functions and Interpretive Strategies**

**Natia Sikharulidze, TSU Shota Rustaveli Institute of Georgian Literature**

The presentation aims to conduct a textological analysis of the peritextual elements (epigraphs, dedications, etc.) in Galaktion Tabidze’s early poetry. The research focuses on two representative cases: the poem “Echvi” (“Doubt”), accompanied by the dedication “Dedicated to Gutsa”, and the poem “Velni Khvavian” (“The Fields Are in Bloom”), prefaced with the epigraph: “The fields are in bloom. Soul, be calm. Goethe”. Although the poet attributes this line to Goethe, the actual source is Heinrich Heine. This correction of attribution enables a deeper understanding of Galaktion’s intertextual ties with German Romanticism.

The study of peritextual elements is highly relevant, as the function of peritext itself is essential in the interpretation of literary texts – it significantly enhances the depth and quality of textual understanding. Galaktion Tabidze frequently uses quotations, dedications, and symbolic references drawn from both Georgian and world literature, which help construct the semantic framework of his poems. However, in Georgian literary scholarship, a systematic analysis of these elements remains rare, which renders this type of research especially valuable not only for Galaktion studies (Galaktionology) but also for textual criticism and comparative literary studies.

The research applies the method of intertextual analysis. In addition, the paper evaluates the effectiveness of selected methodologies – established in contemporary textual studies – for the analysis of peritextual elements.

As a result of the study, the function of peritext in Galaktion’s lyrics from 1908 to 1914 is clarified. The presentation demonstrates that a deep interpretation of the early poem “Echvi” is possible only by considering its dedication “Dedicated to Gutsah”. The named figure “Gutsah” is the pseudonym of writer Giorgi Parkosadze. It turns out that shortly before the publication of Galaktion’s poem, Parkosadze had published a short story entitled “Ichvi” (“Doubt”), which shares not only its title but also key emotional motifs with Galaktion’s poem. The comparison clearly reveals that Galaktion’s “Echvi” engages in an intertextual dialogue with Parkosadze’s story.

The findings of this research significantly contribute to the reception of specific poems by Galaktion Tabidze, while also deepening our understanding of his early poetic thinking and the literary dialogues embedded within his work.

**The Trace of the Soviet Era on Modern Georgian Literature (Based on Nani Manvelishvili’s “Don’t Forget Me”)**

**Ana Gogilashvili, Sulkhan-Saba Orbeliani University**

It is noteworthy that modern Georgian literature frequently produces works depicting the Soviet era, reflecting the fact that, in Georgian reality, the remnants of the totalitarian regime influence, Russian pressure, and occupation remain a painful aspect of everyday life.

Nani Manvelishvili’s novel “Don't Forget Me” is diverse and interesting both in terms of genre peculiarities and themes. It combines a mixture of realism, magical realism, and fantasy. The work organically merges tragic epochal scenes with intimate and moving feelings of love. The title of the novel “Don’t Forget Me” can be understood in two ways. On the surface, it presents portraits of people with dementia and, naturally, the primary understanding of the title is connected to them; however, considering the episodes depicting Soviet life, we can easily be convinced that this is both the central theme and the main message of the work.

The presentation will be performed with an interdisciplinary (historical and literary) approach. It should also be noted that the research contains scientific novelty, as this novel has not yet been discussed in Georgian, or even non-Georgian literary space.

For discussing the work in its intended context, a synthesis of narratology and hermeneutics will be used, along with methods of textual observation, analysis, and conceptual interpretation.

**Biblical Reflection in Givi Margvelashvili’s Prose** **– A Few Miniatures for Understanding**

**Mari Simonishvili, Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University**

What is postmodernism as such? Wolfgang Welsch compares it to new wine in old skins and believes that all debates about postmodernism are doomed to failure, since they are “a publicity stunt by fashionable prophets or a readily recognizable escape from old unfulfilled obligations to the present by announcing a new era.” Postmodernism has fundamentally changed the approaches previously characteristic of various fields of art. It is not just a phenomenon, it is an era that has significantly determined the discourse of vision for the future.

When we talk about Georgian postmodernism as such, the famous German-speaking Georgian author Givi Margvelashvili appears as the greatest innovator. His oeuvre is a peculiar expression of postmodern aesthetics and deserves special attention, since his works have not been properly researched in terms of deconstruction of classical texts.

