

LANGUAGE ISSUE IN ANCIENT GEORGIAN LITERATURE<sup>1</sup>

ენის საკითხი ძველ ქართულ მწერლობაში

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**Abstract**

The article discusses the information in Georgian literature of the Middle Ages about the Georgian language as the clearest sign of the pre-modern unity of the Georgian people. Their analysis provides an opportunity to find out how Georgian authors perceived the social phenomenon of language and what functions they assigned to it in different historical eras. According to this criterion, three chronological periods are distinguished in the article: pre-Christian (III c. BC – IV c. AD), early Christian (IV – X c.) and Byzantine (the second half of the X c. – XI c.).

The notes, discussed in accordance with the mentioned periods are picked out from the earliest layers of "Life of Kartli", hagiographic work of the X century "Grigol Khandztelis Tskhovreba" ("Life of Grigol Khandzteli") and colophons of Georgian manuscripts of the 10th-11th centuries.

The obtained information about the functions of the Georgian language gives such a picture according to the periods: 1. In the multi-ethnic Kartli of the pagan epoch, King Parnavaz recognized the dominance of the Georgian language; he created Georgian writing system and literacy (mythological model of the creation of the state); knowledge of the Georgian language was mandatory for the king, if he belonged to a foreign dynasty. 2. As a result of adoption and wide spread of Christianity, the Georgian language became a religious (and at the same time literary) language. Regular church practice had a great impact on the Georgian folk language - on its "Christianization." During this period, the content of the notion of "a Georgian" is being brought closer to the concept of "a Christian." 3. From the second half of the X century through the whole XI century, church literature previously translated into Georgian is being revised in relation to the Greek texts; The works of authors and genres unknown till that time to Georgian readers are translated, the translation method is improved, theological and philosophical terminology is developed, new notions-terms are formed based on the Georgian language.

The article shows the accompanying historical circumstances, the combination of which in certain social groups, mainly educated monks and clerics and political circles close to them, was leading to greater sensitivity to language, its perception as a tool for broad public and state tasks, assigning it new functions and making relevant practical decisions.

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**Keywords:** Middle Ages; Christian East; Georgian Literature; Greek Language; Georgian Translation; Constantinople Ethnocentrism; Language Function; Language Identity.

### მზია სურგულაძე

ისტორიის მეცნიერებათა დოქტორი  
 კ.კეკელიძის სახელობის საქართველოს ხელნაწერთა ეროვნული ცენტრი  
 წყაროთმცოდნეობისა და დიპლომატიკის განყოფილების უფროსი,  
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### აბსტრაქტი

