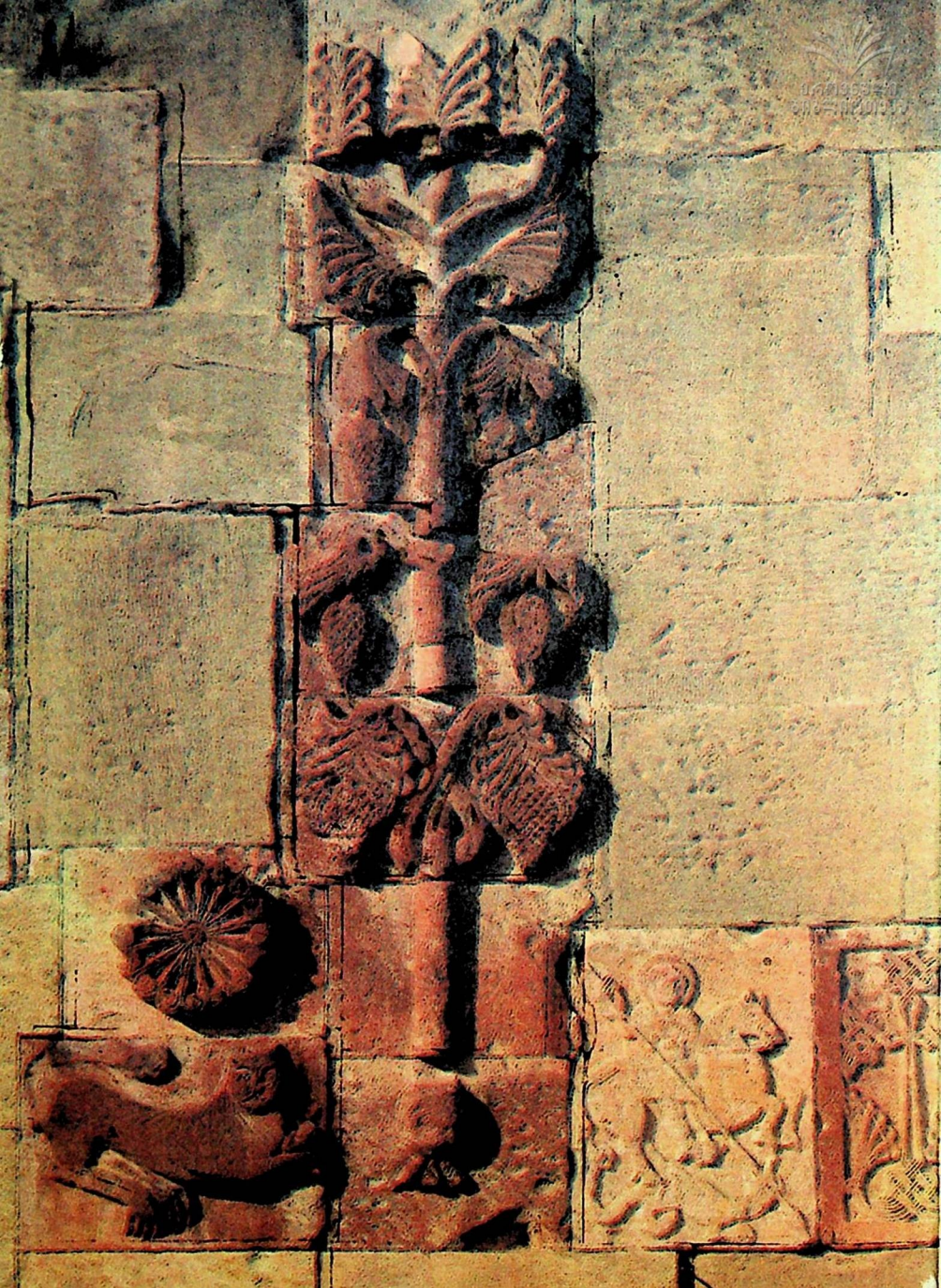


ZVIAD
GAMSAKHURDIA

**THE SPIRITUAL
MISSION
OF GEORGIA**





დამარხულ არს ენაჲ ქართული
დღედმდე მეორედ მოსლვისა მისი-
სა საწამებელად, რაჲთა ვოველსა ენასა
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ქებაჲ და დიდებაჲ
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„განათლება“
თბილისი 1991

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The present collection comprises three lectures and one essay. The author, Zviad Gamsakhurdia, is well known in Georgia and beyond her borders as the leader of the national-liberation movement, a scholar, writer, and champion of culture.

The lectures deal with questions of theology, mythology, ethnology, hermeneutics, and history of religion. At first sight the author's style of thinking may seem unusual to the reader, yet it is safe to say that it marks a new development in Georgian scholarship. Its significance is enhanced by the need, at this time of national revival, of showing the genuine essence of freedom, and of taking the right path in the search for a contemporary interpretation of Christianity.

The first lecture was read last year. Here is what one of our contemporaries wrote about it: "The extensive paper, entitled "The Spiritual Mission of Georgia", presented by Zviad Gamsakhurdia in 1990, at the large concert hall of the Tbilisi Philharmonic House was a culmination of the Idriart Festival. The interest evoked by the lecture was so great that the foreign guests (from Germany, Switzerland, Britain, the USA, and other countries) specially met the author on the following day to discuss the crucial developments in the chronicle of Georgian life, their spiritual essence and the specific impact of these events both on the pagan and on the Christian worlds. This lecture, delivered at the Idriart Festival, completely changed our morale by bringing a revived Christian impulse into our march to freedom".

The second lecture, "The Praise and Glorification of the Georgian Language", was presented last year at the Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University. It was published earlier in the Tsiskari magazine (N 3, 1987).



The third lecture, "The Spiritual Ideals of the Gelati Academy", was read by the author last year at the Lado Meskhishvili Drama Theatre in Kutaisi. In the words of some Kutaisians the lecture "reminded us of the genuinely enlightened Kutaisi - dimmed early in this century - and transferred us there for a couple of hours".

The essay "Konstantine Gamsakhurdia and Christianity" - published here for the first time - was read by the author in a narrow circle of friends, as he was not permitted to present it at Konstantine Gamsakhurdia's anniversary session in 1983.

The subject matter presented here forms a single whole, reflecting the stages of Georgian spiritual self-knowledge and defining the role and significance of the Georgian ethnos in the shaping of the universal principles of civilization.

Vakhtang Bakhtadze

THE SPIRITUAL MISSION OF GEORGIA



A LECTURE DELIVERED AT THE *IDRIART FESTIVAL* IN
TBILISI. PHILHARMONIC HOUSE. 2 MAY, 1990

Dear friends: As it is quite impossible to do justice to such a complex theme in a single lecture, my address will inevitably be in the nature of an overview. I shall try to give a general outline of the problems upon which I and my friends have reflected over the past years, I shall also touch upon the results of separate studies carried out in Georgia as well as in the West.


The plan of the lecture will be as follows: I shall first speak about the ethnogeny of the Georgians. As I am aware that our Western guests are particularly interested in this topic, I shall treat of such aspects that may not be known to them and are given scant attention in present-day Western scholarship. Furthermore, during the long period of Soviet ideological dictatorship much in the history of Georgian culture has been hushed, distorted, and tabooed. This field of knowledge had been placed under a kind of ban, which regrettably, continues to the present day, for it is not so easy to shake oneself free of the effects of the hypnosis of that notorious period. Many issues have been falsified and usurped by Soviet imperial scholarship and subjected to its interests. Unfortunately, Georgian scholars too have come under this influence. I do not want to name them personally; they still do not dare to carry on research along lines that would shed light on these issues. All this was being done with momentous and far-reaching objectives in mind. In this connection, a major campaign was launched against the Georgian scholars Ivane Javakhishvili and Niko Marr. The studies of such major scholars as Wilhelm Humboldt and others in the sphere of the ethnogeny of the Iberians were shelved. This was being done with the purpose of instilling an inferiority complex in the Georgian nation. Soviet scholarship, particularly the classics of Marxism-Leninism founded a theory (see Stalin's theory in this connection) according to which the Georgian nation allegedly took shape in the nineteenth century; prior to the indicated period - this theory would have us believe - it was neither a nation nor did it exist; the advent of capitalism in Georgia in the past century deter-

mined, according to this theory, the development of the Georgian people into a nation. This is a Marxist theory which prevails to the present day and which some of our scholars cannot get rid of, continuing to labour under it. All this had far-reaching implications.

What is the actual situation with regard to the Georgian ethnogeny? In the twentieth century, the leading Georgian scholars Acad. I. Javakhishvili and N. Marr made a study of the genetic roots of the Georgian nation, but their conclusions were bitterly opposed by orthodox Soviet scholarship. At the same time, as noted above, the studies, of the great German scholar Wilhelm Humboldt were passed over in silence. Wherein lay the essence of these studies, why have they been taboo to the present day, and why is modern ethnological and linguistic research not developing in this direction?

To begin with, Humboldt's research into the Basque language and the ancient population of the Iberian peninsula led him to the conclusion that the primary, autochthonous population of Southern Europe, viz. the Iberian peninsula, Italy, and the Mediterranean islands, was Iberian. This population was called proto-Iberian, the later European population stemming from it. The term Mediterranean race (or people) is also used in scholarship. In order to refer to the people of the Caucasian race use is also made of the terms palaeo-Caucasian or ancient Caucasian race and ancient-Mediterranean race, the terms being interchangeable. I am referring to the population diffused from the Iberian peninsula, into the Mediterranean and Aegean basins, the Balkans, into modern Greece, the Caucasus, and the territory of modern India as well as into Asia Minor and Palestine. This is the area of diffusion of the proto-Iberian people which, according to Humboldt, had many offshoots. These people had a single basic language with many dialectal branches, and even if these dialects assumed the character of separate languages, they remained kindred and developed as mutually related languages. That is why the term proto-Iberian gained currency, to which - as I have just said - the ancient population of the Iberian peninsula and Italy, in particular, Basque, Lusitanian, Etruscan, Pelasgian, etc. is linked. Further, Marr studied the language of the Sumerians, the ancient Iberian tribes of Asia Minor and Mesopotamia, while the eminent Georgian scholar Mikheil Tsereteli researched the genetic relationship of Sumerian and modern Georgian.

Marr's studies, as well as those carried out by objective representatives of Armenian scholars (e.g. Ghapantsian), have shown that a considerable part of the Asia Minor population belonged to the proto-Iberian race, represented by the Meskhians or Moschoi, Cappadocians, Colchi-

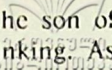


ans, Taochoi, and others. Thus, there are different branches of one and the same people referred to in scholarship as Kartvelian or proto-Iberian, while Georgia or the Georgian nation proper - located in the Caucasus - is linked to the Iberian-Caucasian branch. Of the numerous branches of Iberian, at present Pyrenean (Spanish) Iberian or Basque and Caucasian Iberian or Georgian (with its related tribes in the Northern Caucasus) have survived. The rest have already been assimilated into the Indo-European part of mankind. The Indo-Europeans seem to have arrived in Europe later, viz. after the second millennium B.C., whereas the proto-Iberian or palaeo-Mediterranean and palaeo-Caucasian population is believed to have been on the upgrade from earliest times to the third millennium B.C. The decline of these people, i. e. their numerical diminishment and assimilation by the newly arriving Indo-Europeans, commenced in the third millennium. From this time and later, the Hittite and Ancient Greek or Hellenic worlds come to the fore. But there occurred a synthesis of cultures: the primary cultures of Minos, the Aegean cultures, and Colchian (Ancient Colchian) cultures, the latter being closely connected with Minoan, became linked to the Mediterranean or proto-Iberian people. Subsequently - from the second millennium B.C. - the Hittite world, which was already Indo-European, began to advance to the foreground, along with the ancient Greek world, stemming from the Vedic Greek tribe that had come to the territory on which later arose the ancient Greek world with its culture. On the basis of the evidence of Greek historians the primordial population of ancient Greece is defined as Pelasgic or proto-Iberian. The Pelasgians formed a branch of the proto-Iberians, similarly to the Etruscans, the Colchians, and other peoples. The Colchian, Pelasgian, Trojan, and Minoan were closely related worlds, and for practical purposes of study can be considered as constituting one single world, a world reflected in the great epic of Homer. Modern scholarship's serious studies of this civilization have not been given adequate publicity. In the West, the well-known scholar Furnée is engaged in research along these lines; he has published a significant study of pre-Greek, or Pelasgic, and Kartvelian. In Georgia, Professor Rismag Gordeziani is doing fruitful work in this direction; he too has made important inferences in studying the ethnogeny of the tribes mentioned in the *Iliad*, as well as the role of Kartvelian or proto-Georgian tribes in the Trojan War. Light has been shed in his studies on the genetic relation of the Georgian language to Etruscan and of Kartvelian tribes to the Lycians, Carians, and the entire world of Asia Minor and the Aegean - primarily to Troy. The Trojan world was older than the

Hellenic, for the Greeks fought in Troy in order to secure the sacred, mysterious wisdom of the Palladium. Troy is the same Colchian world for in the dispute of the Achaeans with the Trojans the latter explain the abduction of Helen as a kind of revenge for the earlier carrying off of Medea by the Achaeans. The Trojans remonstrate with the Achaeans saying that inasmuch as earlier they had been deprived of a woman i. e. Medea, now Helen had been carried off in retaliation; thus, the Colchians appear in the role of the abductors. The Trojans and the Colchians are a people of the same stock as that which constitutes the population of the entire Mediterranean Basin and the bulk of the population of Asia Minor. Such are the far-reaching findings of modern scholarship but, as noted above, all this is passed over in silence and instead the role of the Indo-Europeans in that archaic period is being boosted. Yet, as is known, the Indo-European people largely gained ascendancy from the second millennium, and the Trojan War, described in the *Iliad*, actually occurred at a time when the Indo-Europeans had already gained the upper hand both in Asia Minor and in Greece, while the Pelasgian people were threatened with a decline, though Achilles, the greatest hero of the Trojan War, is of Pelasgic origin, i.e. a representative of the Kartvelian people, while Agamemnon and Menelaus are of purely Hellenic extraction, representing the Hellenic world. Here we are dealing with an obvious conflict between the Hellenic and proto-Georgian worlds: Troy is the proto-Georgian world, whereas the Achaeans represent its Hellenic counterpart. One of the main objectives of the campaign, one that stands out in the conflict, is to carry off the Palladium, which is symbolically effected through the Trojan horse. True, symbolically we here have the motif of the abduction of a woman, but Helen is the symbol of the ancient pagan Sophia (the abduction of Wisdom or Sophia, and its subsequent retrieval is a widespread motif in Classical poems), while the horse is known to have been the symbol of intelligence in ancient epic poetry and mythos. The Achaean Greek mission of developing intelligence was already a new stage of consciousness, while ancient Colchian, Trojan, Pelasgic culture was a clairvoyant one which preceded intellectual, reasoning culture. Ancient Greek mythos was in reality not Greek but Pelasgic, as noted by the eminent German philosopher Schelling, who defined the Pelasgic period in the development of Greece as Sabism, i.e. the period of clairvoyant wisdom. From Greek mythology of the subsequent period we learn that Perseus and other heroes transferred the clairvoyant, Pelasgic culture to a reasoning culture, viz. intellectual, Greek culture.

The Promethean myth is also related to the foregoing. Who was Prometheus? Generally speaking, mythos and mythology are not identical notions. Mythos is the universe of myths, while mythology is the interpretation, meaning, or logos of this universe of myths, i.e. the logos or reason of mythos. Thus, the Greek myths were created by the Pelasgians, while the Hellenes systematized and interpreted them. Homer and Hesiod were not the creators of Greek myths but the systematizers and interpreters of the mythos of the Pelasgic period. They were mythologizers, while the names of the mythographers of the Pelasgic period have not come down to us, but the gods - personages of mythos - have survived. The principal gods of the ancient Greek pantheon are of Pelasgic origin, including Zeus. A Pelasgic chthonic Zeus whose cult is connected with the oak is known to have existed; Hera was an ancient Pelasgic-Iberian goddess; also Demeter, in connection with whose stem Acad. I. Javakhishvili pointed out that the stem *de* is absolutely alien to the ancient Greek language. To be sure, *meter* does mean mother, but *de* is a stem of purely Iberian origin, *de* or *deda* denoting mother-goddess. Thus, Demeter is the image in which the ancient Colchian or Pelasgian mother-goddess became fused with the ancient Greek goddess. This is how the ancient Greek pantheon became grafted, as it were, on the proto-Georgian, proto-Iberian, or Pelasgic pantheon.