Givi Margvelashvili’s biography immediately attracts the attention of the reading public. He is a second-generation immigrant, his work is far from classical immigrant prose, but still has common features: bilingualism, biculturalism. The writer was born in Berlin in 1927; Givi Margvelashvili, in fact, lived under two dictatorships **–** fascism and communism. A family sacrificed to repression... Spending the best years of his life under pressure... Constant persecution and harassment... After going through all this, the writer’s words that he is the hero of his book and that he has a place only in the book, further intensify the feeling of the logic of fate. That is why it is believed that his prose is not self-contained, it is full of pain. Philosopher Giga Zedania once notes that Emigration implies a kind of double absence: a vivid confirmation of this in literature and life is Givi Margvelashvili, who did not live in Georgia to the end, nor in Germany; nevertheless, he still has an identity, and it is Georgian-German. Thus, one of the starting concepts of Heideggerian philosophy **–** concerned with finding oneself in a foreign environment, is brilliantly confirmed by both Givi Margvelashvili’s life and work.

Margvelashvili’s literary cosmos is constantly renewable, developing and inexhaustible. His prose is connected to the work of other writers, creating a kind of network system and representing complete correspondence. What he writes about is relevant at all times and seems to be foreseen in advance.

Givi Margvelashvili is the master who created a brilliant combination of literature and philosophy. The starting point of his philosophical tradition is precisely that of phenomenology. A completely different plot develops in his books, not what the author wanted and conceived, but what is free from all conditions. For the writer, a specific plot is dictatorship, and he hates any manifestation of dictatorship, because he bears the entire burden of regimes on himself. This phrase would probably serve as the starting point for Givi Margvelashvili’s prose **–** stop death in texts! “This is one of Givi Margvelashvili’s fundamental feelings and thoughts, the core of his poetics: everything is a text: the world, history, and man; written texts (books) often determine other texts: real history, human destinies, the path of humanity. A person in the world, in history, in a country **–** this is a text in texts. History and existence are the mutual influence of texts, a struggle or a connection between them.”

The purpose of this paper is to show how the author changes the plot in biblical-themed miniatures and how the dichotomy between the reader and the book’s characters is revealed.

**Intertextual Reminiscences and Allusions in the Postmodern Novel *The Brueghel Moon***

**Marine Kukhalashvili, St. Andrew the First-Called Georgian University of the Patriarchate of Georgia**

Tamaz Chiladze’s final novel, *The Brueghel Moon*, represents a significant contribution to postmodern narratology. The research aims to highlight the intertextual allusions and reminiscences in contemporary Georgian literature that the author has employed to craft a 21st-century postmodern novel. We examine the title and the literary text itself, focusing on the global literary and cultural reminiscences employed and their influence on the author’s creative work. The title and conceptual nucleus of the novel derive from Pieter Bruegel the Elder’s painting *Pissing at the Moon*, part of the *Netherlandish Proverbs* series, which serves as inspiration and also as a central meta-protagonist. The novel’s intertextual architecture includes a deep analogy with Fyodor Dostoevsky’s *The Idiot*, which itself engages with Hans Holbein the Younger’s painting *The Body of the Dead Christ in the Tomb*. In Dostoevsky’s narrative, Prince Myshkin remarks that Holbein’s painting is so powerful it might “cause someone to lose their faith.” The study also analyzes Nietzschean themes and allusions to *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. Chiladze’s character, known as the “Alien,” lives in isolation in a forest cave in Abastumani with an animal. He is socially excluded due to his radical difference from others. Similarly to Zarathustra, who emerges from a ten-year solitude to share his spiritual insights and offer new paths to truth and life, the “Alien” raises the question: can he redeem a society steeped in moral decay? Can he become a savior, even for the woman with whom he cohabits, giving rise to a new life through the birth of their child?

 The article’s relevance lies in several key aspects: it is the first scholarly work to examine *The Brueghel Moon* through the lens of intertextuality. It demonstrates the interconnectedness between Georgian and global literary and cultural developments. The novel serves as a key example of Georgian postmodern prose, forming textual links with both national literary traditions and broader currents in world literature, visual art, and philosophy. Moreover, the research addresses a central interdisciplinary question: how can visual art inspire literary creation, generating new forms of intertextual artistic expression.

The primary research objective is to identify the novel’s intertextual reminiscences and allusions, explore its dialogue with global literary and artistic texts, and evaluate how these elements function semantically within the structure of Georgian postmodern literature.