სტატიაში განხილულია ქართული ენის, როგორც ქართველი ხალხის პრემოდერნული ერთობის ყველაზე მკაფიო ნიშნის შესახებ არსებული ცნობები შუა საუკუნეების ქართულ მწერლობაში. მათი ანალიზი შესაძლებლობას იძლევა გავარკვიოთ, რამდენად აღიქვამდნენ ენის საზოგადოებრივ ფენომენს ქართველი ავტორები და რა ფუნქციებს ანიჭებდნენ მას სხვადასხვა ისტორიულ ეპოქაში. ამ კრიტიკუმიტაა სტატიაში გამოყოფილი სამი ქრონოლოგიური პერიოდი: წინარექრისტიანული (მ.წ. III- ახ.წ. IV სს.), ადრექრისტიანული (IV-X სს.) და ბიზანტიური (X ს-ის მეორე ნახ.-XI ს.). აღნიშნული პერიოდების ცნობები ამოკრეფილია „ქართლის ცხოვრების“ ყველაზე ადრეული პლასტებიდან, X საუკუნის აგიოგრაფიული თხზულებიდან „გრიგოლ ხანცთელის ცხოვრება“ და X-XI საუკუნეების ქართულ ხელნაწერთა კოლოფონებიდან. ქართული ენის ფუნქციების შესახებ მოპოვებული ცნობები ასეთ სურათს იძლევა პერიოდების შესაბამისად: 1. წარმატული ეპოქის მულტიეთნიკურ ქართლში ფარნავაზ მეფემ აღიარა ქართული ენის დომინანტობა; შექმნა ქართული დამწერლობა და მწიგნობრობა (სახელმწიფოს შექმნის მითოლოგიური მოდელი); ქართული ენის ცოდნა სავალდებულოდ ცხადდებოდა მეფისათვის, იმ შემთხვევაში, როცა იგი უცხო დინასტიის ეკუთვნოდა. 2. ქრისტიანობის მიღებისა და ფართოდ გავრცელების შედეგად ქართული ენა იქცა ღვთისმასახურების (და იმავდროულად სალიტერატურო) ენად. რეგულარულმა საეკლესიო პრაქტიკამ დიდი ზეგავლენა მოახდინა ქართულ ხალხურ ენაზეც – მის „ქრისტიანიზაციაზე.“ ამ პერიოდში მიმდინარეობს ცნება „ქართველის“ შინაარსობრივი დაახლოება ცნებასთან „ქრისტიანი.“ 3. X საუკუნის მეორე ნახევრიდან მთელი XI საუკუნის განმავლობაში მიმდინარეობს ქართულ ენაზე ადრე თარგმნილი საეკლესიო ლიტერატურის რევიზია ბერძნულ დედნებთან მიმართებით; ითარგმნება ქართველი მკითხველისათვის ამ დრომდე უცნობი ავტორებისა და უცნობი ჟანრების თხზულებები, იხვეწება მთარგმნელობითი მეთოდი, მუშავდება საღვთისმეტყველო და ფილოსოფიური ტერმინოლოგია, ქართული ენის საფუძველზე ყალიბდება ახალი ცნება-ტერმინები. სტატიაში ნაჩვენებია თანმხლები ისტორიული გარემოებები, რომელთა ერთობლიობა გარკვეულ საზოგადოებრივ ჯგუფებში, უპირატესად სწავლულ ბერძონაზონთა და მათთან დაახლოებულ პოლიტიკურ წრეებში, განაპირობებდა მეტ მგრძობელობას ენის მიმართ, მის

აღქმას ფართო საზოგადოებრივი და სახელმწიფოებრივი ამოცანების ინსტრუმენტად, მისთვის ახალი ფუნქციების მინიჭებას და შესაბამისი გადაწყვეტილებების მიღებას.

**საკვანძო სიტყვები:** შუა საუკუნეები; ქრისტიანული აღმოსავლეთი; ქართული მწერლობა; ბერძნული ენა; ქრთული თარგმანი; კონსტანტინოპოლური ეთნოცენტრიზმი; ენის ფუნქცია; ენობრივი იდენტობა.

### **Introduction:**

The research of the Georgian language as one of the foundational characteristics of the pre-modern unity of the Georgian people from the point of view of its public role and functions is a relatively new direction. Its purpose is to study when and under the influence of what circumstances individual public groups perceived their own language as the main marker of ethnic, cultural, religious or state identities, to what extent they assigned new functions to it, and to what extent these functions corresponded to the requirements of the time. Of course, certain observations in this direction can be found in many works, but this time we will single out several researches specifically dedicated to the issues of this type: Язык - ключ к пониманию средневековой картины мира" (Language - the Key to Understanding the Medieval Picture of the World) - in it are revealed the fundamentals of the world perception and value system of the Georgian people according to the old Georgian hagiographical texts. (Вачнадзе 1995: LVI, Byzantino-Slavica); In the work "Christianity and Politics" the importance of language in the process of evangelization of the country - its different functions in missionary activities and church practice in the earlier (IV-V centuries) stage of the spread of Christianity is discussed in a broad historical-regional perspective (vachnadze, ch'eishvili 2008: 101-131); From the position of historical sociolinguistics, the problems related to early Georgian translations and the ways of their solution, the language policy of the Georgian political and church elites of the X-XI centuries and its consequences - the greatest progress of Georgian literature of the XI-XII centuries - are analyzed (doborjginidze: 2010). Z. Aleksidze refers to the viability of the Georgian language as the main idea of the historical struggle for Georgian statehood in Georgian thought from the Middle Ages to the present day (aleksidze 2015: 5-14).