To return to Prometheus, The myth of Prometheus is most important from the viewpoint of the evolution of humankind as well as of the ethnogeny of the Georgians, for the myth in question is known to be linked to the Caucasus, and hence it is not fortuitous that the basic developments of the Greek mythos are connected with the Caucasus. Let us recall the expedition of the Argonauts and the chaining of Prometheus to the Caucasus Range - both major events in Greek mythology. The mission of the personages of mythos - their spiritual identity - was always defined by their names. The names of the personages of mythos (as you are aware, myths were created in ancient mysteries by the priests, devotees, and adepts), as well as the names of gods, demigods, titans, and heroes were directly related to their essential function. Thus, Prometheus [*pro-metheia*, *pro-metheo*] in Greek means prophetic thinking, foresight, forethought, while Epimetheus, his brother's name, means deliberative thinking or afterthought: What does Prometheus stand for? He is a representative of the mankind that must develop prophetic or intuitive thinking, while Epimetheus is to develop reasoning or intellectual thought. Prometheus is the son of Iapetus. The latter name is defined by Zeno of Elea as the upper, spiritual world - Iapetus, i. e. what



Strives upward, to the spiritual world. Thus, Prometheus is the son of the upper or spiritual world, in other words, of prophetic thinking. As observed by Plutarch, ancient Greek myths - as well as all myths in general - could be interpreted at twelve different levels. One of the principal interpretations of the Prometheus myths in the evolution of mankind is the stage at which thinking becomes chained to man's physical body with the descent of his soul into it, thus becoming trapped in this physical body. Now, the liberation of Prometheus who is chained to the Caucasus Range is the liberation of this thinking from the bodily principle. The liberated Prometheus is liberated prophetic thinking, while the chained Prometheus is thinking chained to man's physical body. This is the stage in mankind's evolution known as sinking of human essence or soul into the physical body; subsequently, the soul is liberated from matter. This is one - the spiritual, philosophical - aspect of the Prometheus myth.

The second aspect is ethnological, namely that Prometheus is the symbol of the ethnos or people that is to develop a culture of mysteries, with all its consequences, viz. of spiritual development, initiation, and spiritual thinking. Such is this people, whereas Zeus - viewed from this angle - embodies a people that came to Greece later, established its cult by force, and chained Prometheus to the Caucasus Range. What was the cause of this punishment? It was the meeting of the representatives of two cultures or peoples in Corinth, one aligned to Prometheus, and the other to Zeus. This was a symbolic reflection of the coming together of two cultures or peoples: one was the indigenous, primordial Greek population and the other, newly come, Indo-European or Hellenic. At this meeting, Prometheus and his attendant priests cheat Zeus and his friends in sharing the sacrificial ox. The deception of Zeus' priests was made possible because the intellect and thinking of Prometheus' priests were more advanced. It is symbolic of the superior intellectual development of the indigenous people: in other words, Pelasgic culture that the newly come Indo-Europeans found in Greece was superior to theirs. The culture of thought was correspondingly higher. Subsequently the Indo-Europeans raised the Greek culture of thought to the highest stage of development. However, this was still the period of the first confrontation of the two peoples, when Prometheus' priests divide the ox in such a way that the bones and fat fall to Zeus, and the best parts of the animal to themselves. This too is symbolic, for here we are dealing with a dual interpretation of the offering, Zeus' priests pretending to have deliberately allowed themselves to be cheated. Then Zeus addresses Prometheus:

- The son of Iapetus, the noblest of all rulers, the greatest seer of the future, friend, why did you share the ox thus?

Zeus is late in perceiving what Prometheus has done. Having understood Prometheus' quality, Zeus refuses to give fire to mankind and chains Prometheus to the Caucasus Range as a punishment for his having provided men with it. Here fire is a symbol of man's self. As you know, among the four elements (fire, water, earth and air) it is fire that corresponds to man's self or identity. Zeus' refusal to give mankind its identity, which it therefore lacks, and Prometheus' provision of men with fire, i.e. their identity, reflects a definite stage in the development of mysterious culture when men received the self by descending into the physical body; now the chaining of Prometheus is precisely the stage at which man's soul and his self descend from the spiritual world into the physical body and man becomes aware of his self. (Incidentally, the burial of the Titans in Tartarus following their struggle with the gods has the same implication). This is the consequence of Prometheus' provision of mankind with fire, for all culture comes from self, in the same way as civilization follows from the use of fire. We learn from such symbols that Prometheus reflects the culture of mysteries that was primordial in ancient Greece and later became located in the Caucasus, which is reflected symbolically in the chaining of Prometheus to the Caucasus Range.

Prometheus is tormented by Zeus' eagle. On the one hand, the eagle is a symbol of spiritual flight upward and cognition, and on the other, it symbolizes imperial power and violence that torments Prometheus. Prometheus chained to a rock, or thought chained to the physical body, was released by Heracles.

What does Heracles represent? He represents a new culture of initiation - volitional, heroic initiation - a prototype of Christian initiation. In general, the ancient Greek mysteries were prophetic in character. The central mysteries of ancient Greece were mysteries of "Eloizis". This is an ancient Greek word and means a future event, what is to come to pass, prophecy. The image of Heracles is a prototype of Christian initiation, linked to volition, the activity of the soul and particularly to what is called taking of the Kingdom of Heaven by force in Christianity, for the essence of the Christian initiation is interpreted by Christ as the taking of the Kingdom of Heaven by force ("The Kingdom of Heaven is taken by the power of will"). Thus the feats of Heracles should be understood symbolically as the various stages of initiation of the different levels of spiritual development, culminating in the liberation of Prometheus, or

the liberation of thought from the captivity of the physical body, and the redemption of mankind.

The foregoing interpretation of myths has ethnological implications, mythology and ethnology being closely related. The myths suggest the liberation of the people that had been chained or relegated to the Caucasus by Zeus or an Indo-European people. Thus the past and the future of the proto-Georgian or proto-Iberian people found reflection in the myth of Prometheus. Heracles - as already observed - is a symbolic expression of a new initiatory culture, viz. Christian culture, and by the way, this is so not only in modern spiritual science but in medieval theology as well. Even in Byzantine theology we come across writings hinting at Heracles being a prototype of Christ. For example, Heracles' causing water to gush from a rock with his wand is considered a prototype of Christianity. The voyage of the Argonauts is also a prototype of Christian initiation; nor is it accidental that the Golden Fleece is referred to in spiritual science as the classical Grail. The Golden Fleece in the Classical period was the same as the Grail and the philosophers' stone in the Middle Ages, the two being identical notions. Search for the philosophers' stone is not only a search for physical gold but also a search for spiritual initiation, for god, and for a definite developmental level of spiritual consciousness conveyed in Classical Greek mysteries as a quest for the Golden Fleece. The latter, as you are well aware, was preserved in Colchis, the golden ram having flown to Colchis from Greece. But this was a period when Pelasgic culture was flourishing in Greece, namely the Pelasgic culture of Argos. It is not fortuitous that the ship was called Argo, for the stem of the word is of Colchian provenance; note the Georgian place names Argo, Argveti, Egrisi, containing the Colchian stem *gr*. The expedition to Colchis was symbolically or imaginatively undertaken in quest of mysterious wisdom which at the time was preserved in Colchis alone, no longer existing in the territory of Greece or in the countries of the Mediterranean basin. Consider also Theseus' travel to Crete - again to acquire the wisdom that no longer existed in Classical Greece.

Note that the greatest heroes of Greece: Theseus, Heracles, and Jason (incidentally, Heracles too was on board the Argo), set out in quest of spiritual or mysterious wisdom in countries of proto-Georgian, proto-Iberian origin. Minoan Crete was one such country (incidentally, Minos means a bearer of reason, a thinker); Theseus' arrival in Crete, his entrance of the Labyrinth, slaying of the Minotaur, and coming out purported the adoption of the Minoan culture that was older than and supe-

prior to ancient Greek culture. The same refers to ancient Colchian culture which was at the time at a higher level than its Greek counterpart. (It is not accidental that Aetes' sister Pasiphae was Minos' wife). Thus, the expeditions of these heroes were invariably directed to Kartvelian countries. Heracles too goes to the Garden of the Hesperides in Spanish Iberia to fetch the apples.

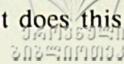
The myth of Orpheus, too, gives his main objective as the revival of the cult of his Pelasgian ancestors. Orpheus was of Pelasgian origin, the son of Oeagrus (incidentally, the name of Orpheus' father directly coincides with the name of Colchis: Egrisi, Egri). His purpose was to breathe new life into Pelasgian culture that had declined in the Hellenic period.

As for the voyage of the Argonauts, as noted above, it deals with different stages of ancient Greek, specifically Doric, initiation, and it is no mere chance that Doric - active - initiation is related to the Colchian world. Now, in medieval Byzantine theology, Germanus the Patriarch of Constantinople wrote his *Miracles of the Archangels* describing the voyage of the Argonauts to Colchis; the expedition is under the patronage of the Christian Archangel Michael. The Archangel, "a terrible power sent from heaven", reveals himself to the Argonauts, predicting their future success. You will have noted the peculiar interpretation of the pagan myth by Germanus - at first sight a representative of the exoteric Church: the "terrible power sent from heaven" is the Archangel Michael, and the voyage of the Argonauts is linked to the mission of Michael - the principal solar archangel of Christianity - power of God, as he is defined. (Significantly enough, Germanus the Patriarch was of Colchian origin - a Laz).

Such are the links between pagan and Christian initiation, connected with proto-Georgian mysterious centres.

In Pindar's Fourth Ode, Jason - as a figure and hero - is referred to as panther-skinned; he is not only the procurer of the Golden Fleece but a panther-skin hero as well. In general, panther-skin heroes are related to the proto-Georgian world. However, panther-skin priests occur in Egyptian mysteries too. Incidentally, the Trojan Paris also wears a panther skin, as do other Trojan heroes. The Dionysiac processions too were led by a panther, Dionysus himself wearing a panther's skin. Thus the skin of a panther is an ancient totemic image of Japhetic mankind or the Caucasian race.

Now, I should like to go back to the discussion of the ancient, proto-Iberian race. It will be recalled that Acad. Marr's terms Japhetic race

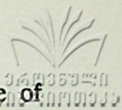


and Japhetic language have gained ground in scholarship. What does this imply?

You are aware of the existence of the notion of Semitic peoples and languages, as well as of Hamitic peoples related to ancient Egypt, and generally Africa. There is also the Japhetic race. The three Biblical brothers symbolically reflect branches of humankind, viz. Noah reflects the Atlantic or pre-Flood humanity i.e. the developmental stage of mankind before Atlantis was swallowed up by the sea, while his children were representatives of the post-Atlantis human race.. Japhetic is one of their branches and incidentally, the Japheth of the Old Testament is related to the Iapetus of ancient Greek mythology. It is not fortuitous that Iapetus was Prometheus' father; Japheth is identical to Iapetus, as is also the planet Jupiter and Jupiter's race, white race. As is known, in esoterism the races are related to the planets: the White race to Jupiter, the Black to Mercury, the Red to Venus, and the Yellow or Mongolian to Mars. The first substrate of Jupiter's race is precisely this Japhetic, proto-European or proto-Iberian mankind. This is how the mission of the proto-European, palaeo-Caucasian and Mediterranean people is linked to that of Jupiter's race. So much for the Classical, pagan period.

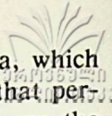
Now apropos of the Christian period. The advent of Christianity in Georgia is connected with the opening centuries of our era. The presence of two Apostles - Andrew and Simon the Cananaian - in Georgia is not accidental; these were the first and the last apostles: Andrew was the first called, while Simon was the last to come to Christ, this being the symbol of their representing the alpha and omega, i.e. the beginning and the end. What part did the Kartvelian peoples play in the development of Christianity, in particular of Christianity propounded by the Archangel Michael, and why is the land called Georgia?

As you know, the Archangel Michael had prototypes in the Classical, i.e. pre-Christian, period. This was a being that appeared in the shape of gods protecting fertility, as gods of the weather or thunderstorms, such as Indra in ancient India, Marduk in the Mesopotamian world, Tarhu in the palaeo-Caucasian world - a panther skin god of thunderstorm. In caves, this god was always depicted as attired in the panther's skin. The panther's skin is an attribute of a being known in antiquity under the name of Indra, Marduk, Tarhu, and in the Christian period as Michael and Saint George. Saint George is the earthly aspect of Michael. Michael represents the spiritual world, i.e. the mental aspect, whereas St. George is Michael's aspect on the historical plane, i.e. in the physical world. But how did the name George become linked to our country?



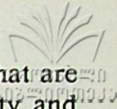
Already the ancient Greeks called the Georgian *georgoi* because of the advancement of agriculture in this country. *georgos* means "a tiller of the ground" but, at the same time, the cult of St. George is connected with farming, particularly with the control of fertility, weather, atmospheric phenomena. This was the case in early Georgia - hence the Georgian national deity: White George. Now, the Christian St. George was a historical figure, being at the same time the earthly image of the spiritual Archangel Michael, both slayers of the dragon. This image and its worship were most congenial to the Georgian people, hence Christianity in Georgia acquired the worship of St. George. Christianity in its pure form existed for the clergy, the feudal class and the royal court, but popular Christianity in Georgia may be said to have merged with the worship of St. George. However, this does not mean that the cult of George eclipsed Christianity. In George the Georgians perceived not only a Cappadocian saint but a Christian God as well, seeing God in the combative, dragon-slaying image of St. George. Thus Michael's spiritual aspect of Christianity was the closest to Georgia. The name of the country became linked to George, who later became not only the principal saint of the Georgian nation but also the image of a Christian God. It should be noted that theology knows of different images and aspects of God. Even in the Apocalypse, the Messiah, God, or Christ is represented as a heavenly rider on a white horse (Rev. 19, 11-15). The familiar traditional images of Christ do not exhaust His essence. There is also another image - a fighting, dragon-slaying one - as found in the Revelation. This is precisely the prototype of St. George that proved most congenial to the Georgians. By the way, the eminent Georgian scholar Ivane Javakhishvili noted that the cult of St. George in Georgia was an unprecedented phenomenon. Cases are on record of the festivals of the Trinity, Christmas and Easter being "absorbed" by the festival of St. George, and of churches built in the name of the festivals just cited being identified with St. George; thus, St. George is identified with God, for he is an image not only of a particular saint but of God as well.

Incidentally, the American scholar Jobses observes that St. George holds the same position in Georgia as Christ does. But this is wrong, for we are dealing not with the similarity of positions but with Christianity in Georgia being imaginatively or symbolically presented in a militant aspect. Essentially, Georgian Christianity may be said to be militant Christianity. It is a Christianity of knights, fighters, and it may be said also that Georgia was a single spiritual Order of St. George, and it was perceived as such by the Crusaders and by foreign visitors of the coun-



try, this leading to the establishment of the designation Georgia, which of course comes from the pagan period. It was only foreigners that perceived the Georgians in this way. True, the Georgians did not use the word Georgian as a self-designation, but we are all well aware of the level of the cult of St. George in Georgia, and of the role this saint and its image plays in Georgian history. There is no other image that would express the national character more adequately. Here we should recall the principal monuments of Georgian literature and their relation to Michael's Christianity - the worship of St. George. The Second aspect of Christian Georgia's mission is linked to Georgia being a country fallen by lot to the Mother of God. Why is Georgia assigned to the Mother of God? This is because the principal divinity of the Japhetid or Kartvelian people was Mother-Goddess appearing in various aspects in different branches of this people, hence her name myrionym, i.e. with myriad names. This was the central mother-goddess found by the Greek colonists in Phasis, her large statue standing at the entrance to Phasis. In this country it is known as "mother-goddess" or "mother of the place" represented as Demeter or Hera in proto-Kartvelian countries. The cult of Artemis stems from this goddess, a parallel cult existing in Svaneti as the cult of Dali. As you know, the cult of Asia Minor goddesses is related to this ancient Japhetic mother-goddess. Now, the Mother of God of the Christian period is the Christian aspect of the same goddess - the Christian image of the being that was closest to this people - and herein lies the mystic predetermination. When the Apostles cast lots to determine the country in which each should preach, Georgia fell to the Mother of God because the country was traditionally linked most to the mission of the mother of God, which is the same as that of the Holy Spirit.