The methodology is rooted in literary theory and postmodern narratology, drawing on thinkers such as Julia Kristeva, Roland Barthes, Mikhail Bakhtin, and Gérard Genette. Hermeneutic, intertextual, comparative, and structural approaches are employed, alongside the author’s own poetic and theoretical reflections.

Ultimately, *the Brueghel Moon* exemplifies the postmodern novel in which intertextuality transforms the reader into a co-creator of meaning. This research situates Chiladze’s novel within modern Georgian literary evolution while also framing it as a powerful site of intercultural dialogue. It will be of interest to scholars in philology, literary studies, intertextuality, and postmodernism, as well as engaged general readers.

**The Concept and Characteristics of Fictional Space in Bernardo Atxaga’s Short Story Collection “Obabakoak”**

**Irina Nozadze, TSU Shota Dzidziguri Bascology Center**

**The Basque novel of the early 1980s had one major drawback** **– it was significantly removed from Basque reality. From today’s perspective, however, it can be said that the Basque novel has successfully overcome these limitations – thanks, in part, to the widely accepted postmodern notion that, as Brian McHale puts it, all reality is invented and shaped by “the ontological image of our culture.” Before long, the Basque novel began to blur the lines between the fantastic and the real, the subjective and the objective. As Basque literary critic Mari Jose Olaziregi notes, there is little doubt that a belief-imagination such as that of Basque society in the 1980s required an expressive concept of identity** **– one that moved decisively away from the outdated idealism and stylized fiction of the costumbrist novel.**

**It was against this background that Bernardo Atxaga had to enter the literary arena. The cultural imbalance of a democratic nature, which arose in the wake of the socio-cultural changes of the 1960s, created a favorable political atmosphere for the Basque literary system, which determines and further underscores the relevance of the present research question. To solve the mentioned scientific problem, the report will mainly use biographical, cultural-historical and hermeneutic methods.**

The phenomenon of the fictional universe is largely reflected in Bernardo Atxaga’s “Obabakoak” (lit. meaning: The Residents of Obaba). The stories are presented in an interesting and strange way and, at the same time, are thematically interconnected. The description of Obaba gives the impression that we are talking about a geographically real, inhabited place. This geographical portrayal transports the reader to the world of the writer’s childhood, which serves as a kind of pretext for the work and reveals an ancient world governed by magical causality rather than logical causality. In this premodern world, words such as “depression” or “schizophrenia” do not exist yet, and the only explanation for incomprehensible events is metamorphosis. As writer and researcher Rosemary Jackson points out, such metamorphoses lay the foundation for fantastical fiction **–** a literature that seeks to speak of the “other,” the marginal, the invisible, even the “monster.”

Obaba is an indefinite, fictional place where Atxaga has transported a mixture of memories and fantastic stories. In an interview with Michael Eaude published in the English daily newspaper “The Guardian” (October 20, 2001), Bernardo Atxaga notes that Obaba is the land of his past, the unity of the real and the emotional. In making a broad statement about his Basque origin, Atxaga avoids the obsession of nostalgia, which often becomes a kind of curse for most writers who talk about a lost rural childhood. According to him, when dealing with feelings, moderation is necessary. If you are guided by nostalgia, you will create false texts.

Thus, for Atxaga, Obaba represents an opportunity to present – to show us – an imaginary existence governed by alternative logic, where events carry significance beyond the real world. This report focuses on the importance of Basque cultural memory, the dichotomy between the local and the universal, and, most importantly, understanding all of this in the context of contemporary literary challenges and globalization.

**Questions to Museum Collections – Communication with Society**

**Gulnara Kvantidze, Eka Berelashvili, Georgian National Museum**

This paper discusses various means of communication that exist between museums and the wider public. Several forms of engagement are examined, including educational talks conducted both in physical and virtual formats, meetings with scholars focusing on museum collections, as well as online tours and exhibitions.

The discussion emphasizes the significance of collaboration between museums, scholars, and the public in the broader context of a country’s development. The cultural heritage preserved within museum collections serves not only cultural but also social, economic, and political functions.

The issues raised in this paper are considered through the examples of the Georgian National Museum – specifically the Simon Janashia Museum of Georgia and the Shalva Amiranashvili Museum of Fine Arts. For decades, these museums have maintained close ties not only with the general public but also with specialists from various fields and individuals with an interest in cultural heritage.