In this regard, the discussion of a language phenomenon involves the identification of political and cultural elites of different historical periods, in the perception of which language and linguistic unity were essential components of cultural identity and were considered among the main signs of state sovereignty. The analysis of the scarce but quite capacious information preserved in Georgian sources on these issues allows us to imagine the development of interesting for us views in three chronological phases: 1. Pre-Christian; 2. Early-Christian; 3. Byzantine.

The information used in the article, which implies directly or indirectly the language, is mainly selected from "Kartlis Tskhovreba" ("The Life of Kartli"), Georgian hagiography and colophons of the manuscripts.

**Methods:**

The present article is based on the comparative-historical research method, retrospective and content-analysis. Moreover, the historical doctrines, by the influence of which medieval Georgian scholars were forming public opinions about the importance of the Georgian language, are studied.

**Results:**

The fully conscious attitude of the Georgian political and religious figures of the 10th - 11th centuries towards the Georgian language essentially ended the centuries-old stage of the development of the Georgian language. It was a completely realized, comprehended and consistent centuries-long process aimed at legitimizing of Georgian language. The Georgian literary language has indeed become an instrument of expression of identity of Georgians and, at the same time, a powerful factor in its distancing from the great empires. In other words, the medieval Georgian literary language itself formed the cultural constitution and the stereotypes of the thought of Georgian people, the inertia of which was felt in Georgian culture throughout the prolonged Middle Ages.

**Discussion:****I. Pre-Christian period. III-IV centuries**

In the earliest strata of "Kartlis Tskhovreba", which are united under the title of "Mepeta Tskhovreba" ("The Life of Kings"), the language is mentioned twice in situationally different contexts. We meet it for the first time in the "Life of Parnavaz", in the summarizing conclusion of his reign: "This P'arnavaz was the first king in K'art'li from among the descendants of K'art'los. He extended the Georgian language, and no more was a different language spoken in K'art'li except Georgian. And he created the Georgian script" (qaukhchishvili 1955: 26; Thomson 1996: 37-38).

The first part of "The Life of Parnavaz", namely, his night dream and the story of his coming to the reign, is built on the mythical construct of founding of the state (baramidze 1985:146-151; Kiknadze while the rest of "The Life"'s narrative, by its structure and content, such as, e. g., introduction of royal cult and government, foreign and domestic political events, - this is already a uninterrupted telling of history by its content's and linguistic construction. It is in the summarising conclusion of this "historical part" that is indicated the story of granting a dominant status to Georgian language and the creation of Georgian writing sistem by King Parnavaz. Such summarising conclusions are, in general, a characteristic compositional element for "Kartlis Tskhovreba". As it is known, this conclusion at this place and in this form belongs not to the archetypal text of the "Life of Parnavaz" (attributed by the scholars to the Christian period and seeming to be created no later than in the first half of the 6<sup>th</sup> century), but to Leonti Mroveli, the compiler of "The Life of Kings" (aleksidze 2010: P.283). Apart from when was written "Parnavaz's Life" itself, no less interesting is the purpose of the editor of "Kartlis Tskhovreba" himself, when he emphasizes this or that information, especially about the existence of the Georgian writing sistem in Kartli of the Hellenistic period. Important here is his opinion that in