As you know, the Trinity, i.e. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, is characterized by many aspects or multiformity. The hypostasis of the son, i.e. the second mode, is manifested in the Divine-masculine aspect of the Trinity, whereas the Holy Spirit is revealed in the feminine aspect or in the Mother of God. In his writings, Gregory of Nyssa states that the Holy Spirit is manifested in the Mother of God, the latter being the earthly embodiment and action of the Holy Spirit. The mission of the latter is directly related to that of the Mother of God. What is this mission? It is one of sanctification, i.e. the purification of humankind and, at the same time exposure to be effected by this principle, similar to the mission of Michael-George, viz., the development of spiritual thinking and the crushing of the universal serpent or dragon of materialism, and



of universal evil, saving mankind thereby. It is these two aspects that are linked closest to Georgia's spiritual mission. Michael's Christianity and St. George's Christianity are two aspects of the same phenomenon, on the one hand, and Sophian Christianity or Christianity connected with the Mother of God, on the other, is the aspect of Christianity which is manifested in the Mother of God or Sophia. In Classical times this being emerged as the goddess of fertility, mother goddess, or earth, while in Christianity it is manifested as Sophia or divine, cosmic wisdom. Sophia is one of the designations of the Mother of God - an image of the Mother of God or the Holy Spirit. Wisdom emanating from the Holy Spirit is expressed in Sophia. These two aspects are basic to Georgia's spiritual mission, being reflected in Georgian theology, art, and literature.

Before passing on to other problems, I shall briefly touch on Svetitskhoveli. I know that today our guests visited Svetitskhoveli, in Mtskheta. Svetitskhoveli is the church in which Georgia's mission, Georgian spirituality, and Georgian Christianity have found most profound and all-round reflection. You are aware of the uniqueness of this church for, as far as I know, in no other Christian church can one find a cult pillar. A pillar, more precisely two pillars, did exist in the temple built by Solomon in Jerusalem, while here a Christian temple has been built around a pillar. The pillar was the initial foundation of this church. The story of its construction is linked to that of the raising of the pillar, the latter symbolically embodying the tree of life. Historically, too, a cedar, which is a symbol of the tree of life, had grown at the site. The cedar was cut down and, by the prayers of Saint Nino, the Angels raised it and the first church of St. Nino was built on the spot. Svetitskhoveli was built later at the same site. It is an allegorical church, similar to the house of the Lord built by Solomon. In what sense is the latter allegorical? Two pillars were erected by Solomon in the temple, one embodying the tree of life and the other the tree of knowledge. Now, in Svetitskhoveli we have a single pillar. The question may be asked as to the reason for this difference. It is because Solomon's temple was connected with the Old Testament, i.e. esoteric Judaism, when the tree of life and the tree of knowledge were still separate, whereas the mission of Christian initiation is a harmonic merger of the tree of life and the tree of knowledge into an integral whole, hence the single pillar in Svetitskhoveli in contrast to the two of Solomon's edifice. This also points to the unity of esoteric Judaism and esoteric Christianity. As is known, there was a Jewish community in Mtskheta that adopted Christianity at an early



date, for they saw the unity between esoteric Judaism and Christianity. One representative of the Mtskheta Jews was present at the crucifixion of Christ. Our Lord's tunic falling to him by lot, the man brought it to Mtskheta where it was buried under the pillar, together with his sister Sidonia. The Lord's tunic is a symbol of cosmic ether that envelops Christ, and the tree of life, which rises above the place where the tunic is buried, is connected with it. Merged in this tree of life is also the tree of knowledge which stood separate at the pre-Christian stage; here is given the ideal of the future - the mission of future Christianity. Other symbols of Svetitskhoveli also point to the extensive development of esoteric Christianity in Georgia. Thus, on the southern wall of Svetitskhoveli we see St. George with a lion and a panther. Let us recall the struggle of the principal character of *The Man in the Panther's Skin* with a lion and a panther. I should note at this point that in some Georgian bas-reliefs, e.g. the Mravaldzali one, St. George is slaying a panther rather than a dragon. The panther is identified with the dragon slain by St. George, i.e. a symbol of the base instincts that are defeated by the human self in the process of initiation. This is what we perceive on the southern wall of Svetitskhoveli. On the political level this a symbol of fighting Georgia, of fighting Orthodox Christian Georgia that vanquishes political Islam - the panther or Turkey, and the lion or Iran. This bas-relief is amenable to such an interpretation too. On the inner southern wall of Svetitskhoveli we find the depiction of an apocalyptic Judgment Day, featuring many symbols interesting from the esoteric point of view, including an image of a panther as an apocalyptic beast. In this fresco the beast is depicted as a spotted panther. In general, the panther in Rustaveli's poem is spotted. Such esoteric symbols are numerous in Georgian frescoes in Georgian churches, calling for a special study and interpretation. I shall merely observe that the motifs of the Grail are very frequent in Georgian frescoes. Such motifs occur in Gelati which, as is known, was an Orthodox Montsalvat, the seat of the culture of the Grail in Georgia, and in Georgia the Grail Christianity was blended with the Orthodox Church.

In the West the exoteric or Catholic Church was separated from its esoteric counterpart, a Crusade being declared against the latter. In Georgia, however, the two formed a unity, on account of which David the Builder was called King-Priest John. What does King-Priest John mean and how should we define the period in the evolution of mankind that is linked to King-Priest John? In this connection we must recall Wolfram von Eschenbach's poem *Parzival*. King-Priest John is the son of

Parzival's half brother Feirefiz. Now, Feirefiz means a "black-and-white son". What is the significance of black-and-white? It is well known that in medieval chivalrous romances and poems the characters symbolically embody some path or idea, in other words these characters are personifications. Parzival, in particular, is the personification of the initiatory path of the West; he sets out in quest of the Grail and finds it. Feirefiz represents the integration of the Eastern and Western paths. That is why he is black-and-white, i.e. a blend of the white race with a darker one. He is black-and-white for the additional reason that in him Western Christian wisdom is blended with Arabic wisdom, as is the case with the Templars. The movement of the Templars was the Western path of initiation transferred to the East where it absorbed the oriental wisdom, namely Arabic-Persian, yielding a hybrid - the black-and-white Feirefiz, an embodiment of oriental Templar movement with its oriental colouring. Old Georgian chivalry was connected with this Templar order, primarily David the Builder, the Georgia of Queen Tamar's epoch, and Shota Rustaveli. The Templar movement is not only a Western phenomenon, for we have evidence of the closest links between Georgian knights and the Templars. It was a movement that united Western and Eastern wisdom, Western and Eastern initiation. This is why King-Priest John is the son of the black-and-white half brother of Parzival. In the Chronicles of the Crusades King-Priest John is identified with David the Builder; however, this is not only a symbol of the person of David the Builder but in general a symbol of the totality of wisdom that was born in the West and later fused with oriental wisdom. The Tabronit or the Caucasian Uplands, mentioned in Wolfram von Eschenbach's *Parzival*, is the offspring culture of this synthesized wisdom. As the poem is allegorical, Georgia is not referred to directly in it. Not a single historically known country or person is mentioned in Eschenbach's poem; it contains only symbolic and allegorical names of countries and personages, the personifications of this or that movement or path of initiation being represented by various characters; thus Parzival's father Gahmuret is a symbol of the stage when the movement of the Grail had not yet taken shape and the Grail Christianity had not appeared on the scene. Parzival is a symbol of the Grail movement itself, while Feirefiz - as already noted - is the symbol of the Grail or Templar movement transferred to the East; Eschenbach directly points to Tauronit or Georgia as the source of all this. Georgia's pseudonym, as it were, in the work under discussion is Tauronit or Tabronit. This is because the word is related to Taurus or the culture of the bull; as you know, the culture of the Bull in

the proto-Georgian or proto-Iberian world was the leading one while, cosmically, the period of the bull reigned zodiacally. Recall the Cretan-Minoan cult of the Bull, the cult of the Minotaur, the struggle with it, and so on. In this connection Eschenbach refers to it as the source of the culture of mysteries. It is to this Caucasian mountain range, this Tauronit, this fabulous land where King-Priest John reigns, that Eschenbach points to as the source of everything, viz. mysterious wisdom and mysterious culture. This is hinted at in Eschenbach's *Parzival* which, as you know, is not easy to decipher and interpret. Researchers are confronted with a number of difficulties when trying to conjecture the intent of the ciphered proper names or geographical designations. But we are more or less able to draw conclusions, for the poet points particularly to the Caucasian mountains and a land adjacent to the Caucasus Range as the source of the mysterious culture and the abode of King-Priest John in whose realm is the seat of spiritual wisdom. Incidentally, the Crusaders referred to the land as spiritual India as well; this was because in the Middle Ages India was not only a geographical term but was often used in the spiritual sense too, as the homeland of spiritual, mysterious culture. India is mentioned similarly in *The Man in the Panther's Skin*, but without reference to geographical or historical India. The same is the reference to India in Nizami Ganjevi's *Iskander-namah*, implying a world of mysteries. Hence the coincidences between the Georgian and Western cultures. Regrettably, history has not preserved much about the relationships between countries in the period under discussion, and whatever has survived still awaits study. Nevertheless, such creations as *The Man in the Panther's Skin*, *Odes*, the chivalrous romances of the West, and Wolfram von Eschenbach's *Parzival*, give indications of the intensive relations existing at the time between Georgia and the Western countries. Take, for instance, the striking kinship of *The Man in the Panther's Skin* and *Amiran-Darejaniani* with the Western chivalrous romances, though the former have their own highly peculiar specificity. Here too is the mission of Georgian culture highlighted. The traditions of Oriental and Western literatures are given in these works as a single whole. From the cultural viewpoint, Georgia's mission is to synthesize the Western and Oriental cultures, presenting them as an integral whole. This is why *The Man in the Panther's Skin* can be considered equally the possession both of Western and of Oriental literature. No division or separation is possible here. That is why, Pitareti - that major monument of Georgian architecture - may be classified as an example of Christian architecture as

well as that of Eastern architecture. Here elements of Western and Eastern cultures always merged.

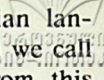
This is our vision of Georgia's cultural mission. Unfortunately, many topics have remained outside of our discussion, for it is impossible to cover everything in one lecture. We shall probably have some more lectures and talks, and it is desirable to provide information about this to the West, for much there remains unknown about Georgian culture and Georgia's spiritual path. Regrettably coverage hitherto has been given rather to the external aspects of our history and culture, and meetings like this should facilitate further mutual understanding and exchange of knowledge and information.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

If the audience wishes I can answer questions. This may render the discussion more interesting. I shall welcome questions around the topics of my talk. Today we shall devote our time to a discussion of questions dealing only with the present theme.

Question: What is the difference between Georgian (*Kartuli*) and Kartvelian (*Kartveluri*)?

As I noted at the beginning, these two terms should be differentiated. To be sure, the difference between Georgian and Kartvelian is not essential, yet there is a difference in shade. Georgian refers to Georgia proper, to everything related to Georgia's history and language - all that we know from our history and which is within this geographical area. Kartvelian is a much broader and comprehensive notion. Kartvelian are tribes that are not Karts, nor Kartvels (Georgians) proper, but of Kartvelian stock. This may be compared to the relationship of the Semites and Hebrews. Kartvelian is an ethnic conception, being more comprehensive than national. There is Georgian nationality, but Kartvelian people or ethnos - Another name for which is Japhetic. It is rather these palaeo-Caucasian or Japhetic peoples that may be said to constitute the ethnos. As there exists a Semitic people, so is there a



Japhetic one. This Japhetic people is Kartvelian. The Kartvelian languages stem precisely from this primary Japhetic language which we call proto-Georgian. The separation of the Kartvelian languages from this Japhetic language is assumed to have occurred from the third millennium B.C., as we learn from the book of Gamkrelidze and Ivanov, as well as from Marr's studies. I shall probably devote a separate lecture to the book just mentioned, but here I should like to note its clear tendency to belittle the role the proto-Georgian world played historically, and which has been dealt with in the studies of a number of scholars. All this is relegated to the background in the book in question, while Indo-European is given prominence. However, the positive side of the book is the dating of the disintegration of the proto-Georgian parent language into separate languages and dialects in the third millennium which, according to my own theory, is related to Ioane-Zosime's *Praise and Glorification of the Georgian Language*, which states that the Georgian people or the Georgian Language (language in Ioane-Zosime's work implies the people as well) "has been dead four days" and "one day totals one thousand years". The death of this language began four days or four thousand years ago, i.e. in the third millennium B.C. Ioane-Zosime uses "death" because the language had lost its old area of diffusion and significance. This was followed by a Lazarus-like rising from the dead of these people and language, as Ioane-Zosime relates. In his work these people are compared symbolically to Lazarus. It may be said that here is implied not only Georgia but the entire Kartvelian ethnos; to this is related that proto-Georgian or proto-Iberian world which extended from the Iberian Peninsula to India, and - as hypothesized by N. Marr and H. Johnstone - there existed a primordial Basque-Caucasian-Dravidian language - older than the Hamitic parent Language, and the basis of all languages, this being a glottogonic or language-forming phenomenon; it was the primary language of the priests, and in general, the beginning of languages. Such is Marr's theory, for which Stalin rebuked him; Marr's theory was anathematized because it gave an objective interpretation of the prehistoric period and the origin of the Georgian language. Our national movement too has some criticism to level against Marr. True, he did make anti-Georgian statements dictated by political considerations of the day, but his elucidation of the prehistoric period of development of the Georgian language and the Georgian people was very objective and profound. That is why he was denounced in Soviet scholarship under Stalin's leadership.

Question: What is the role of the peoples of the Kartvelian stock in the development of Christianity?



The peoples of the Kartvelian stock play a major role in the development of Christianity. The Semitic peoples played the principal role in paving the way for Christianity in the period of the Old Testament, while in Christianity proper - in its development Kartvelian and Indo-European peoples play the main part. The ancient Greeks are related, as you know, to peoples of Indo-European origin. Ioane-Zosime's *Praise and Glorification*, tells us that the two sisters - Mary and Martha - may be compared to Nino and Queen Helen. Nino is a symbol of the Kartvelian people and of Georgian Christianity, whereas Helen is a symbol of Greek Christianity, the relationship of Mary to Nino being the same as that of Martha to Helen. As you know, Mary is a symbol of mystic contemplation - a symbol of mystic theology, or esoteric Christianity, whereas Martha is a symbol of the intellectual, rational path - a symbol of dogmatic Christianity which developed rather in Greece; in other words, representatives of the Georgian ethnos in Christianity tend to follow the path of mysticism and esoteric theology. Take, for example, Dionysius the Areopagite, or Peter the Iberian, Saint Nicholas Thaumaturge, and Saint George himself - all are representatives of the Kartvelian ethnos. This is how Lazarus becomes linked, as a symbol, to the Georgian people. As we know, Lazarus is John not only in spiritual science, but a number of Western exegetes identify Lazarus with John. Incidentally, this identification is clearly seen in Georgian folklore too; there exists here a folk cult of Lazarus which is the god of rain, the same as Elijah; thus Georgian folklore identifies Elijah with Lazarus. John-Lazarus is the symbol of the Georgian Language, the Georgian people that must rise after this four-day death-like sleep. This is Ioane-Zosime's message in his *Praise and Glorification of the Georgian Language*.

Question: What is, in your opinion, the relationship between Kartlos and Haos?

It should be said, inter alia, that Leonti Mroveli's work, as well as others of the kind, reflect profound esoteric wisdom. He states that both Kartlos and Haos are descendants of Japheth, that they had one progenitor, and that the Japhetic people are the ancestors of Haos or the primary ethnos from which the present-day Armenian nation stems. The

latter ethnos was very closely related to the primary Georgian ethnos - hence comes the story of the brotherhood of Haos and Kartlos. I do not think that we are here dealing with seniority, for this is a very ancient epoch, and it is extremely difficult to determine the period when the Armenian ethnos took shape as a separate nation. In this connection, the seventh-sixth centuries B.C. are named as the time of the advent of the Armenians in Hayasa. This is the first country very closely related to the Colchian world; thus, it is well known from the specialist literature that Old Armenian or Grabar has preserved Laz and proto-Georgian roots, and that proto-Georgian played a major role in the development of this language. This is noted, e.g. by the well-known Armenian scholar C. Toumanoff. Hence Marr believed Armenian to be a semi-Japhetic and semi-Indo-European language because it contains elements of both. This gives rise to the idea of the ancient kinship and unity, as found in Leonti Mroveli.

Question: What is the relationship of the Basque and Georgian worlds?