This interaction continues consistently, both in everyday life and during periods of crisis and instability.

The presentation accompanying this paper includes photo, audio, and video materials belonging to the Georgian National Museum.

**The Symbolic Meaning of “****Khatis Mamulebi” (Shrine Lands) in the Khada Gorge in Traditional and Modern Society**

**Irakli Peradze, Georgian National Museum**

**Research Topic:** The mountainous regions of eastern Georgia are distinguished by a rich variety of sacred traditions. The Khada Gorge, as a historical part of Mtiuleti, is no exception. In Khada, the lands surrounding local shrines – known as *“Khatis Mamulebi”* (lands belonging to a saint or shrine) have traditionally been perceived as sacred spaces, carrying religious, communal, and identity-related functions.

This research focuses on the functional and symbolic significance of these *“Khatis Mamulebi”* in both traditional and contemporary societies. The aim is to analyze how *“Khatis Mamulebi”* was understood in the past as a sacred, collective space, and how its status, use, and social role are changing today – in the context of privatization, infrastructural intervention, and the transformation of religious practices.

**Relevance:** This study is relevant within the broader context of cultural heritage protection and the preservation of ethnographic memory. In the 21st century, under the influence of globalization, traditional sacred spaces are undergoing significant change. The Khada Gorge – known for its deeply rooted traditions of shrine veneration and historic sacred lands – now faces serious threats. Ongoing large-scale infrastructure projects in the valley are dramatically altering the landscape and, more importantly, leading to the destruction of historically sacred places. Thus, this research has not only academic value but also practical and educational importance – in terms of cultural self-awareness and civic responsibility.

**Research Problem:** The main objective is to investigate the religious, social, and cultic significance of the lands associated with local shrines (*Khatis Mamulebi*) in the Khada Gorge, both in the past and in the present. The research seeks to answer the following questions:

• How was *“Khatis Mamulebi”* perceived in traditional society – as a sacred space that served shrine worship, community cohesion, and ritual practice?

• How were these lands protected by the local population – through taboos and customary law?

• And finally, how has the traditional relationship to *“Khatis Mamulebi”* changed or disappeared in the modern era – in light of land privatization, infrastructural development, and shifts in religious worldview?

**Methodology:** The study is based on an interdisciplinary methodology that combines ethnographic fieldwork with historical and anthropological source analysis. Field research was conducted in 2024 and will continue in July-August 2025. It includes interviews with local residents and the processing of oral histories. The research also draws on the ethnographic archives of Mikheil Kedeladze and Vera Bardavelidze.

Key data were collected during fieldwork in the Khada Gorge, through interviews with local inhabitants, village elders, and tradition bearers. The main focus was placed on personal memory, religious practice, local customs related to shrine lands, and the real-life use of these spaces today. Observations were made during shrine feast days (*“Khatoba”*) as well as in everyday contexts.

**Conclusion:** This research demonstrates that *“Khatis Mamulebi”* were sacred spaces that held not only religious but also social and identity-defining significance in the past. They were perceived as symbols of communal unity, belief, and order, with their use strictly regulated by customary rules. In the modern era, these lands are undergoing considerable transformation. Nevertheless, fieldwork has revealed that local memory still retains the sacred perception of shrine lands. In some communities, taboos and customs surrounding land use during shrine feast days continue to be observed, suggesting that these spaces remain vital components of local identity today.

**Folk Festivals in the Generational Memory of the Khada Gorge**

**Tamar Didebashvili, Georgian National Museum**

The presentation focuses on the study of the relationship between folk rituals and cultural memory in the Khada Gorge. The subject of the research is the mnemonic dimension of traditional festivals and how the population of the Khada Valley preserves and transforms these festivals from generation to generation. Particular attention is given to the changing perceptions and practices of rituals among younger and older generations in the context of migration, urbanization, and cultural transformation.

In the contemporary world, where cultural homogenization and urban processes pose a threat to local traditions, such research is significant both in the context of preserving cultural heritage and in understanding social identity. Against the backdrop of ongoing demographic changes in the mountainous regions of Georgia, it is particularly relevant to examine the mechanisms that ensure the transmission of traditional knowledge and memory across generations. The Khada Gorge represents one of the key local spaces where traditional rituals remain relatively vibrant, offering valuable social and cultural material for observation and analysis.