the ethnically and ethnographically diverse Georgian kingdom of that time, exactly the language of Georgians is the language of the dominant at that time ethnic "we-group", and that it is an essential sign of the sovereignty of the Kingdom of Georgians.<sup>2</sup> It is clear that the compiler linked to this function of language also the "creation of script". And this means to admit such an ideological construct for the time of Parnavaz, as is the existence of common national language or constructing it on the basis of any ethnic language. This process in itself implies the linguistic standardization of language through artificial intervention or long-term literary creative work. It is clear that this issue was not so complicated for Leonti Mroveli, as in his time already existed the national language, which in his imagination was an indispensable element of state sovereignty. Recently, a German scientist V. Boeder expressed an interesting opinion on the introduction of the language component by Leonti Mroveli in "The Life of Parnavaz". He logically connected it with the ethnogenetic concept of the "Introduction" of "The Life of Kartli", that is, to the biblical model of the so-called "Caucasian project". And he understood both of them as constructing signs of Georgians' national self-consciousness and national sovereignty (Boeder 1998: 70-71). This opinion, of course, is to be shared, but it still needs to be precised to which epoch it corresponds, why it became vital to link the issue of the Georgian language with the biblical introduction to "Kartlis Tskhovreba". What problems could cause the inclusion of an editorial insertion about the Georgian language in the "Life of Parnavaz", we will talk about it a little below.

The second episode, which again refers to the function of language, concerns King Mirian's coming to the reign. This episode is one of those episodes that talks about the conditions, admitted for replacement of Parnavaz's dynasty in case of its interruption. King Mirian, who was the prince of the Sassanids, was demanded by the aristocracy of Kartli, to recognize the "faith" of their fathers, to respect the graves of their ancestors and to master the Georgian language. Mirian fulfilled all these conditions: "And Mirian was brought up in service of seven idols and fire, and he came to love of Georgians, and forgot the Persian language and learned the Georgian language. And he added decorations to the idols and deities, and kindly treated the priests of pagan idols, and most of all the kings of Kartli performed service to their idols, and orned the tomb of Parnavaz" (qaukhchishvili 1955: 65). With this passage Leonti Mroveli expressed the national-cultural content of pre-Christian Kartli (berdenishvili 1990: 377-378), which included the indispensable knowledge of Georgian language along with the state and religious traditions of the local people. But who sets these conditions? This is a local aristocracy - the most prominent part of the Kartli society ("relatives of kings") and, also, the upper layer of free citizens with high status, "indigenous people" (vassal feudal lords of the king from the time of Vakhtang Gorgasali), who were the main support of kings of Kartli during Mirian (p'at'aridze 2009: 33-34). Exactly this part of the society is the defender of the Georgian language and state identity, as well as of other above-mentioned characteristics. Thus, according to the conception of "Kartlis Tskhovreba", use

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<sup>2</sup> According to Leonti Mroveli's conception, Parnavaz's reign was preceded by confusion of "foreign tribes" and "evil faith" ethnoses, Alexander "purified", but after his death Azon regained idolatry. After Azon, Parnavaz begins to build a nation-state, which is associated with the expansion of the Georgian language and introduction of writing system.

of Georgian language as a state language in pagan Kartli had a long tradition. In the perception of the social elite of that time, it was an essential sign of state sovereignty, and their loyalty to a new king (in the event of dynastic breaks) was determined by knowledge of the local language.

A new, special stage in the expansion of the functional use of the language in Georgia begins from the IV century, after adoption of Christianity.

## II. Early-Christian period. IV-X centuries.

The Christian East, to whose cultural circle belonged Eastern Georgia (the Kingdom of Kartli), unlike the Christian West, was being formed as a multilingual Christian world. The multilingualism of this world was first and foremost conditioned by people with ancient scribal traditions of Syria-Palestine and Egypt (Syrians, Copts), who were unfamiliar with the trilingual theoretical concept, but the compromise policy of the Roman Empire towards the region was no less important than this circumstance. This policy also created the prospect for local peoples with a relatively less literary tradition to perform church services in their own languages. According to "Moktsevai Kartlisai" ("Conversion of Kartli") and "Kartlis Tskhovreba" ("Life of Kartli"), the first bishops of Mtskheta (IV-first half of the V century) were Greeks and maybe Syrians too, at the same time we have information that in the V century there already were psalms and liturgical collections in the Georgian language (Hagiographic Collection, Policephallons). We should think that in the 5th-6th centuries, in the background of the constant opposition with Sasanian Iran, it was pragmatically advantageous for Constantinople to develop Christian worship and literary culture in their native languages in the Caucasus countries - this gave it more opportunities, whenever necessary, to balance the influence of Persian Zoroastrianism on these peoples. Finally, the flexibility of the Byzantine policy towards the Christian East and the Caucasus countries gave rise to the possibility of implementing the universalist idea of the Christian Church (as it existed in the apostolic age (Acts of the Holy Apostles 2,3-4; Epistle to the Philippians 2-1). This kind policy of Constantinople in the Christian East and the Caucasus contributed to the realization of the concept of Christian supranationalism among Caucasus peoples, which led to irreversible cultural processes in these peoples.