About Basque and Georgian I can say that Basque is - like Georgian - a proto-Iberian language, but they have been separated from each other for great periods of time and have been developing separately so long as to render the establishment of their genetic relationship difficult. This relationship is being established rather by means of place names, separate phrases, and forms, as well as by the cultural-historical comparative method. Today Basque and Georgian do not seem to be genetically related languages; however, this does not mean that the Basque and Georgian worlds did not form a single whole in antiquity. As I have said, this was one people, one race, and one language, but later Basque assumed such individuality that today scholars even find it hard to establish genetic relationship. There exists a different approach, based - as I have said - on Humboldt's well-known work on Basque. The work has not been translated into Georgian and, by the way, it is being boycotted; for definite reasons the study has always been ignored, but it is our task to have it translated into Georgian and circulated in the country, so that the Georgians might learn of their real origin. As you know, Western science has no greater authority than Humboldt; however, according to the latest studies of modern Kartvelologists (Jan Braun, and others), the view is gaining ground on Basque being a fourth Kartvelian language.

Question: What relation is there between Lazarus and the Georgian language?

In Ioane-Zosime the raising of Lazarus implies the raising of the Georgian nation, and not only of the Georgian people but of the entire Georgian ethnos in its distribution in the prehistoric period, i.e. to the time of Lazarus' falling asleep, or the third millennium B.C., when this ethnos diminished, being decimated by the Indo-Europeans; it survived only in the Iberian peninsula, Asia Minor, and the Caucasus. The raising will again revive this nation, when it will regain the position it held in the prehistoric period - a leading position, the position of mankind's spiritual teacher. This is implied in Ioane-Zosime's statement to the effect that on the Judgment Day God will judge all the languages through this language. And this means that the Georgian people will be the chief bearer of spirituality, i.e., Christianity, and that it will judge the sinful humankind.

Question: What relation is there between Prometheus and Amirani?

Amirani must be a later name of Prometheus. We lack evidence to prove that in prehistoric times Prometheus was called Amirani. In Georgia, Amirani ('Amir') is related to the advent of Persian culture in Georgia. Amiran Darejanisdze (*Amir andare jehan* - "ruler of the country") is a Persian term.

In general, the extant version of the folk legend on Amirani must be of later origin. The prehistoric myth of Amirani found reflection in the Georgian folk tradition, but the name is altered. The name Amirani is obviously of Persian provenance, and it does not seem to reflect the identity of this character. In the proto-historic period the hero must have had an older, proto-Georgian correspondence. Generally speaking, it was not only such personages that had proto-Georgian correspondences. Take, e.g. the derivation of the eponym "Kardu" of the Georgians. It is the name of the mountain that was called Kardu - the name of a Babylonian god. Mountains were given the names of gods, Kardu being the name of Ararat, called Nisir in the Sumerian period. Neither these place names nor characters bear old names any longer. And I am convinced, this hero referred to as Prometheus, was not called Amirani; the latter name must have been given to him in the Middle Ages.

Question: What could you say about the relationship of the Abkhazian and Georgian languages?



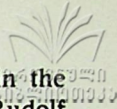
As you know Adyghe and other Caucasian languages are of Iberian-Caucasian origin; there is a genetic relationship between those languages and Georgian, there also is a genetic relationship between the Kartvelian languages too. The Abkhazians fail to understand this, hence this ethnic strife. Their origin is indeed Ibero-Caucasian, and had they knowledge of their descent they might have never started such conflicts with their kindred nation. In general, the peoples of the Northern Caucasus are genetically related, and so are their languages. This has been thoroughly researched by our celebrated scholar Arnold Chikobava, and Iberian-Caucasian linguistics and Ibero-Caucasian peoples were his favourite terms. By the way, this means that Ibero-Caucasian is not exclusive in the Iberian world; there is, e.g. Iberian of the Pyrenees, and so on; thus, Iberian-Caucasian is only one part of the Iberian world that comprises the North-Caucasian peoples too.

Question: In what relation is Mazdeanism to the Georgian spiritual world?

Historically, the Georgian nation has been in contact with many cultures and religions, and there are indications that at a definite period the Mazdeanic cult was practised here: the cult of the goddess Anahita, and many other cults. However, this was not leading or essential in our spiritual culture. Thus, it is still problematic whether the Armazian culture was Zoroastrian, and whether it had anything in common with Zoroastrian culture and Mazdeanism. Nor has the kinship of Ahura Mazda and Armazi been demonstrated.

Question: What is anthroposophy?

Anthroposophy is a spiritual science in modern Europe - a science of the spirit, spread in Western countries. As I have said, it is a Christian movement, viz. Micheal's Christianity. I should note, however, that some people erroneously take anthroposophy for a religion. It is not a religion or confession but a cognitive trend. Hence the opposition - heard occasionally - of Orthodoxy to anthroposophy is wrong. This is the same as opposing Orthodoxy to a follower of Hegel. The point is that anthro-

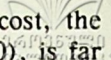


posophy has no confessional claims; it is a cognitive path. True, in the West there does exist a religious community - its outgrowth; but Rudolf Steiner, the founder of anthroposophy, was not a creator of a new religion or confession. He was a follower of Christ and Christianity, and the creator of a new cognitive form of Christianity. So there should not be a confusion of terms here. As I mentioned above, there are many branches of anthroposophic science: anthroposophic medicine, biology, pedagogics. In particular, anthroposophic medicine played an outstanding role here in the treatment of those poisoned on 9 April. When these patients failed to respond to the treatment prescribed by traditional physicians and to drugs, representatives of anthroposophic medicine arrived with remedies, developed in their school, which saved many persons.

I should like to add also that in one of his lectures R. Steiner ranks the Orthodox cult much higher than its Catholic counterpart. I can cite the relevant passage from the lecture. In general, Steiner was closely connected with Orthodox philosophy, particularly with the philosophy of Vladimir Solovyov, considering him - an Orthodox philosopher as one of his forerunners. In his cycle of lectures, read in 1922 and entitled: "Supersensible Influences in the History of Mankind", Steiner says: "In the Catholic church the cult and ritual are rather of the character of symbols to be viewed by the eye, whereas in the Eastern Orthodox church it is something that reaches the soul with the profoundest reverence". Thus, he sharply differentiates these two cults from each other, himself tending rather to the Orthodox cult as being more congenial to him. This is seen also from the lectures he delivered at Oxford, in which he speaks of the profound esoterism in the Eastern Church, or the mysterious doctrine owned by the Church. As I noted earlier, in the East esoterism was not divorced from exoterism, whereas in the West it was, with attendant conflicts and persecution of exoterism - something never occurring in the Eastern Orthodox world.

Question: What is the origin of the Grail?

The etymology of the Grail stems from old Provençal, and probably, by its root from the Cappadocian term *gratsal*; and generally speaking, the Grail movement was also the creation of the Kartvelian ethnos. The Cappadocian ethnos, which was the same as Kartvelian or proto-Iberian ethnos, was the principal founder of the Grail movement. Titurel - the first owner of the Grail, was a Cappadocian by nationality, i. e. of



Kartvelian origin. The mention of the Cappadocians on Pentecost, the day of the descent of the Holy Spirit (Acts of the Apostles 2.10), is far from accidental. The Cappadocians were present at the descent of the Holy Spirit, and the mission of the Grail is that of the Holy Spirit - a symbol of the Mother of God; the owner of the Holy Spirit. The Grail is a bearer of the Holy Spirit and the Grail is one imbued with the grace of the Holy Spirit. The Grail movement or the Grail Christianity was created precisely by the Iberian peoples. It was created first in Cappadocia, and later in Provence and Languedoc, populated largely by peoples of Iberian and Celtiberian race. The Celtiberians were the same Iberians by origin, with whom the Celts merged at a later period. The migration of the Celts began in the third century B.C., continuing later too. The Celtiberian ethnos took shape later, yet it was of Iberian origin. The Celtiberian people too were linked to Cappadocia, and it was from Cappadocia - this Meskhanian or Moschian, and Zan land - that the Grail Christianity and movement came. Incidentally, in Kartli there is a village named Grakali. Inasmuch as the initial name of this bowl was *gratsal*, Grakali and *gratsal* are obviously related words, and this place must be connected with the Grail. I am deeply convinced of the reference to the Grail in Shavteli's *Odes*, in which it is defined as "a bowl of graces, for the purification of the people". As you know, the Grail is a bowl; it is mentioned in Georgian folklore, namely in connection with the campaign of Saint George - hero of Georgian folklore - in Kajaveti together with Kopala and Iakhsar; from there St. George brings back a bowl which, I am fully convinced, is the Grail. Thus, the descent of St. George into the nether world is connected with the bringing back of the Grail; in other words, this is a symbol of initiation. It is in this way that the Grail became linked to Georgian culture, folklore, and history. The principal motifs of the Gelati mural paintings are connected with the Grail. The child Jesus, held by the Gelati Virgin, bears an imprint of the Grail on his forehead, pointing to the closest link of the Grail with Georgian culture. As for *The Man in the Panther's Skin*, it may be said to be a poem of the Grail because the Grail's symbols are synonyms: treasure, precious stones and pearls, philosophers' stone and a virgin, i.e. the rescuing of a virgin from captivity in the nether world is the same as retrieving the Grail. In this case, the maiden embodies the anima or the soul and the release of the anima from the dragon's captivity is precisely the aim of initiation. This is given in *The Man in the Panther's Skin*, for in it is depicted the path of heroic initiation. Allegorically, chivalry is in general related to initiation, being its institution; hence its principal aim

was the descent into the nether world and the retrieval of the Grail, or the rescuing of the holy principle from the bondage of evil powers.

Question: How is it proved that the Pelasgians and the Sumerians were not Indo-Europeans?

This is proved by linguistic evidence. In the first place, the eminent Georgian scholar M. Tsereteli has demonstrated that the Sumerians were not Indo-Europeans, and that today only Kartvelian languages are related to Sumerian. The Indo-European languages are not related to these languages. As for the Pelasgians, Herodotus and other Greek historians point out directly that they were Iberians.

Question: What relation was there between the Irish and Georgian Iberians?

The relationship of the Irish Iberians and the Georgian Iberians was very strong. In his work, Humboldt speaks of the migration of the Iberians to Ireland, and Northern Europe. He clearly distinguishes them from the southern Iberians who were autochthons, whereas there took place a migration to the North - Ireland, Britain, and elsewhere, with the establishment of Colonies. The Picts - the earliest population of Ireland - descended from the Iberians.

Question: Who were the Albanians?

It appears from *Kartlis Tskhovreba* ("History of Georgia") that the Caucasian Albanians too were Kartvelian tribes. They are the 'Berda' in Nizami Ganjevi's works... By the way, it is not accidental that Nizami linked the image of Queen Tamar with Berda.

Question: Is there any link between Lazia and Lazarus?

It can only be hypothesized that the stems are related; Lazarus and Laz, lapis lazuli, denoting azure; azure and blue are the colour of Ioane-Lazarus; in general all this may be in some relationship... The murals of Betania Church of Tamar's time, dedicated to Lazarus, are done in blue colours, which cannot but have a profound esoteric meaning.


Question: What have the Hittites to do with Georgia?



There are place names related to the Hittites in Georgia. This means that the homeland of the Hittites was here. There were migrations of peoples, hence the numerous related place names. In general, the Hittites were Indo-Europeans, not belonging to peoples of Kartvelian provenance.

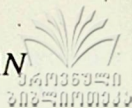
Question: What can you tell us about Niko Marr and *The Man in the Panther's Skin*?

Marr entertained very contradictory views on *The Man in the Panther's Skin*; and, in general, great men occasionally commit great errors. He erred with regard to *The Man in the Panther's Skin*, but then he corrected his errors, and advanced highly significant views regarding the poem. Initially believing it to be a translated work, he intended to discover the original in the British Museum; failing in this, he later changed his view. Most importantly, Marr was the first to demonstrate the existence of an organic relationship between the world of *The Man in the Panther's Skin* and that of the Western chivalrous romance - and in general Western courtly poetry. He also pointed out the similarity of *The Man in the Panther's Skin* to the troubadours of Provence and other monuments of chivalrous culture in general. Giving a strong indication of this, Marr left behind a highly valuable study entitled: *The Cult of Woman in the Man in the Panther's Skin*. As for the idea of Rustaveli having been a Muslim, for some time Marr did entertain it, but this was because he failed to explain Rustaveli's supra-religious oecumenism. Rustaveli unites, as it were, all cults and religions in his poem. Generally speaking, *The Man in the Panther's Skin* is a syncretic work - not eclectic, that is bringing different elements together without connection, but syncretic, giving various elements in unity. The poem in question is a synthesis of Classical and Christian wisdom, a synthesis of esoteric wisdom; a new synthesis of the paths of Classical and Christian initiation is presented in the language of a new literary mythos. That is why many researchers perceived separate doctrines or confessions in it, which subsequently failed to be substantiated. Today the view prevails which holds that it is a Christian work and the author was a Christian - a Christian in a broad sense who oecumenically unites the achievement of different religions in his Weltanschauung. Thus, the poem contains



astrological and astrosophical ideas, ideas of Classical mysteries, a quatrain on the "sunny night", and so on. All this suggests that Rustaveli had a profound knowledge of the ancient culture of mysteries, synthesizing it in his work. Initially, Marr failed to see this. He considered Rustaveli a Muslim because the Koran figures in the poem, and the characters swear their oaths on the Koran. But this was because the action of the poem was conventionally transferred to the Oriental, Muslim world, where no other book than the Koran could be mentioned. However, Avtandil's prayer is Christian, although he seems to pray in a mosque. Similarly, in their actions and character the personages are Christians - representatives of the Christian world. 'Arab' and 'Indian' do not refer to nationality in the poem, the usage being symbolic. The countries in *The Man in the Panther's Skin* do not constitute geographical or historical reality. Here we are dealing with allegorical geography and history.

PRAISE AND GLORIFICATION OF THE GEORGIAN LANGUAGE AND THE ETHNOGENY OF THE GEORGIANS.*



Dating from the second half of the 10th century, the Praise and Glorification of the Georgian Language is ascribed to Ioane-Zosime, a monk at the monastery of Saint-Saba on Mount Sinai. Here follows the Georgian text of the MS. with a transliteration and tentative translation.

ქება და დიდება ქართულისა ენისაჲ

1. დამარხულ არს ენაჲ ქართული დღედმდე მეორედ მოსლვისა მისისა საწამებლად, რაჲთა ყოველსა ენასა ღმერთმან ამხილოს ამით ენითა.

2. და ესე ენაჲ მძინარე არს დღესამომდე და სახარებასა შინა ამას ენასა ლაზარე ჰრქვიან.

3. და ახალმან ნინო მოაქცია და ჰელენე დედოფალმან; ესენი არიან ორნი დანი, ვითარცა მარიამ და მართაჲ.

4. და მეგობრობაჲ ამისთვის თქუა, ვითარმედ ყოველი საიდუმლოჲ ამას ენასა შინა დამარხულ არს.

5. და ოთხისა დღისა მკუდარი ამისთვის თქუა დავით წინაღწარმეტყუელმან, რამეთუ წელი ათასი ვითარცა ერთი დღე; და სახარებასა შინა ქართულსა ხოლო, თავსა მათესსა წილი ზის, რომელ ასოჲ არს და იტყვის ყოვლად ოთხათასსა მარაგსა. და ესე არს ოთხი დღე და ოთხისა დღისა მკუდარი, ამისთვის მის თანავე დაფლული სიკუდილითა ნათლისღებისა მისისაჲთა.

6. და ესე ენაჲ შემკული და კურთხეული სახელითა უფლისაჲთა, მდაბალი და დაწუნებული, მოელის დღესა მას მეორედ მოსლვასა უფლისასა.

7. და სასწაულად ესე აქუს: ოთხმოც და ათოთხმეტი წელი უმეტეს სხუათა ენათა ქრისტეს მოსლვითგან ვიდრე დღესამომდე.

8. და ესე ყოველი, რომელი წერილ არს, მოწამედ წარმოგიტხარ ასოჲ ესე წილი ანბანისაჲ.

* This is part of an extensive study being written by the author on Ioane-Zosime's eschatology and related philological and ethnological problems.

1. damarkhul ars enai kartuli dghedme meored moslvisa misisa satsameblad; raita qovelsa enasa ghmertman amkhilos amit enita.
2. da ese enai mdzinare ars dghesamomde da sakharebasa shina amas enasa lazare hrk-vian.
3. da akhalman nino moaksia da helene dedopalman; eseni arian orni dani, vitartsa mariam da martai.
4. da megobrobai amistvis tkua, vitarmed qoveli saidumloi amas enasa shina damarkhul ars.
5. da otkhisa dghisa mkudari amistvis tkua davit tsinaistsarmetqelmān, rametu tseli atasi vitartsa erti dghe; da sakharebasa shina kartulsa kholo, tavsa matessa tsili zis, romel asoi ars da itqvis qovlad otkhatassa maragsa. da ese ars otkhi dghe da otkhisa dghisa mkudari, amistvis mis tanave dapluli sikudilita natlisghebisa misisaita.
6. da ese enai shemkuli da kurtkheuli sakhelita uplisaita, mdabali da datsunebuli, moelis dghesa mas meored moslvisa uplisasa.
7. da sastsaulad ese akus: otkhmeots da atotkhmeti tseli umetes `skhuata enata kristes moslvitgan vidre dghesamomde.
8. da ese qoveli; romeli tseril ars, motsamed tsarmogitkhras ese tsili anbanisai.