The report addresses the following research questions: How does collective memory function within folk rituals in a highland region, and how is it transformed across generational shifts? How are oral and ritual memories transmitted and reshaped within the social space of the Khada Gorge? In the context of contemporary challenges, do festivals remain part of living memory, or are they acquiring a more formalized character?

The research is based on ethnographic material collected during field expeditions, including archival notes by twentieth-century scholars (Vera Bardavelidze, Julieta Rukhadze, and Leila Soselia) as well as the data gathered in 2024-2025. The study employs interviews with representatives of different generations, along with on-site observation of festival practices in the Khada Gorge. By comparing historical and contemporary sources, the current state of these traditions was analyzed.

The research demonstrated that rituals in the Khada Gorge continue to serve as mechanisms for preserving memory and maintaining intergenerational connections; however, both their content and formal dimensions are undergoing certain transformations. For the older generation, these rituals retain a sacred religious significance and function as markers of identity, whereas for younger people, they are increasingly perceived as formalized elements of cultural heritage.

**Reflection of Heroic-Historical Literature in Georgian Folklore (Based on Tushetian Materials)**

**Mariam Bakuridze, International Black Sea University**

The real foundation of Georgian folk heroic-historical works is shaped by Georgia’s centuries-old history, its heroic past, and its political, economic, and cultural development. The rich past and present of the homeland have become the subject of Georgian people’s creativity and poetic understanding. Heroic-historical works were created based on the struggles the Georgian people waged for centuries to protect their independence and culture against foreign invaders and social evil. These battles fostered and strengthened the best qualities of the Georgian people, which are wonderfully reflected in folk oral traditions.

It is well-known that for centuries Tusheti had to defend its region with its own strength against hostile neighboring tribes; and, at the same time, it actively participated in wars fought to protect the entire nation. The mountain population was always a reliable military reserve for the Georgian kingdom. The highlanders knew well that the fate of the nation was decided in the lowlands. Ivane Javakhishvili quotes Strabo, writing: “The highlanders... had their eyes on brave deeds and warfare... as soon as they heard the sound of war, they would quickly leave their land and take up arms” (Iv. Javakhishvili, History of the Georgian Nation, Vol. 1, 1960).

Tushians had no peace from the Lezgins and Kists. Lezgins would steal Tushetian provisions, cattle, and even take people captive, demanding large ransoms for their release. Tushetian folk poetry is filled with lamentations of this Lezgin captivity. On January 4, 1837, Shamil’s countless army attacked the villages of Diklo and Shenako. This is also mentioned in Baron Rosen’s address to Count Chernyshev on January 13, 1837, in the 9th volume of Acts (pp. 609-610). Folk oral traditions have preserved abundant folklore material discussing this heavy attack and the destruction of Tusheti.

In the struggle against external enemies, a viewpoint gradually formed about what a heroic man should be like, and what his duties were to the homeland and the people. A hero, first and foremost, had to act according to the customs and wishes of the community, protecting the interests of the entire community as well as each of its members – this was the way of thinking and living for Tushetian men, which gave birth to the ideal of the hero in heroic-historical poetry. The ruined fortress-towers of Tusheti, and the scattered fortified houses with their “chardakhs” (balconies) in this region, still leave a strong impression on visitors today. They are silent witnesses to a heroic past.

**The Image of the *Mother* in Svan Tales**

**Shorena Shavreshiani, Independent Researcher**

In Svan folklore (and in traditional culture in general), the mother is usually represented as a protector, helper, and a loyal figure. However, some stories fundamentally challenge this role, depicting the mother in a degraded way.

**The research topic** focuses on **the image of the *mother* in Svan folk tales**, analyzing her traditional and symbolic roles using archival materials, “The Svan Language Chrestomathy”, “Svan Prose Texts”, and fieldwork.