Thus, the advent of the Christian era and the ability of vivification of the concept of religious supranationalism in the Christian East and the peoples of the Caucasus (unlike the Christian West) caused cultural processes of the greatest importance. Primarily it was the recognition of the functional equality of the local languages,<sup>3</sup> which resulted in the creation of writing systems for the local folk languages, translating of the books of the Holy Scripture and gradually expanding the translation activities, resulting in a process of language standardization. In this way began the "Christianization of languages", which simultaneously led to the propagation of translated specimens of Christian literature

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<sup>3</sup> Scholars consider the literary tradition in the Christian East, including Georgia, to be an expression of the same concept, according to which monks who did not know each other's languages, could speak freely to each other. They were understanding the "language of the spirit" with which Christ spoke to every believer (doborjginidze 2010: 35-37, footnote 91).

and development of original literature by imitating them. According to D. Likhachev's appreciation, it was on the basis of translation that in the Middle Ages was created the International Literary Foundation, as a developable whole (Likhachev 1973: 20-22). Creation of such a foundation, rather than political factors, determined the ecumenical unity of the Christian East.

Let us now turn briefly to the sociological side of this universally-known process – ecclesiastical practice that communicated the essence of the Christian faith to believer parishioners in their native language through regular recurring liturgy – by performing St. Texts, rituals, holidays, St. mysteries in temporal and spatial dimensions, was making people feel the relation between the sacred and the profane, made the most widespread, mass-scale changes in public consciousness and everyday life; it was defining the rules of organization of their everyday life, explaining the symbolism of Christian mysteries (baptism, marriage, confession, death, etc.) for them. Thus, the church was filling the daily life of both the individual and the society, as a whole with a new rhythm and content. The information gained from ecclesiastical practice, especially its regularity, obviously, affected the conscious field of people and led to great changes in their value perceptions, which was finally realized in the institutionalization of individual social groups (parishes), including the erasure of tribal and ethnic boundaries between them and increasing of a sense of solidarity. All this not only is reflected in the spoken language, but over time the language itself becomes the most important forming factor of the communities of believers. The changes caused by Christianization in the life of the society in Georgia were so noticeable already in the VI century that Procopius of Caesarea, who was here, expresses his impression as follows: "They (Iberians) are Christians and follow the rules of the faith better than anyone we know" (Procopius of Caesarea 1965: 48). But this impression, as it seems, concerns the lowland population, as it was in this century that the so-called Syriac fathers continue missionary work among the mountain population of Eastern Georgia.

In Georgia of the V-X centuries, in addition to properly liturgical books, they were constantly translating ecclesiastical literature of various genres (hagiography, asceticism, hymnography, homiletics), with which was regularly being fed the ecclesiastical practice. Based on the translation, a common national language was being formed and spread by ecclesiastical practice in every ethnographical region. Together with translated literature, samples of original historiography, hagiography and hymnography, based on Greek models were being provided to Georgian believers in their national language, connecting them with the common Christian thought space. It is in these patterns that the greatest changes in Georgians' perceptions of ethnic and religious boundaries are observed: the notion of "being Georgian" is filled with religious content and in some cases overshadows the notion of ethnicity. The basis of such an expanded ethno-religious identity turned out to be the Georgian language again, as also the representatives of foreign ethnoses were Georgian speakers, who voluntarily received martyrdom merit here on Georgian soil and their martyrdoms were described in the same language (St.: Shushanik, Eustathius of Mtskheta, Abo of Tbilisi).