Translation Praise and Glorification of the Georgian Language

1. The Georgian language (nation) is preserved until the day of the Second Coming to testify to Him, in order that God judge (expose) all the languages through this language.
2. And this language has been dormant to this day, and in the Gospel this language is called Lazarus.
3. And the new Nino and Helen the Queen converted; these are two sisters, like Mary and Martha.
4. And he said friendship because all mysteries are hidden in this language.
5. And David the Prophet said "four days' dead", for one thousand years are equal to one day; and in the Georgian Gospel according to Matthew at the beginning there stands the letter Ϝ (ts) that speaks of four thousand *maragis* ('prophesies'). And this is four days and four day's dead, and buried with Him through death with His baptism.
6. And this language, adorned and blessed in the name of the Lord, humbled and rejected, is awaiting the day of the Second Coming of the Lord.
7. And [the language] has a sign: ninety-four years since the advent of Christ to this day, and in this it [the language] has an advantage over other languages.
8. And all this, that is written, will be testified by this letter of the alphabet.

In recent years many views have been advanced regarding the *Praise and Glorification of the Georgian Language* - a monument of Old Georgian theosophic literature. The work has been considered from different viewpoints, but its students clearly face difficulties, for many questions connected with it still remain vague. Neither do I pretend to shed light on all the moot problems connected with the work under discussion. My sole purpose is to give my view on some problems.

To begin with, the traditional reading of the text of the work presents us with a considerable difficulty. Take the first sentence: "The Georgian language is preserved until the day of the Second Coming to testify to Him, in order that God judge or expose all the languages through this language". In this statement, the word *ena* is often taken only in its modern meaning of 'language'. Actually, however, a deeper insight into the purport of the sentence will show clearly the one-sidedness of such an interpretation, for *ena* in Old Georgian as well as in other ancient languages implied not only 'language' but also 'people', 'nation', 'tribe'. In the Revelation of John we read: "After this I looked and saw a vast throng, which no one could count, from every nation, of all tribes, peoples and languages, standing in front of the throne and before the Lamb" (7.9). In the Greek text we have *glossa* for 'languages'. Doubtless, reference here is to a gathering of men "of all tribes and peoples", i.e. to representatives of nations. In the same vein, we read in the fourteenth chapter: "Then I saw an angel flying in mid-heaven, with an eternal gospel to proclaim to those on earth, to every nation and tribe, language and people" (Rev. 14.6.). It should be clear that the angel could not have proclaimed anything to 'language' as such - whether literary or vernacular - for it is not a living being. The angel proclaimed to human beings - representative speakers of those languages. Similar is the use of 'language' in the Old Testament too: "These were the families and languages with their countries and nations" (Gen. 10.31) (cf. Dan. 3.4-6; 5.19;). Incidentally, in the same text of the Mtskhetan manuscript of the Bible 'tribe' is substituted for 'language'). We find the same use of 'language' in *Kartlis Tskhovreba* too: "The Scythians, Khazars, Abyssinians, Arabs, Medes, Elamites and Mesopotamians, and all languages and nations" (vol. II, 1959, p. 562). In the vocabulary, appended by S. Qaukhchishvili to this volume, we find two definitions of

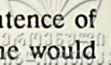
'language': 1) *ena* - 'language', 'tongue' ("I fail to utter a word"); 2) *ena* - 'tribe', 'nation' ("all languages and nations"; "every language should worship the single God").

Thus, Ioane-Zosime's Praise refers not only to the Georgian language as such but to the Georgian nation or ethnos (and by extension to its cultural historical mission as conceived of in Georgian esoteric Christian circles).

Now let us look at other words in the quotation from the *Praise*: "... to testify to Him, in order that God judge or expose all the languages through this language". Some scholars take the word *satsameblad* in its modern meaning of 'torture', 'ordeal'. Actually, in this text it is used in the Old Georgian meaning of 'to testify'. (For example, *da stsama Ioane da tkva* is translated "John testified further" (John 1.32). Furthermore, to apply the modern meaning of 'language' to the word in the quote leads one nowhere, for language as such cannot testify to anything as it is not a living being, a person. The word 'testify' is invariably used in Scripture and in Christian writings as an act of human beings - a person or a group of persons.

A further and greater misunderstanding arises from assuming that 'language' in its present-day meaning can be a 'judge' or 'exposer' of other languages: *raita qovelta enata ghmertman amkhilos amit enita* is translated literally as "in order that God denounce all the languages through this language". This translation might be taken to mean that the Georgian language not only testifies for Christ but also denounces or exposes other languages. Other languages are sinful, while Georgian is not; hence it exposes them. But wherein does the sinfulness or innocence of a language lie? How can a language - an abstract concept - act in a sinning or innocent way; or expose or refrain from exposing someone who has sinned? Should the Georgian *mkhileba* here mean 'to make known' as some authors believe, we would have had *umkhilos*, as found in the Acts of the Apostles: "... but their plans became known to Saul" (9.26). (See I. Abuladze's *Dictionary of Old Georgian*). *mkhileba* in Ioane-Zosime is used in its Gospel meaning of denounce or expose. A language may convey definite notions or spiritual conceptions more or less adequately; it may be more or less divinely spiritual or more or less rich - but its 'sinfulness' or 'denouncing quality' is incomprehensible.

The above obstacles will be removed if we understand 'language' in the way it was used at the time of the writing of the Gospels and the Revelation, or when Christianity and hagiographic and hymnographic literature came into being. Adoption of such an approach will do away



with all contradictions in the interpretation of the very first sentence of the quote under discussion. It should be noted that Ioane-Zosime would not conceive of Georgian nationality in isolation from the Georgian language, for there would be no meaning in the Georgian nation alone reaching the Judgement Day without the Georgian language and culture. Thus, the sentence in question should be rendered as follows: "The Georgian nationality and its language (the Georgian nation) will be preserved to the Judgement Day (the advent of Christ), so that it (the Georgian nation) might testify or bear witness (to Christ), so that God denounce every nation through this (Georgian) nation."

Now the implication of all this becomes clear: one nation may be more sinful than another, one nation may be closer to God, and another in a lesser degree so. The exposer may be a person or a group of persons, or a nation, but by no means does language alone do the exposing.

Further, could a tenth-century (or even earlier) erudite Georgian man of letters not have known the elementary truth that not only Georgian but all languages and scripts would be preserved ("would be hidden") to the end of the world, i.e. to the advent of Christ? Why should this discovery or prophecy be so solemnly announced to his compatriots? After all, would Greek, Latin, or any other dead language possessing a script not have been preserved likewise? What was the wisdom that lay behind his statement?

As for the people or nation, here the matter must have been different, for a language may survive, but a nation disappear. According to Christian eschatology, in the future cataclysms some nations will be wiped off the face of the earth, while some will survive. This called for the prophetic optimism displayed by Ioane-Zosime in his encouragement of his fellow countrymen, namely that the Georgian nation would survive and live on to the Judgement Day. At this juncture Ioane-Zosime could not have used 'nationality', for the term did not yet exist in his day, being a product of a later period. That is why he used 'language' which at that time stood for 'nation', 'nationality', 'people', 'ethnos'.

We learn from John's Revelation that not every nation or country will reach the advent of our Lord on Judgement Day. Thus at the pouring of the seventh bowl of God's wrath (Rev.16.17.), which occurred much earlier than the Judgement Day and the resurrection of the dead, we have a description of the ruin of Babylon and other peoples and populations, and languages (nations). Babylon here is a symbolic collective image of all empires; regarding Babylon it can be said, with reference to the Revelation and the *Praise*, that this 'language' is not preserved to the com-

ing of the Judgement Day: "Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great! She has become the dwelling for demons, a haunt for every unclean spirit, for every vile and loathsome bird" (Rev. 18.2.). All this happened prior to the Judgement Day.

Thus, Ioane-Zosime prophesies that the Georgian nation, the Georgian people will reach the Judgement Day. No prophesying would have been needed to announce that language alone would reach the Day.

We see at the end of the Revelation that peoples or languages are divided into two, one group being like the waters (ocean) on which Babylon stands, i.e. those forming the basis of Babylon: "The ocean you saw, ... is an ocean of peoples and populations, nations and languages" (Rev. 17.15). They will be engulfed in the nether world together with Babylon. The other nations are invited to the wedding-supper of the Lamb: "After this I heard what sounded like the roar of a vast throng in heaven; and they were shouting: 'Alleluia! Victory and glory and power belong to our God ...'" (Rev. 19.1). Who is at this time the one who bears testimony to Christ? Referring to the angel who is announcing these things, John says: "At this I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me: 'No, not that! I am but a fellow servant with you and your brothers who bear their testimony to Jesus. It is God you must worship. Those who bear testimony to Jesus are inspired like the prophets'" (Rev. 19.10).

It follows that those who bear testimony to Jesus are brothers of the Apostle John, who also bears testimony together with them, and they too are inspired like the prophets, i.e. they have the Holy Spirit. This is how Ioane-Zosime envisions the future of the Georgian nation that "is preserved to testify to Him"; it will possess the prophetic or Holy Spirit, similarly to John and his brothers or the righteous who are invited to the wedding-supper of the Lamb in heaven together with choice representatives of the twelve tribes of Israel. There can be no doubt, however, that Ioane-Zosime reckons genuine Christian Georgians among his countrymen who must bear testimony to Christ. Only such can become equal to the apocalyptic brothers of John. At the same time, these brothers of John are the denouncers or exposers of other peoples and languages, and these denouncers appear in the Revelation in the form of a symbolic, heavenly rider on a white horse: "Then I saw heaven wide open, and there before me was a white horse; and its rider's name was Faithful and True, for he is just in judgement and just in war. His eyes flamed like fire, and on his head were many diadems. Written upon him was a name known to none but himself, and he was robed in a garment drenched in blood. He was called the Word of God, and the armies of

heaven followed him on white horses, clothed in fine linen, clean and shining. From his mouth there went a sharp sword with which to smite the nations; for he it is who shall rule them with an iron rod, ...” (Rev. 19.11-15).

The 'sharp sword' is symbolically the 'sword of exposure', i.e. divine exposure of mankind's sins, while 'to rule with an iron rod' is the trying of the peoples and populations (the rod being the symbol of justice). It is to this eschatological image that Ioane-Zosime's conception of the future denunciatory mission of the Georgian people or ethnos is related.

The rider on a white horse is at the same time the Archangel Michael - the archstrategist of the heavenly hosts, the instrument of God's power, and God's spokesman - and St. George - the earthly knight. It is to the latter, of course, that Ioane-Zosime, being a true Georgian Christian, most closely relates the country of Georgia. He sees the victorious rider as an image of Georgia and its divine mission of denouncing the peoples of the world, of judging them and ruling them with an iron rod. 'Denunciation' or 'exposure' is the real meaning of the word *mkhileba*.

Now we shall pass on to the next sentence: "And this language has been dormant to this day, and in the Gospel this language is called Lazarus".

Above we saw the mysterious link of the Georgian language or nation with the Apostle John who, at Second Coming, will have to "testify to Christ", just as will the Georgian language (nation). Now we see the Georgian language identified with Lazarus, whom Christ raised from the dead. In the opinion of some theologians, Lazarus represents the same Apostle John². In recent times, not only theosophists but philological students of the text of the Gospel too have paid attention to the fact that when there is reference in St. John's Gospel to the Apostle John as the favourite disciple of the Saviour, use is made of the verb *phileo*, i.e. spiritual love; the same word is used also solely in relation to Lazarus (John, 11.4) which - besides love - means, in the sense of the Gospel, the highest spiritual love and friendship (see F.V. Farrar. *The Life of Jesus Christ*, London, 1880). As is known three types of love are distinguished in the Gospel: *eros*, *agape*, and *philia*. The verb *phileo* is not used in reference to the other disciples. On other occasions and with regard to the other disciples the verb *egapa*, derived from *agape*, is used. In connection with this let me note that the main point here is not the identification of these two persons, but the fact that in his Gospel John the Evangelist adduces the raising of Lazarus from the dead as the paradigm of baptism or initiation by Christ (as distinguished from that by John

the Baptist). After identifying the Georgian language with Lazarus, Ioane-Zosime too emphasizes that the Georgian language "is buried with him [Christ], through death with his baptism"; in other words, the Georgian language receives baptism from Christ.

What does Christ's baptism mean and how does it differ from John's baptism. John the Baptist himself answers this question: " ... I baptize you with water, for repentance; but the one who comes after me is mightier than I. I am not fit to take off his shoes. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire" (Matt. 3.11.). An answer to the question is given also by Christ himself when he - already baptized by John - says to his disciples: "I have a baptism to undergo, and what constraint I am under until the ordeal is over!" (Luke, 12.50). Thus, in addition to John's baptism, Christ has to undergo another baptism - his crucifixion, death, and burial, followed by his resurrection. The raising of Lazarus from the dead was a prototype of this baptism. It is of the same baptism that Christ talks to James and John, who had come to him to request the right to sit in state with him, one at his right and the other at his left. Jesus said to them, "You do not understand what you are asking. Can you drink the cup that I drink, or be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with?" (Mark, 10.38). They answered that they could, which was followed by Christ's prophetic words showing clearly that these two apostles would indeed receive Christ's baptism in the future: "The cup that I drink, you shall drink, and the baptism I am baptized with shall be your baptism" (Mark, 10.39). Such was the case with Lazarus, for he received Christ's baptism by dying and resurrection, as well as by being graced by the Holy Spirit. The essence of this baptism is also described by the Apostle Paul: "Have you forgotten that when we were baptized into union with Christ Jesus we were baptized into his death? By baptism we were with him, and lay dead, in order that, as Christ was raised from the dead in the splendour of the Father, so also we might set our feet upon the new path of life. For if we have become incorporate with him in a death like his, we shall also be one with him in a resurrection like his" (Rom. 6.3-5). It was this baptism, Christ's baptism, that Lazarus underwent when he died and was raised from the dead. Lazarus was the first to be baptized with the Holy Spirit and with fire. Jesus says about Lazarus' illness: "This illness will not end in death; it has come for the glory of God, to bring glory to the Son of God" (John, 11.4). The Son of God was glorified by the Apostle John, with his Gospel and Revelation. The Georgian language accepts Christ's baptism, so that it might fulfil Christ's mission in the future. Wherein does this mission lie?

Let us recall Christ's description of his mission when he was being interrogated by Pilate: "My task is to bear witness to the truth. For this was I born; for this I came into the world, and all who are not deaf to truth listen to my voice" (John, 18.37). Now, in Ioane-Zosime's work on the Georgian language we read: "The Georgian language is preserved until the day of his Second Coming, to testify". 'To testify' to what? Obviously to the truth. The Georgian language, the Georgian nation must bear witness to the truth, in the same way Christ did. It must glorify Christ, as John-Lazarus did. This is how Ioane-Zosime sees it.

According to Ioane-Zosime, Lazarus, four days' dead, is a symbol of the Georgian Language, which is "adorned and blessed in the name of the Lord, humbled and rejected". He quotes David the holy prophet's words: "One thousand years are equal to one day". We shall discuss the "four thousand" in more detail below, but now let us look into the purport of the author's statement: "And the new Nino and Helen the Queen converted; these are two sisters, like Mary and Martha".

Let us assume again that the word *ena* is used in Ioane-Zosime's text in its modern meaning of 'language'. It follows that the Georgian language was converted not only by Nino but by Queen Helen as well. Now, suppose that, on her arrival in Georgia, St. Nino, being a Moschian Cappadocian, studied and eventually mastered the Georgian language and enriched it with Christian notions, thereby 'converting' it. But how could Queen Helen convert the Georgian language? Or could Georgian have been transformed from a pagan into a Christian language immediately after the conversion of Kartli by Nino? After all Nino did not write anything in Georgian; and what is the difference - if any - between pagan and Christian language? "Conversion of a language" by itself is a clearly strained conception, whereas conversion of a people is understandable. Queen Helen's contribution is also understandable: she facilitated the proclamation of Christianity, the state religion in Rome, which paved the way to the Christianization of Georgia. Furthermore, Queen Helen's efforts towards the conversion of Georgia and her friendship with Nino are historical facts.