**The figure of the mother** is complex: in some stories, she shockingly agrees to her son’s murder for the sake of her lover, a devi, defying maternal instinct and values where love for the child is supreme. Sometimes, the devi opposes the son’s killing, showing more morality than the mother despite symbolizing evil. In other tales, the devi forces the mother to feign illness and send the son on deadly tasks. Ultimately, with the help of sisters, brides-to be, the half-brother devi, and aided animals, the heroes revive and take revenge on the treacherous mothers and devi. The figure of the anti-mother in Svan folklore is rare but reveals the deep psychological layers of these tales, where the mother can become a trial for the hero. She acts as an opponent whose overcoming is essential for the hero’s growth. However, the mother’s role is not limited to betrayal; many stories portray her as loyal to the family, actively protecting her children, shaping her fate, uniting the family, and guiding the hero’s success. Alongside the active or harmful mother, there is often the archetype of the “passive mother”, which holds deep symbolic and folkloric significance. This mother is physically weak but emotionally deeply connected to her son. She often inspires the hero, with the son acting as her savior – as if she is reborn or redeemed through him. The passive mother is silent and patient, full of worry, waiting, or tears. Her hope and faith in her son’s strength outweigh any direct action.

**The relevance of the topic** is determined by the increased scientific and public interest in Svan fairy tales, especially in narrative figures previously neglected or seen only as part of oral tradition. Examining lesser-known archival and field materials from a fresh perspective will deepen our understanding of Svan folklore.

Given the specificity of the research topic **several methods** were used: **the descriptive method** for detailed portrayal of plots, characters’ behavior; **the analytical-comparative** method to examine the mother’s role, motives, and moral traits across tales; and **the textological method** for processing and comparing archival and field texts and variants.

**In conclusion**, **the figure of the mother** in Svan tales is multifaceted. Traditionally, she appears as caring, and protective, yet the narratives also include her antitraditional aspects. The mother betrays her child due to passion. Sometimes, her faith and silence help the hero survive. The mother is more than a biological figure – she is a trial, symbol, and a guide for the hero.

**Ethnographic Expeditions of the Georgian State Museum in the Mtiuleti Region Based on Archival Sources**

**Mariam Khintibidze, Georgian National Museum – Simon Janashia Museum of Georgia**

The Caucasus Museum, which was later transformed into the Georgian State Museum, actively organized ethnographic expeditions from the time of its establishment. These expeditions aimed at the scholarly exploration of the Caucasus region and the collection and study of materials for museum purposes. From the 1920s onward, such fieldwork intensified significantly, with research teams from the museum’s Department of Ethnography conducting systematic investigations across various regions of Georgia, including the highland areas of eastern Georgia – to document and analyze local ethnographic environments.

At the initiative of the museum, multidisciplinary research teams comprising historians, ethnographers, and artists were dispatched annually. Their work encompassed both the collection of textual materials and the documentation and analysis of tangible cultural artifacts. These expeditions were typically planned and coordinated by Giorgi Chitaia, whose methodological approach was grounded in the principles of comprehensive and intensive ethnographic research. Within the framework of the Georgian ethnographic school, this methodology prioritized the in-depth study of specific social units, such as families, clans, neighborhoods, villages, and communities – rather than the superficial description of dispersed ethnographic features across a broad geographic area.

Archival materials preserved at the Georgian National Museum – including official records, accession documents, and expedition reports, trace the dynamics of ethnographic research in the Mtiuleti Region throughout the 20th century. Research teams often remained in the field for extended periods, conducting detailed observations of the local population’s everyday life, economic practices, and social structures, while simultaneously documenting objects of cultural heritage.

Mtiuleti, one of Georgia’s distinct highland regions, is rich in traditional lifeways and material culture. However, this cultural heritage is increasingly at risk due to urbanization, demographic shifts, and the pressures of globalization, all of which contribute to the erosion of traditional knowledge. The study of archival materials preserved in museum collections is therefore essential for the preservation and transmission of this cultural legacy.

This study aims to systematize and analyze archival documents preserved at the Georgian National Museum that chronicle the ethnographic exploration of the Mtiuleti Region throughout the 20th century. These materials, which remain largely inaccessible to the broader academic community, hold significant potential – not only for reconstructing historical narratives but also for generating new avenues of research.

The methodological foundation of the study is based on the analysis of archival documentation and secondary sources, the comparative-historical method, interview techniques, and visual ethnography.

**Field-Collecting Activities in Georgia (According to the Georgian Folklore Database)**

**Marine Turashvili, TSU Shota Rustaveli Institute of Georgian Literature**

The Folklore Archive of the Shota Rustaveli Institute of Georgian Literature is one of the richest repositories of antiquities in Georgia. Founded in 1932, its first director was the prominent Georgian scholar Vakhtang Kotetishvili (1892–1938). Today, the archive houses approximately 115,000 texts collected from nearly every region of Georgia, with its collection continuing to grow through ongoing fieldwork.