In the X-XI centuries many times is evidenced that the notion "Georgian" has superior meaning over the ethnic and ethnographic borders - next to the ethnographic/provincial names, the expression: "Georgian in origin" is often used to explain them. For example, St. Hilarion was Georgian in origin, -

from the "province of Kakheti" (Ilarion kartvelis ts'khovreba 1967: 19), these "invincible martyrs (St. David and Constantine)" were Georgians in origin, from the province of Argueti (abuladze (ed.) 1971: 251). As a title of a hymns of Ioane Minchkhi, a famous hymnographer of the X century, it is written: "written by blessed Minchkhi the Georgian" (ingoroqva 1954: 666, 670-671). „Stefane Sananoisdze Chkondideli (the bishop of Chkondidi) also is "Georgian in origin" (k'ek'elidze 1980: 179); Iovane the Hagiorite was "Georgian in origin, from parents and ancestors who were glorious and distinguished and renowned among the noblemen of David the Kouropalates" (giorgi mtats'mindeli 1967: 42; Grdzelidze, 2009:55); "Giorgi the Hagiorite was Georgian in origin ... and his ancestral land was Samtskhe" (giorgi mts'ire 1967: 109-110; Grdzelidze, 2009:102).

Such linguistic material proves one of the most important circumstances: at the end of the early Middle Ages, ethnographic provinces were culturally homogeneous and shared common Georgian identity. At the same time, the country of Georgians, to use the definition of Ioane Sabanisdze, is perceived in the consciousness of Georgians, as the edge, i.e. a part, of the Christian oecumene (ioane sabanisdze<sup>2</sup>: 49). This already really ecumenical scale in the Georgian thought indicates the specific content of the national identity, in which both the national and the universal coexist. Such perceptions will acquire clearer contours in the following centuries. Exactly such kind perception is the basis of the famous expression of the 10th century author Giorgi Merchule, which can also be called the formula of premodern identity: "A great country is considered to be Kartli, where the services and all the prayers are carried out in the Georgian language. Only "Lord have mercy" is said in Greek..." (George Merchule 2015: 153).

In this definition is summarized the information scattered in various texts that the Georgian language is not only the language of the Christian liturgy, but also the national language, which fused the socially, ethnographically and ethnically different communities living in the "many countries" of Georgia, but also belonged to the Byzantine ecumen what is confirmed by "Kyrie eleison" pronounced in Greek at the end of prayers, performed in Georgian language.

But, still, why it became impossible to materialize the common national language and national-religious ideology at the political level until the 11th century? We know how much Georgia was turned into a front line of great empires in the early Middle Ages. We also know how many times its territories were redistributed into the zones of influence of rival empires, under what conditions took place the feudal-rank segmentation of the political unity of earlier Kartli and division of its territory into small kingdoms-principalities; Finally, we know how much the Greek-speaking church hindered the universal use of the Georgian language in Western Georgia. Such a political and social environment, of course, only hindered the consolidation of Georgian society, but the strongest of the "operating" factors was the church, organized in Georgian language - the main mechanism by which Merchule's "many countries" maintained their homogeneity, was Georgian religious culture and the written language. This language was not only the language of the clergymen and the feudal aristocracy, thanks to the ecclesiastical practice it was the national language of the whole Georgian people.



In the 10th century, before the political forces of Georgia achieved state unity, the idea of the indivisibility of language and faith had already become a category of thought. On it, as on one of the ideological constructs, was based the struggle of the kingdoms and principalities for the restoration of a united Georgian monarchy, which ended at the turn of the X-XI centuries. Later, official Georgian historiography will use this ideologized function of language and declare language as one of the fundamental features of the Georgian state. But before that, the new political reality revealed new problems in front of the Georgian language.