But why does Ioane-Zosime associate Nino with Mary and Helen with Martha. Let us recall the episode in Luke's Gospel involving Mary and Martha: "... Jesus came to a village where a woman named Martha made him welcome in her home. She had a sister, Mary, who seated herself at the Lord's feet and stayed there listening to his words. Now Martha was distracted by her many tasks, so she came to him and said, 'Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to get on with the work

by myself? Tell her to come and lend a hand'. But the Lord answered, 'Martha, Martha, you are fretting and fussing about so many things; but one thing is necessary. The part that Mary has chosen is best; and it shall not be taken away from her'. (Luke, 10.38-42). Mary, who kept on listening to the Saviour and did not do housework, is a symbol of the inner meditative activity of the soul, of the eternal contemplation of God, of mysticism. Martha, on the other hand, who is ever fussing about things in the house, is a symbol of the external activity of the soul, its involvement in social life and in acts of charity. One is the path of mystic contemplation, and the other that of social development. The Saviour gives priority to the former, i.e. Mary. Hence, Nino, a mystic woman, clairvoyant, ever praying and fasting and thereby earning the grace of the Holy Spirit, is compared to Mary, while Queen Helen, a Roman empress officiating in the social sphere, is likened to Martha. Ioane-Zosime clearly distinguishes the two impulses that came to Georgia through these women. Linked to one is a mystic contemplation of God, i.e. mystic theology, while to the other, charity and justice in the social sphere, i.e. official dogmatic theology - in other words, the state ideology. Similarly Ioane-Zosime distinguishes the missions of these two nations represented by Nino and queen Helen.

What does the phrase 'new Nino' mean? Does it imply some other, earlier Nino? Absolutely not, for the word *akhali* in Old Georgian denoted also 'the first in order'. Thus, in the old Georgian translation of the Bible we have: *dghes gamokhualt tkuen tuesa akhalsa* "... for today, in the month of Abib,* is the day of your exodus" (Exod., 13.4); *tuesa shina akhaltasa gamokhued egvptit*, "Observe the month of Abib ... for it was in that month that the Lord your God brought you out of Egypt by night" (Deut., 16.1). Or take *akhalkviriate* or *akhalkvira* which does not mean 'new Sunday' but the first week after Easter. Thus, 'new Nino' implies the original Nino, the saintly enlightener of Georgia. The word 'new' is used with regard to Nino with a view to ruling out any future confusion with personages of the same name. Besides, in the tenth century, Nino might be considered new, for she introduced the new religion³.

If we continue to uphold the view that *ena* in the text under discussion is used in its primary meaning (i.e. of 'language'), then the following phrase will appear quite superfluous: "And he said friendship because all mysteries are hidden in this language". Who said 'friendship'

* The first month of the ancient Hebrew calendar corresponding to Nisan.

and for what purpose? To whom does this word 'friendship' refer? The context suggests that it refers both to Lazarus and to the Georgian language. But can a language be anybody's friend? This contradiction will be removed if we take *ena* in its more proper sense, i.e. denoting the Georgian nation, a nation that is a friend of Christ, in the same way as is Lazarus and John. According to the Gospel, Jesus used the word *philia* to denote his feeling for John, a term he does not apply to the other apostles, though they are referred to as friends (Luke, 12.4). It is in the latter sense that the phrase "And he said friendship because ..." should be understood. The continuation of the sentence sheds light on the essence of this friendship: "all mysteries are hidden in this language". As Lazarus-John was the possessor of all the esoteric mysteries or mysterious wisdom of mankind, in the same way all these mysteries are hidden, i.e. preserved, in Georgia - in its people - and are reflected in its language and culture. However, it would be an overstatement to say that Lazarus and Georgia possessed all the esoteric mysteries of Christ, as some researchers⁴ assert, for according to John's Gospel, neither Lazarus nor any apostle could possess all the esoteric mysteries of Christ. The Saviour himself says to his chosen disciples towards the end of the Gospel: "There is still much that I could say to you, but the burden would be too great for you now". (John, 16.12). This means that Christ at that time imparted to his disciples only part of his esoteric wisdom. He wished to pass more on to them, but they (including Lazarus) were not yet mature enough for it. Furthermore, according to St. John, all the mysteries of Christ could not be held either by his disciples or by the whole world: "There is much else that Jesus did. If it were all to be recorded in detail, I suppose the whole world could not hold the books that would be written" (John, 21.25).

Thus reference here is not to all esoteric mysteries of Christ but only to those which he succeeded in passing on to his disciples, and to humankind in general. True, the baptism, mentioned in the text, is Christian initiation - a sharing in the mysterious wisdom, but the attempt by E. Chelidze to declare Ioane-Zosime's *Praise* a writing of Gnostic character and to assume it to be written in the fourth century seems to be an obvious overstatement.⁴ After all, an Orthodox monument would not refer to St. Nino and St. Helen the Queen - then active in the Orthodox Church - as authorities, but would rather cite Basilides, Valentinus, and other older Gnostics. To be sure, Gnosticism provided an insight into the spiritual depths and mysteries of the Gospel, but it had an erroneous conception of the facts related to the earthly life of Jesus of Nazareth,

especially of his physical death on the cross. The Gnostics did see Christ's divine aspect but failed to notice his human aspect. Hence, in their view, it was not Christ's real body that was crucified but the so-called "apparent body"; in the opinion of Gnostics, it was not Christ but Simon of Cyrene that was crucified. This view was propounded, for example, by Basilides the Gnostic (see E. Bock, *Komentarten zum Evangelium*, II, Stuttgart, 1971). Owing to this, there was no place in Gnosticism for the conception we find in Ioane-Zosime's work of Christ's baptism, i.e. baptism through death. Furthermore, one more nuance occurs in the monument under discussion which has hitherto not claimed the attention of researchers, and which rules out its ascription to any unorthodox trend, viz. the reference in all Georgian manuscripts to David the prophet as 'Holy', i.e. a Saint. That is a term used only in Orthodox contexts and quite alien to Gnostic nomenclature. Besides, if the *Praise* contains heresy, by what miracle did the work survive over the centuries - and that too in Mt. Sinai monastery? Was there no one in the monastery to discern the heretic teaching? How did an heretical treatise find its way into the "all-destroying" Church?

E. Chelidze calls the *Praise* an example of eschatological mysticism. This statement needs clarification. The *Praise* is a commentary on John's Gospel and the Revelation - an exegesis from the standpoint of eschatological mysticism. Now some hold that Orthodoxy fought against all manner of esoterism and initiational wisdom. But care should be exercised in making such an assertion, especially when it concerns the Eastern Church. In the first place, we should remember that the Areopagitic treatises were written in the bosom of the Eastern Church, while the "mysterious theology" referred to by Dionysius the Areopagite, is the same esoteric doctrine or mysterious wisdom, not always available in written form but found in oral tradition, in the form of the so-called *logia*, as well as in the form of 'secret' ('hidden') books or so-called Apocrypha⁵. This suggests that esoterism was not totally rejected by Orthodoxy.

Furthermore, it is notable that originally the word dogma - in the language of the Church - denoted a secret doctrine. Thus, one of the pillars of the Church, Basil the Great, said: "Of the dogmata and sermons, available in the Church, some we have in the teaching of the Holy Scripture, while some have been passed on to us secretly - by the tradition of the apostles... We are silent on the dogma, while we impart the sermon to the people" (*On the Holy Spirit*, p.322). Another Church Father, St. Cyril of Jerusalem observes: "We do not preach to the Gentiles

the hidden doctrine on the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; even to those who are ready for baptism we speak vaguely about the mysteries, suggesting many things figuratively, so that those who know and those who believe might gain insight, and the ignorant not be impaired (*Works*, XXV, 29, p. 103). A similar view has been expressed regarding the Communion by John Chrysostom, and on baptism by Gregory the Theologian in his fortieth homily, as well as by other Fathers. The German scholar Augusti lists the Greek terms used by the Fathers to denote the esoteric rule: *epicryphus*, *siopé*, *gnosis*, *mysteriocyphia*, *dogma*, *tropos*, *paideas*, etc. He also gives the terms used by Latin Fathers: *occultatio*, *reticentia sacrorum*, *silentium sacrum*, *arcanum*, etc. There also exists a medieval Church term to denote esotericism: *disciplina arcani*, i.e. secret discipline. The best proof of all this is the existence of a book of the order of the *Praise* in the very bosom of the Church.

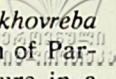
Thus, it will be seen that gnosis is one of the terms denoting the esotericism of the Church Fathers. If such gnosis is related to Ioane-Zosime's *Praise*, - it will be acceptable, whereas the doctrine of Gnostics opposed to the Church cannot be identified with this work. Thus, the Georgian Catholicos Anton I used gnosis in a similar sense in his *Theology*; he states that Petritsi introduced "the mind-sun - the gnosis of the freemen and free cognition". Therefore, gnosis was not considered alien to the Church by Anton himself. According to E. Chelidze Orthodoxy of the third and fourth centuries totally destroyed the conception of baptism as a mystery, and subsequently baptism in Church acquired only a symbolic meaning (pp.12-128). In reality, the fourth-century Father Cyril of Jerusalem writes in his *Mystagogic Catechism* that though immersion in water thrice during baptism symbolically embodies the three days of Christ's being in the grave, yet this imitation of Christ is not only an image - *eikon he mimesis* - for baptism proper is a reality through which we actually receive salvation (Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catèchisme mystagogique*, Paris, 1966). Cyril then goes on to say that baptism is absolution of sins really and purification really, and so on. Thus, baptism for the Orthodox Church is one of the mysteries. Baptism is of symbolic nature only in the Protestant Church: one must not confuse the doctrine of the Protestant and the Orthodox Churches.

E. Chelidze ascribes the doctrine on the trichotomy of the human being (spiritual body) to the Gnostics, erroneously referring to it as the three parts of the human person. Actually this doctrine took shape earlier, in the Letters of the Apostle Paul (1 Cor. 2.14; 5.44-17), and it has been accepted as a doctrine by the Eastern Church, whereas the Catholic

Church denounced it but only at the Eighth Council, in the ninth century, retaining dichotomy (i.e. soul and body only). The author's assertion that "the Georgian language died with the adoption of Christianity" sounds strange (p. 138) against the background of an unprecedented revival of the Georgian language and literature precisely after the adoption of Christianity. And if the author can produce any document attesting to the pre-Christian life and growth of the Georgian language and literature, that would be a major discovery. Neither should such a view be ascribed to Ioane-Zosime, for he could have hardly been unaware of the benefits brought to the Georgian nation and its language and literature by Christianity.

Let us revert to the statement: "All mysteries are hidden in this language". As noted above, reference here is not to all esoteric mysteries of Christ but to the mysteries he succeeded in imparting to his disciples and humankind. It should be noted that both the disciples and the Fathers perceived a unity between Christian esoteric wisdom and Classical Greek mysterious wisdom, considering this too as divinely granted. This is how the Apostle Paul defined this single wisdom: "I speak God's hidden wisdom, his secret purpose framed from the very beginning to bring us to our full glory" (1 Cor.2.7). Justin the philosopher, Basil the Great, Saint Augustine, and others have the same conception on this unity. The symbolism of the art of the initial centuries of Christianity points clearly to the close links perceived by the first Christians between the ancient Greek mysteries and Christianity. Thus, e.g. a motif prevails in catacomb paintings featuring Christ as the hierophant of the mysteries, holding a wand in his hand with which he is raising Lazarus from the dead. This is a reflection of the practice followed at ancient Greek initiation centres by which the initiate was brought to life by the chief priest following his three-day-long death-like sleep in the temple; whereas this was done in secret in the mysteries, Christ performed it openly in the case of Lazarus.⁶ Therefore, the initiation of Lazarus proved a new stage along the road of ancient Greek initiation. A similarly strong link existed between the ancient cult of the Sun (*Sol invictus*) and its Christian counterpart. Early Christian images have survived in which *Sol invictus* is featured as Christ performing an Easter liturgy (see E. Sauser, *Das Frührchristliche Kunst*, München, 1966, S. 393).

From prehistoric times, the proto-Georgian ethnos and culture were linked very closely to the culture of mysteries, and what is more, this ethnos was the creator and propagator of these mysteries, as is seen from the myth of the Argonauts as well as from the evidence of Classical



writers and historians; we find an indication of this in *Kartlis Tskhovreba* ("Life of Georgia") too, which contains the story of the initiation of Parnavaz by the spiritual sun, as well as the discovery of a treasure in a cave, which is a universally-known symbol of initiation in the mysterious wisdom. Subsequently Georgia shared in the new, Christian, wisdom, i.e. Christian initiation through the "new Nino".

This is what Ioane-Zosime implies in saying that "all mysteries are hidden in this language". According to tradition, Georgia fell by lot to the Mother of God. From the esoteric viewpoint, Mother of God, Sophia, or Heavenly Mother is the mother of mysteries, Isis, Magna Mater of all ancient religions and cults, while in the conception of the first Christians and Fathers it is the earthly revelation⁷ of the Holy Spirit - given of true divine wisdom (Sophia), and of the grace of purification from sins. In the Gospel the Holy Spirit is also called Paraclete (i.e. advocate, intercessor) (see M. Parmentier, "The doctrine of the Holy Spirit" by Gregory of Nyssa, *Ecclesiasticos Pharos*, J. Patriarchy of Antioch, 1976, vol. 60, p. 697).

In the Gospel according to St. John, the Saviour announces to his disciples the future denouncement of the world by the Holy Spirit and the granting thereby of true divine wisdom to the chosen: "Nevertheless I tell you the truth: it is for your good that I am leaving you. If I do not go, your Advocate will not come, whereas if I go, I will send him to you. When he comes, he will confute the world, and show where wrong and right and judgement lie. He will convict them of wrong, by their refusal to believe me; he will convince them that right is on my side, by showing that I go to the Father when I pass from your sight; and he will convince them of divine judgement, by showing that the Prince of this world stands condemned" (John, 16.7-11).

Thus, according to the Gospel, the mission of the Holy Spirit is to show the sins of mankind, or the sins of "all languages". In Ioane-Zosime's view, the same mission will be carried out in the future by the Georgian nation. Being a true Christian, he doubtless believes the Georgian nation will be so involved because Georgia is a country fallen by lot to the Mother of God, and the Mother of God is the earthly manifestation of the Holy Spirit. It is not accidental that according to tradition, Georgia fell by lot to the Mother of God on the day of the descent of the Holy Spirit, or the Pentecost.

Thus, as noted above, during his earthly service, Christ passed divine wisdom on to his disciples - but only partially, for they were not yet mature enough ("the burden would be too great" for them). However, he



warns them that the Holy Spirit or the Spirit of Truth will convey that wisdom to them: "There is still much that I could say to you, but the burden would be too great for you now. However, when he comes who is the Spirit of truth, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own authority, but will tell only what he hears; and he will make known to you the things that are coming. He will glorify me, for everything that he makes known to you he will draw from what is mine" (John 16.12-13). Therefore, the Holy Spirit is the denouncer or judge of mankind and at the same time grantor of "all the secrets" or hidden wisdoms. It is the same with the Georgian language or ethnos, for its mission is the same as that of the Holy Spirit, i.e. through the Georgian language or Georgian nation the Holy Spirit will perform its mission when it judges mankind at the Second Coming.

Proceeding from the foregoing, at the Second Coming the Georgian people and its language will have to perform the mission devolving, according to John's Gospel and the Revelation, on Christ and the Archangel Michael, on the one hand, and on the Holy Spirit and the Archangel Gabriel, on the other. Gabriel is the 'face' or announcer of the will of the Holy Spirit, Gabriel having brought the news to the Mother of God of her conception by the Holy Spirit and being connected with the future mission of the Holy Spirit. In the same way Michael is considered the 'face' of the Son, or Christ. This is why the sixth-century Davati steles* feature the Archangels Michael and Gabriel reverentially holding a board with the Georgian alphabet carved on it. By the way, in their article on the discovery of the stele, G. Abramishvili and Z. Alexidze remarked casually that in Old Georgian writings *ena* ('language') denoted people as well, without relating this statement to Ioane-Zosime's *Praise*⁸.

The authors just cited note the occurrence on the Brdadzori sixth-century stele** of a theme quite unusual for iconography: the ascension and glorification of the shrouded Lazarus at the Second Coming, with the Archangel Michael announcing to mankind with a trumpet the advent of Judgement Day. This discovery is another demonstration of the awareness in the Georgia of the period under discussion of the esoteric secret of Lazarus and John being identical, for Lazarus is not mentioned at all in the Revelation in describing the events of Judgement Day, whereas on Judgement Day, John contemplates himself with an es-

* Found in Davati, Dusheti district, Georgia

** Found in Brdadzori, Marneuli district, Georgia.

chatological vision beside the Archangel Michael (Rev. 19.9-21). Thus, the Lazarus represented on the Brdadzori stele is the same St. John.