The archival materials are organized into several large collections based on their origin and/or date of entry into the archive: 1. Petre Umikashvili’s collection (6,018 texts) dating from 1860-1900; 2. Materials of the folklore sector of the Georgian State Museum and scientific expeditions carried out in 1930-1959 (32,986 texts), the so-called old fund; 3. Materials collected as a result of scientific expeditions carried out from 1960 to the present (59,087 texts), the so-called new fund; 4. Materials collected as a result of expedition work carried out in the 1930s-1970s of the 20th century (13,737 texts), the so-called Varlam Matsaberidze fund.

The objective of this research was to analyze field-collecting activities across the regions of Georgia, based on the folklore material preserved in the archive. This topic is especially relevant and novel, as it has not previously been examined from this perspective. The integration of digital methodologies in the humanities now enables more complex and comprehensive research.

The study relies on the data from the Folklore Archive Database of the Shota Rustaveli Institute of Georgian Literature (see: <https://www.folktreasury.ge/ARPA>), which includes 35,625 text entries described using 29 parameters. These include information such as the narrator’s name, gender, age, education, birthplace, place of residence, the recorder’s name, the date of recording, and more. Using a quantitative research approach, the data were analyzed according to the narrator’s place of residence, which also corresponds to the location where the material was recorded. The comparative analysis method enabled the examination of regional folklore repertoires.

The analysis shows that in 67% of the entries, the narrator’s place of origin is identified; in 33% it is not. The regional distribution of the recorded folklore materials is as follows: Racha 21%, Kakheti 17%, Svaneti 17%, Kartli 16%, Imereti 11%, Samegrelo 6%, Meskheti 3%, Guria 2%, Lazeti 1%, Pshavi 1%, Javakheti 1%, Lechkhumi 1%, Adjara 1%, Khevi 1%, Khevsureti 1%, Tusheti 1% and Mtiuleti 1%.

The findings indicate that the highest volume of material was collected in **Racha**, while the fewest texts were recorded in **Gudamakari** (2 texts), **Shavsheti** and **Saingilo** (1 text each). No material was recorded from **Imerkhevi, Klarjeti** or **Abkhazia.**

**Using Python for Automated Data Processing in Digital Archives**

**Tinatin Mshvidobadze, Gori State University**

The digitization of materials held by libraries, museums and archives around the world is creating an ever-growing collection of digital resources that are widely available for research and teaching. There are large networks dedicated to preserving cultural heritage, such as the Archives Portal Europe, which offers millions of documents, images and videos with thematic exhibitions and access to primary sources.

In this paper, we discuss the views of various researchers, demonstrating the effectiveness of using Python to solve a wide range of problems in libraries and archives.

Researcher Heidi Frank discusses how a Python-based workflow enabled them to submit records from the Archivist’s Toolkit to the general catalogue of libraries. She concludes: It is difficult to imagine the world of cataloguing… without the methods she describes. Therefore, increasing collaboration between archivists and programmers is the next logical direction for the field of bibliographic description.

At the same time, the availability of records can obscure the selection process behind the creation of a digital archive, and search results can be determined by algorithms operating on parameters unknown to the researcher.

Thus, the challenge for today’s archivists is to create automated workflows that require the use of many different tools.

Python is an ideal tool for solving this problem. Its syntax is relatively simple and intuitive, and it has a huge number of libraries that are optimized for accessing data. Python can be used to read complex directory data structures and export them to CSV and EAD files. Python can extract corrupted data into a CSV file, which can be edited with OpenRefine and then re-saved to ArchivesSpace via the API.

Researchers Jacob Nash and Jonathan Wheeler have developed an automated workflow to enable the creation of Simple Archive Format (SAF) packages for uploading data to DSpace.

In this paper, we present an automated web data collection method called “webscraping,” which is used to solve the specific problem of collecting records from websites.

The use of this method is relevant because webscraping allows to dramatically reduce the time required to collect material from the website.

In the context of digital humanities, webscraping can be used to retrieve digital information for further research, which is useful for several reasons: Since the content on websites is not permanent, it can be used to store the state of websites at a certain point in time. In addition, it can be used to automate the downloading of necessary information.