### III. Byzantine period. X-XI cc.

The influence of Byzantine tendencies in the Caucasus countries was felt from the end of the IX century and in the X century, following the political and cultural successes of the Macedonian emperors, they become noticeably stronger. The contribution of the peoples of the Christian East and the Caucasus, whose political and ecclesiastical elites became more closely acquainted with the priorities and high culture of Byzantium of those days, to the strengthening of Byzantine political positions in the struggle against the Arabs in the Near East was great. In the same period, the representatives of the peoples, allied with the Byzantium in the contact zones, face great difficulties in their relations with the Greeks. At this time, Greek ethnocentrism becomes stronger, making it possible for the representatives of other ethnic groups, living in the empire, making perfect knowledge of Greek language and culture a measure of being "Roman". In reality, this meant Hellenism, equipped with an international-cosmopolitan content, but the way to such knowledge seemed not quite easy for non-Greeks, but necessarily to be gone through. This phenomenon is linked in the literature to the renewed doctrine of Constantine Porphyrogenitus about the "chosenness" of the Greeks, with which are imbued his teachings to his son. The idea of the Byzantines' "chosenness" comes from the Roman-Greek chosenness, revived by the Macedonian emperors. Constantine Porphyrogenitus expressed it most clearly of all. By doing so, he substantiated the right of Byzantium to rule over other peoples, and the French scholar calls it Roman "racism" (Ahrweiler, 1975: 35-36). Constantine Porphyrogenitus somehow summarized the political-theological thought of the Macedonian emperors about the empire and gave it a more systematic look. According to his doctrine, empire - this is the "ship of the world", emperor - Christ among the apostles - - unlimited ruler, Constantinople, the share of the Virgin and the world capital, the service of the divine empire is the moral duty of the Roman citizens notwithstanding are they rulers or subjects. Porphyrogenitus, in order to keep the "divine" imperial order intact, demanded of all obedient peoples, whether pagan or Christian, complete obedience and a uniform mindset, which could only be achieved through a common language. (Константин Багрянородный 1989: 53-54; Moravcsik, Jenkins 1967: PP. 45,47 ).

According to this doctrine, since access to the truth was possible only in Greek, which was recognized as a sacred language, it was the state duty of the "chosen people" to establish imperial order among the peoples under its orbit (barbarians and semi-barbarians) to protect them from the excruciation, coming from their own language and convince them that for acquiring Orthodox

knowledge the Greek language had no alternative. Such an imperial task was relatively easily solved directly among the peoples within the borders of the empire; but among the peoples who already had a long literary tradition, the Greeks faced great resistance. At such times Byzantium intensified political and cultural pressure on the allies. One of the manifestations of this was the accusation of heresy from the Greeks and the bringing of these accusations into the quality of politics. The creator of the Slavic alphabet, Constantine-Cyril, may have been even an exception among the Greeks, who feared of his countrymen to be accused of heresy. During the controversy in Venice, when he was attacked by the German clergy from the position of the "three holy languages", he defended the rights of "other peoples" to praise God in their own language. In response, he used the Psalm (149-150), which states that the Lord Himself gave every spiritual right to be praised, while quoting a gospel episode, in which Christ appeared to his disciples and bequeathed his doctrine in "new" languages to preach his doctrine (Mark, 16: 15-17). In addition, he reminded opponents of the peoples of the Christian East, having their alphabet, including Armenians and Georgians, who performed religious services in their own languages (Obolensky, 1971: PP.142-143).

Apparently, Georgians also faced such problems. Among them were, the victims of the accusation of heresy from the Greeks, the Georgians working on Mount Sinai, in response to which seems to be written Ioane-Zosime's "Praise and Exaltation of the Georgian language." In this original thought, appears the "soundness" of Messianic nationalism based on "eschatological logic", with which the author tries to express the superiority of the Georgian language over the Greek language.<sup>4</sup> But, if such a way of arguing with the Greeks was in the case of Ioane-Zosime, his individual choice (as, for example, of the Bulgarian Khrabri) (Obolensky, 1971: PP. 151-153) establishment of the Georgian Monastery of Athos was already the fruit of joint judgment of scholars and politicians. From Athos begins transfer of the vector of development of Georgian culture to the stage of Byzantinization. For Georgians, as for other peoples of the Christian East, protection of the rights of their own languages meant protection of their cultural identities, strengthened during the centuries, which did not contradict the idea of Greco-Byzantine teaching as a civilizational choice at all. That is why these peoples chose the principle of equalization with the rich Greek as a way of developing their own languages, which required a long and purposeful creative work; that is why the Athonites were the first, who recognized the "infancy" of Georgian language (doborjginidze 2010: 104-108). and directed great efforts to overcome it. The event that this process did not depend only on the spontaneous initiatives of the monks and religious persons and was part of a far-reaching political program, is well substantiated by Georgian scholars, who rely on information about the "lives" of Georgian Athonites and colophons of the Athos manuscripts on the regular involvement of the highest political actors -