2. "Four-days' Dead"

What should the phrase "four-days' dead" mean in relation to the Georgian language and nation? This is partially explained by Ioane-Zosime with a citation from David the Prophet: "one thousand years are equal to one day"; at the same time, he considers the letter წ (ts) of the Georgian Gospel as denoting four thousand *maragis* (the latter word means "prophetic vision" in old Georgian). In other words, the author speaks of four thousand years in relation to the Georgian people - of the prophetic meaning of four thousand years for this nation. Though this is quite clear, it remains vague as to which is considered to be the four-thousand year period for the Georgian language, i.e. its point of commencement and end. Different - mutually exclusive - views have been expressed in Georgian scholarly publications, none in my view providing a satisfactory explanation of the phrase.

Inasmuch as the *Praise* belongs to medieval Christian theosophic literature, its explication calls for recourse to theosophic concepts of the periods of the development of mankind, for the passage in question cannot be explained on the basis of only theological and exoteric church evidence.

The theosophic doctrine contains the conception of the various developmental periods of mankind, or successive cultural eras. The term 'thousand' has a broader use in theosophy, going beyond the purely numerical value of the number. For example, the Gospel describes the feeding by Christ, of four thousand men with seven loaves of bread and two fishes. In the theosophic sense 'thousand' means not only one thousand but a great number of men⁹. (We have an analogy to this in the Georgian word *tskhra* ('nine') which means not only the number it designates but 'many' - e.g. in the place names Tskhratsqaro, Tskhramukha, etc.). The term 'four thousand' was used in reference to people of the fourth cultural era. As for the 'seven loaves' - from the theosophic viewpoint - in the Gospel it is a symbol of heavenly food, stemming from the seven zodiacs of the night, while the five loaves,

which feed 'five thousand', or people of the fifth era, are the five zodiacs of the day (*ibid.*, p. 239).

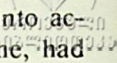
Such a conception of "thousands" is common in Christian and Indian theosophy. Further, theosophy has a conception of various dark and clear periods of mankind's development: Krita Yuga, Treta Yuga, Dvapara Yuga, Kali Yuga. According to the theosophic view, each of these lasts several thousand years, and is divided into thousand-year periods too. Thus, according to theosophy, the last, Kali Yuga, or the dark period in mankind's history, commenced in 3101 B.C. and lasted five thousand years. The 'dark period' implies a time when mankind gradually becomes divorced from the divine-spiritual being; the divine-spiritual world darkens for mankind, and increasingly sinking into matter, it comes to know the material world; mankind's links with the divine spiritual world and beings gradually weakens; instead, its self-consciousness strengthens, which, in the first millennium of the Kali Yuga (i.e. in the third millennium B.C.) - called also Abraham's era - receives and becomes aware of the revelation of one God as the universal ego.

The next millennium of the Kali Yuga is the second millennium B.C. or the era of Moses, when mankind becomes still more divorced from the divine spiritual world and needs to exert greater effort to receive the revelation of God, as did Moses at the burning bush and on Mount Sinai. In this era, a single God - as a universal ego - already appears in natural phenomena: thunder and lightning, the burning bush, and so on. It reveals itself as the ruler of natural existence and giver of law to man. Man's ability to know the outer world and material being correspondingly increases.

The third millennium of the Kali Yuga (first millennium B.C.) is the era of Solomon, when one God, as a universal ego, reveals himself not only in natural phenomena, in law and divine worship but in human (i.e. Solomon's) wisdom ¹⁰.

This period of three millennia follows the time when, according to the Bible, the building of the tower of Babel was foiled by the Lord and the confusion or differentiation of the languages began (Gen. 11). Prior to that, mankind had a single, universal protolanguage and dialects arose gradually.

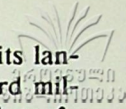
According to Ioane-Zosime, the Georgian language or ethnos has been dead four days or four thousand years, its demise, i.e. humbling and rejection, has continued for four thousand years. Assuming the work was written approximately in the tenth century, one should hypothesize that,



in determining the four-thousand-year period, the author took into account the theosophic tradition of the Kali Yuga, which, in his time, had reached four thousand years (three millennia B.C. plus the first millennium A.D.). Now the revival of the Georgian language and literature, spiritual life, and statehood, and the unification of the country began in the tenth century. This is the resurrection of the Georgian nation, envisioned by the author of the *Praise* in the period of the Second Coming.

3. The *Praise* and the Linguo-ethnological Evidence

Along with theosophic data, those of modern linguistics and ethnology help to understand Ioane-Zosime's "four thousand", for the data of the latter disciplines are not at considerable variance with those of theosophy. Furthermore the disciplines in question are developing a theory on the proto- or parent language, as we see, e.g., in the recently published two-volume *Indo-European Language and the Indo-Europeans* by Th. Gamkrelidze and V. Ivanov (Tbilisi, 1985 /in Russian/). The purpose of the monograph is to reconstruct the proto-language and proto-culture, with an historical-typological analysis. According to this study, the differentiation or breaking up of the common Kartvelian parent language into separate languages and dialects can be dated - on the basis of glottochronological evidence - to the second millennium B.C., or possibly even to a much earlier period (i.e. third millennium) (p. 863). The earlier date fully accords with my own hypothesis that the first three-millennial period 'four thousand' implies the last three millennia B.C., during which time the Georgian language and the Georgian ethnos were being "humbled and rejected," which - in Ioane-Zosime's view - amounts to death. It should therefore be inferred that at the time of the writing of the *Praise* there was certain knowledge in Georgia of the prehistoric period and the proto-Georgian ethnos and language discussed in modern scholarship. The same is attested by Euthymius the Athonite's reference to the Basques as "the Georgians of Spain", being descendants of the ancient Japhetids or Pyrenean Iberians. The same is suggested by the use of the phrase "Georgians of the West" to refer to Spanish Iberians in the translation of Basil the Great's *Hexaemeron* (57.20).



It would appear that the proto-Georgian (Japhetic) ethnos and its language began to be 'humbled' and 'rejected' precisely from the third millennium B.C. or - in theosophic terminology - from the beginning of the Kali Yuga. It was at this time that the Indo-European expansion and ascendancy started in Eurasia, symbolized in Greek mythology by the chaining of Iapetus' son, the Titan Prometheus ("prophetic thought"), to the Caucasus Range, and the dominance on earth of Zeus and his pantheon (Prometheus representing Japhetic mankind and Zeus Indo-European). In S. Qaukhchishvili's view, here we are dealing with the struggle and confrontation of two different cultures. Prometheus is not a Greek god; he is the god of a people of high culture populating the country before the advent of the Greeks. On the other hand, the Olympian Zeus is a purely Greek god¹²; he is the god of those Greeks that had a rather low culture when they arrived and settled the Balkans, the Aegean archipelago, and the western littoral of Asia Minor. The newly-come uncultured Greek population fought the old, proto-Georgian population, which possessed a much superior culture. (See S. Qaukhchishvili, *What do the Ancient Greeks Tell Us about Georgia*, Tbilisi, 1964, p. 34 /in Georgian/). Thus, Prometheus chained to the Caucasus, represents the highly civilized proto-Georgian people who were located in the Caucasus and restricted to this region. At an earlier time, these people filled not only the Caucasus but also India, the Mediterranean basin, Northern and Southern Europe, the Iberian peninsula, the Aegean archipelago, and Asia Minor¹³. Some European scholars refer to these people as Ligurian-Iberian or Euscaro-Alarodian, whereas Georgian scholars call them Japhetic or Ibero-Caucasian. Specialists agree that in the fourth millennium B.C. the Indo-European tribes occupied the territory from mid-Europe to the Aral Sea, and from the beginning of the third millennium they began expansion southward. Hittite-Luwian tribes conquered Asia Minor in the second half of the third millennium, while early in the second millennium a new wave of Indo-Europeans, viz. Aryans, came from the East, causing the final breakup of the single Mediterranean and Aegean cultures and ethnic confederations (of proto-Georgians) that had hitherto dominated the Mediterranean basin and Asia Minor and that had earlier checked the Indo-European expansion. The proto-Georgian culture had attained a higher stage of development than the Indo-European, exerting influence on the latter (see R. Gordeziani. *The Iliad and Questions of the History and Ethnogeny of the Aegean Population*. Tbilisi, 1970, p. 194 /in Georgian/). In Marr's view, Georgian is a purely

Japhetic language, while Armenian is a hybrid Japhetic-Indo-European language.

The matriarchate was central in the ethnic structure of the proto-Georgians. Female deities were characteristically dominant in their pantheon, which included the worship of the Great Mother of nature, or Mother Goddess (the Greek Demeter stems from here). This is also the source of the cult of the woman of the ancient Iberians: males are referred to not by the father's name but that of the mother, a practice that survived in medieval Languedoc and the Pyrenees where the Celtiberian traditions were still strong. Males were here referred to as "the son of Belisena", of Imperia, of Oliveria, and so on (see O. Rahn, *Kreuzzug gegen den Gral*, Stuttgart, 1964).

The reference in Georgia to Amirani as "the son of Darejan" is doubtless another instance of this practice. This was a manifestation of the cult of the female, a cult that paved the way for the future worship of the Mother of God.

According to the Bible, the breakup or differentiation of the proto-Georgian parent language took place after the fall of the tower of Babel; according to the theosophic viewpoint, at the beginning of the Kali-Yuga ('Dark period'); and according to linguistics and ethnography, it followed the Indo-European expansion of the third millennium B.C. This is the beginning of the decline of the proto-Georgian ethnos, involving the separation of its people and the decline of the Japhetids. The decline continued for centuries, reaching its lowest point in the time of the Roman empire when the Indo-Europeanized Rome destroys Carthage and Pontus, and endeavours to conquer ancient Iberia. The Indo-Europeans become patricians in the Empire, and the Japhetids, plebeians. In Marr's view, initially Carthage and Rome, on opposite sides of the Mediterranean, were cities of the same ethnic origin, namely Japhetic. The later Indo-Europeanization of Rome and the Semitization of Carthage (by the Phoenicians) resulted in a life-and-death confrontation of the two cities. Marr compares the fate of the Pelasgians and Etruscans to that of a lion that had no praiser and was eclipsed by man's glory. This is the "humbling and rejection" of the Georgian (Japhetic) language or people, paralleled by an upswing of the Semitic and Indo-European peoples.

Besides the matriarchate, the proto-Kartvelians were characterized by plant totems - the vine and oak - and animal totems - the panther and the wolf. Gods in the panther's skin and in the lion's skin are characteristic of the ancient Asia Minor Japhetic pantheon. A view has been expressed in specialist literature that Rustaveli's *Man in the Panther's*

Skin is an echo of an ancient, prehistoric, proto-Caucasian saga, which also found reflection in the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, and in other lion and pantherskin heroes (see T. Margvelashvili, *Georgica*, London, 1936). The above-cited work of Th. Gamkrelidze and V. Ivanov relates Rustaveli's poem to the ancient Asia Minor cult of the panther (pp. 506, 507).

Scholars agree that the Basque people are a remnant of an ancient Iberian race and civilization destroyed by the Indo-Europeans in the course of their expansion, the same being the fate of other Mediterranean, Aegean, and Asia Minor cultures. Thus, remnants of a single civilization have survived only in the Pyrenees and in the Caucasus (Georgia). In modern scholarship, Marr laid a firm foundation for the theory of the prehistoric kinship of the Basques and the Georgians. In the view of H.G. Wells, the ancient Iberians, whose descendants are the Basques, belonged to the Neolithic Mediterranean race (H.G. Wells, *A Course of History*, p.91). According to the studies of Humboldt and Marr, the Japhetid Iberians covered the Mediterranean basin, the Sumerian, Minoan, Pelasgic, Etruscan, and other cultures being created by them. In Marr's view, the proto-Georgian or Japhetic parent language was a single glottogonic phenomenon - a common basis of all the languages that came into being in the course of differentiation¹⁴. That is why the well-known Russian scholar A. Losev also speaks of "the world role of the Georgian and other Kartvelian languages" (see A. Losev. *Sign, Symbol, Myth*, Moscow, 1956). Marr quotes Fr. Müller, according to whom the Caucasian languages constitute a remnant of a once powerful and important family of languages that was spoken in the Caucasus and south of it, until the arrival of the Semitic, Aryan, and Uralo-Altai tribes. Marr concludes that the Georgian language originated from mankind's common parent language that resembled the Semitic languages in the same way as they showed mutual resemblance (N. Marr, *Selected Papers*, vol. I. 1933 /in Russian/). That is why Tubal and Meshech are mentioned in the Bible as the sons of Shem's brother Japheth (Gen. 10.2).

The later Japhetic languages are survivals of a vast language branch (Japhetic parent language) which diffused westward, eastward and southward to the Semitic world. In Marr's words, among the Japhetic languages, Georgian holds the same position as does Arabic among the Semitic languages. Both Marr and H. Johnstone, hypothesized the existence in prehistoric times of a primary Basque-Caucasian-Dravidian language in parallel with Sumerian and Elamite; Sumerian may have been a connecting link between the primary Basque-Caucasian and primary

Mongolian groups, for there existed a primary Basque-Caucasian-Dravidian-Sumerian-Mongolian parent language which was older than the Hamitic parent language. It was the language of the Eolithic culture. We shall note here that the Sumerians, the Tubals and the Tibareni belonged to ancient Iberian tribes¹⁵.

Later, in the period following the Bronze Age, the Japhetids (proto-Georgians) originated the Iron culture at the end of the Mycenaean period (the Halizones or Chalybes, in the Bible: peoples of the Tubal-Cain stock). Japhetid Pelasgians were the initiators of civilization in ancient Greece too, the country originally being Pelasgian and later subjected to Hellenization. Homer's *Iliad* depicts the expansion of Indo-European peoples and the decline of the Japhetids. Opposed on the one hand were the Indo-European Achaeans and Japhetid Trojans, and on the other, the Achaean Agamemnon and the Pelasgian Achilles. Greece's contacts with Japhetid Colchis were reflected in the myth of the Argonauts.

As noted above, the part played by various ethnic entities in the development of Greek civilization found reflection in Greek mythology. Scholars agree that the Titans and Heroes belonged to a non-Greek, pre-Greek world, leading first the Pelasgic culture and later the newly-come Achaean culture (O. Neeracher, *Auf Geistespfaden Griechenland*, Basel, 1966, S. 24). The Titans and Heroes were supermen who had received a spark of divine self-identity. The stealing of fire from the heaven by Prometheus - viewed microcosmically - was the acquisition of identity or self, whereas the casting of the Titans into Tartary is the descent of the human soul into matter, its sinking into the body and establishment there, giving rise to man's individual life, thought and culture. Subsequent developments of self-identity involve the initiation of will (suggested in the myths of Tantalus, Sisyphus, and Heracles) and the merger of will with love (a theme in the story of Medea). It is through self-identity that the Golden Fleece (the cosmic wisdom of the ram) was procured, the Golden Fleece having the same meaning in Classical times as the philosophical stone and the Grail had in the Middle Ages. (The Golden Fleece is also called the "Classical Grail").

Couched in the language of Classical mythology and mysteriosophy, the myth of Prometheus conveys what the author of the *Praise* says in the language of Christian theosophy. The once ascendant Titan Prometheus, son of Iapetus (the same as the Pramathusa and Matarishva of the Indian mythology), the stealer of fire (the spark of divine self-identity), creator and inspirer of human civilization and rational culture, creative and previsioning thinker, inaugurator of the culture of mysteries

is the symbol of the Japhetic, proto-Georgian or proto-European ethnos which, in the course of time, was defeated and set aside by Zeus or Indo-European mankind and chained to the Caucasus, restricting its sphere of life and activity to the Caucasus. (According to another view, the chaining of Prometheus to the rock suggests the chaining of thought to the physical body.) Prometheus was rescued by Heracles, the continuer of his cause. Being a hero who raised the syncretic culture of mysteries to a new stage, Prometheus is linked also to the pre-Greek, Pelasgic-Iberian world and to the ancient Iberian mysteries. Heracles, the earliest solar god-hero of the ancient Iberians, was closely linked to the Pyrenees. The myth of Heracles and his beloved Pyrene, who perished in the Pyrenees, reflects his relation to that area. The story of his tenth and eleventh labours indicates the same relationship (Gibraltar is not called accidentally Pillars of Hercules.) Furthermore, Heracles hailed from Pelasgian Argos. It is not a mere chance that the stem *Argo* is related not only to the ship that brought the Argonauts to Colchis, but also to Colchian place names and designations of ethnic groups: Argueti, Margueti, Egrisi, Margali, etc. Heracles was the son of Perseus, who founded the clairvoyant Pelasgic culture which he subsequently converted into the Hellenic culture of the Athenians. Heracles was annointed by Hera, the ancient Pelasgic-Iberian goddess, a forerunner of Isis, of Sophia, and of the Mother of God in the Christian understanding. At the same time, Heracles is the son of Zeus, for he absorbed also the Zeusean, i.e. Indo-European, culture of initiation. Heracles is usually depicted in a lion's skin, like the characters of *The Man in the Panther's Skin*, being the symbol of confidence and the royal power of the self. His supernatural physical power and his labours symbolically reflect the spiritual potencies of the mystes or adept, the will-power; his 12 labours are the 12 stages of initiation. (To portray Heracles as merely a hero possessing physical strength amounts to ignorance).