For this purpose, we have developed a Python program that uses web scraping to automatically download all records from a site and combine them into a single HTML document, which can then be imported into any program for further analysis. This allows the researcher to create their own corpus of documents and easily import all documents into different software for analysis (e.g., MaxQDA, Atlas.ti, or NVivo).

Thus, the use of automated steps can pave the way for the use of information methods and ultimately simplify research methods.

**Mould and Preventive Conservation: The Limit of Climate Control Effectiveness in the Protection of Manuscript Materials in Practice**

**Asmat Gvazava, Revaz Kldiashvili, Korneli Kekelidze Georgian National Centre of Manuscripts**

This study explores the possibilities and challenges of the preventive conservation of manuscript materials specifically paper, parchment, wood, and leather against mould damage. It focuses on the effectiveness of microclimate regulation as a core component of preventive conservation, while critically examining its actual limitations in cases where biological threats, such as mould fungi, have already manifested. The research is grounded in practical experience, including a comparative analysis of materials stored under climatically different conditions.

In the context of contemporary climate change, the increasing vulnerability of tangible cultural heritage, and the widespread nature of microbiological threats, particularly mould fungi the long-term preservation of historically and culturally significant materials has become critically important. A disruption in microclimatic conditions increases the risk of biological activity, threatening not only the material structure itself but also its informational and visual integrity. Consequently, assessing the components of preventive conservation that aim for complete protection is of particular importance.

Although microclimate stabilization is widely acknowledged as a fundamental requirement of preventive conservation, practice shows that climate control alone is often insufficient once mould spores enter their active phase. Under such conditions, regulating only relative humidity and temperature does not ensure full protection of the materials, especially since certain types of mould can leave dark, irreversible stains within just a few days. In such cases, an integrated approach becomes essential, where microclimatic regulation is combined with cleaning procedures and the use of safe, compatible antifungal agents.

The methodology of the study is based on the analysis of international standards, literature, and professional recommendations. It also draws on years of practical data collected in the storage repositories of the National Centre of Manuscripts, including climate monitoring and assessments of damage progression. A comparative analysis was conducted between collections stored in stable and unstable environmental conditions.

The findings show that despite the critical importance of stabilizing microclimatic parameters such as temperature and relative humidity, these alone do not provide sufficient protection in the face of active mould growth. According to the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), mould begins to grow actively when relative humidity reaches or exceeds 70%, and some species may develop within just 24-48 hours. Compared to other material aging processes – which typically unfold over many years this is a remarkably short timeframe that can cause catastrophic damage. In addition to structural deterioration, some mould species leave irreversible dark stains. In this light, it becomes evident that climate control alone is inadequate; it must be combined with cleaning and the application of safe antifungal agents that are compatible with the material – a field that remains an open direction for further research. The results of this study can inform both national and international heritage preservation strategies, within an integrated context of microclimatic regulation and biological threat prevention.

**Eastern Manuscripts – Restoration/Conservation as a Cultural Mission**

**Leila Gotsiridze, Korneli Kekelidze National Centre of Manuscripts**

Eastern manuscripts represent a distinguished segment of the world’s cultural heritage due to their historical, artistic, and cultural significance. Preserving and safeguarding these unique artifacts remains one of the foremost priorities in the field of modern restoration and conservation. Such manuscripts are characterized by distinctive stylistic features, including original decorative elements and embellishments, uniquely processed paper, natural pigments, gold and silver ornamentation, complex binding techniques, and elaborately decorated covers.

These components are extremely sensitive to environmental factors such as humidity, temperature fluctuations, exposure to light, mechanical stress, and biological agents. As a result, the conservation and restoration of such manuscripts necessitate a meticulously planned and consistently implemented workflow.

The present paper offers a detailed account of the restoration and conservation process of a 16th-century Turkish-language manuscript. The object exhibited various forms of mechanical, chemical, and biological deterioration. These included paper fragility and brittleness, surface disintegration of the ink, and cracking of the pigments. Most of the text was written with organic inks, which, in many cases, promote paper corrosion and constitute one of the most vulnerable aspects of the manuscript. Elevated acidity levels in both the paper and ink accelerate the degradation process and pose a major challenge for conservators.

Equally concerning is the deterioration of natural pigments, which threatens the integrity of both the textual and visual layers of the manuscript.

The conservation and restoration of Eastern manuscripts extends beyond a purely technical intervention – it is a cultural mission that bridges the fields of art, science, and history, and ensures the survival of this irreplaceable heritage for future generation