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<sup>4</sup> The same circumstances led to the introduction of the Byzantine idea of being Virgin Mary's share on Georgian soil, which was transformed into the idea that Virgin Mary particularly protects Georgian language, in the creative work of the Athonites and further developed in Georgian literature of the XI-XII centuries (makharashvili, 2009: 209-221; ch'qoidze, 2012: 151-160).

kings and the highest ecclesiastical and secular aristocracy in the foundation of the Monastery (k'ek'elidze 1980: 59-65; lolashvili 1982: 44-45; met'reveli 1996: 107-114).

Already the first generations of Athos scribes maintained their linguistic identity through the principles of selection of Byzantine literary material and the gradual refinement of translation methods, and laid the foundation of scientifically accurate and religiously sound and reliable translation. The work, started by the Athonites, was taken to an even higher level by their ideological successors already in the monasteries of Antioch. It was their attitude towards the translation material that completed the great and, arguably, most daring project that the Athonite fathers began. As a result of their translation and philological activities philosophical, legal and dogmatic texts and the relevant terminology developed in Georgian language (otkhmezuri 2011: 7-16).

It was a gradual process of linguistic emancipation, which brought about really systemic changes in the Georgian elite society of that time. It raised the quality of education of the "the Georgians in origin", established a new paradigmatic ideal of a scholar and translator as an educator in the society, legalized firm criteria for mastering "Greek scholars" and knocked the bottom out off the constant accusations of the Greeks about heresy. The expansion of the functional capabilities of the Georgian language qualitatively changed the educational affair, which was later revealed in founding of the Gelati Academy and, apparently, Ikalto's Academy as well (qaukhchishvili 1955: 229-230; lolashvili 1978: 84-86).

In the middle of the 11th century, Dogmaticon was translated from Greek into Georgian, and at the end of the century, the Great Nomocanon. The wide state and public importance of these monuments is invaluable. These books have long been used in Georgia to teach the basics of dogmatics and the justice system. This gave rise to the possibility of establishing an official apparatus, educated in Byzantine dogmatics and justice, which had a decisive influence on the strengthening of the novice Georgian monarchy.<sup>5</sup> It also created an educated feudal civil elite and prepared the ground for development of the secular literature. Such expansion of the functions of Georgian language in the feudal society naturally led to the formation of a highly educated elite, who set a new standard for linguistic independence.

### Conclusions:

Despite the sharp military-political confrontations with Byzantium, the Georgian society of the XI century was still reaping the positive results of this great cultural process. As it seems, it was in consequence of this process that the perception of language as a bearer of statehood and cultural identity expanded in the collective consciousness of the elites of that time. Exactly the echo of such a perception or imagination can be seen in "The Life of Kartli", where its editor, Leonti Mroveli, includes into the state measures of the founder of Georgian statehood, King Parnavaz, the story of creation of

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<sup>5</sup> It is known that high-rank Byzantine civil and ecclesiastical officials (e.g., Photios, Nicholas the Mystic, etc.) who were theoretically formulating and practically implementing Byzantine politics, were mainly graduates of the Magnavr Academy.

Georgian literacy and dominant importance of Georgian language. Here the editor, of course, for ideological purposes, shifts the historical and cultural context of his time to the distant past. In this way he emphasizes the antiquity of the Georgian literary language, its long history and public value. By such presentation of the language, Leonti Mroveli formulates a new and strong argument in favor of the sovereignty of the young Georgian monarchy.

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