The freeing of the chained Prometheus and the slaying of Zeus' eagle by Heracles means the following in the language of mysteries: the Japhetic-Promethean or proto-Georgian race - subdued and oppressed by the Indo-European race (Zeus) - is at present confined to the Caucasus, being humbled, rejected, and surrounded by a hostile race. Its heart and liver are being torn by an eagle (symbol of the imperial might of the Indo-Europeans). But in the future Prometheus will become free, will revive and recover his original power and position in the world; that is, he will assume the role of the creator of civilization and culture, of the propagator of the culture of mysteries, and of the judge of humanity. He

will be liberated by Heracles, and a new initiation culture, founded by Prometheus himself, will in the future attain to the highest stage of spiritual development, spiritual omnipotence (Heracleian omnipotence), and will become a supreme theurgy. This supreme theurgy is Christian theurgy or Christ's initiation through which he raised Lazarus from the dead, being a continuation of ancient mysteries and a new and highest stage of theurgy and initiation. This is what will rescue the humbled and rejected, chained Prometheus-Amirani; this is what will destroy the imperial power (Zeus' eagle) that tortures it.

The myths of Prometheus, Heracles, and the Argonauts are a prophetic vision of the future mission of Christianity. The Dorian-Colchian initiation - whose leaders the cited heroes are - is the forerunner of Christian initiation. It is not accidental that Dorian initiation is connected with Colchis, while Heracles was one of the members of the Argonautic expedition. The causing of water to spring from a rock by Heracles with his wand during the voyage is considered a prototype of Christ's causing the springing of water from a spiritual rock (1 Cor., 10.4; see O. Neeracher, *ibid.*, p. 274). This is suggested also by the semantic relationship of Jason and Jesus (*iasis* 'remedy', *iesos* 'healer'). Thus, from the viewpoint of Greek mythology, Prometheus will be liberated by a theurgy of the future - a new culture of initiation, which, from the point of view of Christian theosophy, implies Christian theosophy.

It is no mere chance that in the work of Germanus the Patriarch of Constantinople (a Laz by descent) *Narration of the Miracles of the Archangel Michael* the voyage of the Argonauts is guarded by Michael, Christ's image, a "terrific power sent from heaven", who prophesies victory. Thus, it was not only esoterism but the exoteric Church as well that had a tradition on ancient Colchian civilization as the forerunner of Christianity.

The author of the *Praise* tells us in Christian terminology what a myth coming from ancient mysteries does: the once ascendant and powerful Kartvelian-Georgian ethnos and its language have been humbled and rejected for four thousand years, but this humbling is for the Georgian people and language Christ's baptism of death and burial (wherein it is 'four-days-dead'), which is inevitably followed by resurrection and ascension. The Georgian nation too will rise after this four-day baptism, while at Second Coming it will recover the position of a universal spiritual leader and judge of mankind, as in the past. All this will be restored to the Georgian ethnos by Him who raised and glorified Lazarus. This is why the Georgian people are compared to Lazarus. At

the same time, it is not said that the Georgian nation will remain humbled, rejected and dead until Second Coming but that after four days' ('four thousand years') death and burial it will rise like Lazarus. Much earlier than the Second Coming of Christ it will bear testimony to Christ, its history will be an unseen martyrdom for Christ, while at Second Coming it will show up the sinful.

It is notable that the proto-Georgian (Japhetic) ethnos is recognized - according to ancient mythological notions - as the judge of the humanity that has passed to the nether world. This is testified by the myths of Iapetus, Rhadamanthus, and Minos. The first Japhetid king, Minos (Minos means "bearer of thought"), whose spouse was the sister of the Colchian king Aectes, figures in Homer's *Odyssey* as the judge of the dead in Hades; subsequently, this notion found its way into the medieval tradition (see Dante's *Inferno*), while Minos' brother Rhadamanthus is a judge in the Elysian Fields (together with Cronus and Iapetus). (Rhadamanthus was also the legitimizer of blood-feud.) It has been ascertained in modern scholarship that the Minoans belonged to the Mediterranean race, like the proto-Georgians. They created an ancient civilization that exerted a great influence on Mycenae and Greece. (It is noteworthy that the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* assigns the modern Georgians to the Mediterranean race.) Thus, Ioane-Zosime's conception of the Georgian people as the expositor or judge of mankind goes back to prehistoric times.

To revert to our discussion as to what is implied by the death and humbling and rejection of the Georgian people and language. Inasmuch as the Japhetic proto-language was a language of priests of mysteries or magi, by which they established relations with spiritual beings and totems, it acquired from the start a sacred mysterious character and purpose. The speakers of that language, the Japhetids or proto-Georgians (the same proto-Europeans and proto-Aryans), formed mankind's religious elite, the leaders of spiritual life, the universal culture bearers. In Ioane-Zosime's view, the life of these people and their sacred language must have lasted from time immemorial to the third millennium B.C. or to the beginning of the Kali Yuga. The period of profanation started in the third millennium. It was characterized by the humbling and rejection of the sacred language. The profanation was caused by (a) the sinking of humanity into matter, (b) the ascendancy of the Indo-Europeans, and (c) historical adversities. In the same period, the proto-Georgian people began to diminish numerically, a situation symbolically embodied in the slaying of Niobe's children. (Niobe was a mother of Japhetic extraction.)

The use of Japhetic mysteries began to decline, while the single parent language suffered differentiation into many separate languages and dialects, being a continuation of the confusion of languages following the fall of the tower of Babel.

According to Ioane-Zosime, "all mysteries" in the Georgian nation and its language have been hidden since prehistoric times when Georgian was the language of the priests (magi) - a language created for contacts with gods. That is why "all the secrets" of the mysteries are preserved in the Georgian language and culture. Hence the Georgian language is a Lazarus among the languages; it is the primary and basic language, in the same way as Lazarus-John was the principal apostle of Jesus Christ - the disciple "whom Jesus loved" and who was his closest spiritual friend. He was at the same time a foster son of the Mother of God - like Georgia fallen by lot to the Mother of God.

With the commencement of the Christian era, races, nations, and men received a stimulus to revival. Christ's impetus made for the rise and elevation of all that had been humbled and rejected. In the words of John the Baptist: "Every ravine shall be filled in, and every mountain and hill levelled" (Luke 3.5.). The most humbled and rejected Georgian people and language received a stimulus to rise, like Lazarus. The stimulus was similar to the one Christ gave to John when the crucified Saviour said to his mother when he saw her standing beside the disciple whom he loved: "Mother, there is your son", and to the disciple: "There is your mother" (John, 19.26-27). Similarly did Georgia or Iberia fall by lot to the Mother of God on the Pentecost. So that Lazarus-John and Georgia were almost simultaneously adopted by the Mother of God, this being the will of the Saviour. This is one more reason why, according to Ioane-Zosime, the Georgian language is called Lazarus in the Gospel.

"And this language adorned and blessed in the name of the Lord". Blessed it was already in the Bible, where the nobleness of Shem and Japheth is praised (Gen. 9.22-23). Japheth's sons: Meshech, Tubal, and Javan are mentioned among the future blessed nations (Isaiah, 66.19) while the name John stems from Javan - a chief of Japhetic origin).

Which peoples should be considered leading in the development of Christianity? According to Ioane-Zosime's conception, these are peoples of Kartvelian and Indo-European (Greek) origin. Although the Semitic peoples played their role in the opening centuries in giving rise to and establishing Christianity, in the later centuries their mission did not continue along these lines. The peoples of Kartvelian origin assumed the principal role in the development both of exoteric and of esoteric Chris-

tianity, as well as of theology. The great pillars of the Eastern Church - St. George of Cappadocia, St. Nicholas of Myra, in Lycia,¹⁶ and the Cappadocian Fathers: Basil the Great, Gregory of Nazianzus, Gregory of Nyssa, and many others - were of Japhetic or Kartvelian extraction¹⁶. The fact that these Fathers wrote in Greek indicates the humbling and rejection of the Georgian language at that time. Peter the Iberian, author of Areopagitic treatises, was a great pillar of Christian theology and theosophy. His writings formed the basis of the theology, mysticism, and esoteric Christianity both of the Eastern and of the Western Churches. It should be noted also that Cappadocian and Georgian Christians were inclined more to missionary work than were the Greeks.

The Grail Christianity is the principal trend of esoteric Christianity. Rising among peoples of the Celtiberian race - in the Pyrenees, Languedoc and Provence - it spread from there to the whole of Europe. The quest for the Grail is the same as the quest for the Golden Fleece, which in scholarship is called also the "Classical Grail", as I noted above. The culture of the Golden Fleece was created by Kartvelian, viz. Colchian, tribes, while the culture of the Grail is credited to their kindred Western Celtiberian tribes¹⁷. In the Middle Ages, the Grail was secretly transferred to Georgia from Western Europe, which is mentioned in the legend of the King-Priest John, identified by the Chronicles of the Crusades with the Georgian King David the Builder. Motifs of the initiation of the Grail have found reflection in Georgian, particularly Phshav-Khevsurian, folklore - namely in the motif of the bringing back from Kajaveti* of Samdzivari,** and the bowl by St. George and his sworn brothers, children of God, which served as the basis of Rustaveli's *Man in the Panther's Skin*. Gelati is a church dedicated to the Grail, its fresco motifs reflecting the Grail mysteries. All this found symbolic reflection in the royal coat-of-arms of the Bagrationis, featuring David's Harp and sling (symbol of Iese and David), St. George, Christ's lordly tunic, and the spherical bowl of the Holy Grail (all symbols of esoteric Christianity).

As noted earlier, Ioane-Zosime compares St. Nino - the symbol of Georgian Christianity - with Lazarus' sister Mary, because Mary's path lies in the spiritual-contemplative line of Christianity, theosophy and esotericism. We find the same comparison of Nino with Mary in *Moktsevai Kartlisai* ("The Conversion of Georgia"); Zabulon says to her:

* The realm of demons in Georgian folklore

** A goddess in the Georgian mythological pantheon

“Fear not, my child, imitate the love of Magdalene and of the sisters of Lazarus for Christ” (*Kartlis Tskhovreba*, I, 1955, p. 76; quoted from M. Wardrop’s translation).


Further, one of the articles (7) in the book given to Nino by the angel reads: “Now Mary was greatly beloved of the Lord, so that he always hearkened to her truth and wisdom” (*ibid.* p. 87). Thus, the comparison of St. Nino with Mary appears to have been a common tendency in the Georgian Church and literature - hence the search for some other Nino in the “New Nino” of the *Praise* is a deviation from the correct path. The mission of Greek Christianity - with Helen the Queen as its symbol - is compared with Martha in the text because the Greek people created State Christianity, Social Christianity, and exoteric theology. Neither is it fortuitous too that the Georgian people were converted by St. Nino, a maiden hailing precisely from Japhetic-Moschian-Zan Cappadocia¹⁸, while St. George the Cappadocian is the principal saint of the Georgian Church. At the same time, he is a national god of the Georgian people, possessing the attributes of Christ and the Trinity.

The mission of Christianity also manifested itself in the fact that it reconciled the Kartvelian and Indo-European peoples that had been mortal enemies, establishing a harmony between them. Today they emerge as the two sisters - St. Nino and Queen Helen - servants of the same ideal and objective for the good of humanity. This is how Ioane-Zosime sees it.

The idea of the Georgian people and their language being blessed and belonging by lot to the Mother of God does not stem from Georgian messianism alone, as some researchers believe. This idea was shared by the Greek and Russian Churches as well, as will be made clear below. Thus, Basil the Philosopher’s *Life of Ilarion the Georgian* contains a passage which reads: “when St. Ilarion and his associates were banished from the chapel as non-Greeks by the oconomus of the Monastery of Ulumbo, the same night he had a vision of the All-Holy Mother of God, who said to him: “Why did you, wretched man, drive out unjustifiably the great anchorite Ilarion and his associates ... You think the language of the Greeks is alone accepted: do you not know that all nations that fear God and act according to His commandments are agreeable to Him, and do you not see how many of their nation have been accepted as good by God; how did you, wretched man, dissociate yourself from the prayer of my friend and from his blessing, for he who does not accept these is my enemy”. It seems clear that the author of these lines - a Greek by nationality - believed Iberia to be a country fallen by lot to the

Virgin Mary. An earlier work, *The Life of Simeon Stylites* by Arcadius, the Archbishop of Cyprus, relates how Simeon Stylites "saw in sleep a great multitude of people - men, women, and children - and they were holding crosses in their hands, and they came to him from the East, and the Holy Spirit guarded them". Then the Holy Spirit showed him that "these were the Georgian people". On the following day the Georgians did come to Simeon with crosses in their hands (K. Kekelidze. *Georgian Hagiographic Monuments, Keimena*, I, Tiflis, 1918, p. 260 /in Georgian/. It was doubtless this vision that led Simeon to establish friendship with the Georgians and subsequently to send thirteen Syrian Fathers to Georgia to preach and strengthen Christianity here. Thus, in the work under discussion the Holy Spirit emerges as the guardian of Georgia, and the earthly revelation of the Holy Spirit is the Mother of God, as demonstrated above. So we find an echo of the idea of Georgia being the Mother of God's lot as far back as the seventh century in the *Life of Simeon Stylites*.

Now let us look at the tradition of the Russian church related to this point. The friendship and cooperation of Georgian and Russian monks in the Iberian Monastery on Mt. Athos is well known, many Russians becoming Georgianized and staying in the Athonite monasteries, as for example, Ioane the Former Russian (see *The Cultural Role of Iberia in Russian History* by Kyrion the Catholicos. Tiflis, 1910 /in Russian/. The well-known Old Slavonic Akathistos of the Iberian Mother of God (Portaitisa), whose last redaction dates from the seventeenth century, tells of the falling of Iberia by lot to the Mother of God, of the Glory of the Iberian Monastery on Mount Athos, of St. Euthymius being golden-mouthed, of the invincibility of St. Tornike, of St. Gabriel, the bearer of the icon, and also of the future glory of the Iberian nation - all in the same vein as in Ioane-Zosime's *Pralse*. In the very first echos of the Akathistos we read: An angel in the divine presence was sent to the Mother of God when apostolic work in the Iberian land fell to her by lot: "Do not depart from Jerusalem, the country fallen to you by lot will become radiant in the last days [i.e. before the Second Coming], and you should labour in other countries where the Lord will send you". The Akathistos narrates: "Having knowledge of her lot regarding the people of the Iberian land, she arranged things there, and herself took up abode at Mt. Athos, in the monastery of that nation, in a quiet haven for those seeking salvation, wishing to present her icon to the monastery as a shield and protection ... Conveying her will to the preacher Gabriel, the Queen said to him: "It is not proper for me to be guarded by you,



but let me be your guardian not only in the present but in the future life as well; I give you this sign: so long as you contemplate my icon in the monastery, the grace and favour of my Son will never diminish, let them shout: Alleluia!"¹⁷ Proceeding from the same tradition, the Kontakion of echos 3 of the eighteenth-century Russian saint Serafim of Sarovo echoes Ioane-Zosime by stating that many nations will be wiped from the face of the earth, but Iberia, being the lot of the Virgin Mary, will survive to the end of the world. The idea of Iberia being the lot of the Virgin Mary occurs also in the Old Slavonic Akathistos of David Gareji.

The Patriarch Nikon (seventeenth century) had a copy of the Iberian Virgin Mary's icon brought to Russia with great honour, building a special church for it ("New Iberian Cloister"). At present the copy of the icon rests in the Sokolniki Church of the Resurrection in Moscow, its feast day being 12 February. Thus, the icon of the Iberian Virgin Mary is one of the most important holies of the Russian Church. It played a major role in the official cult as well, which is seen also from the fact that one of the principal gates of the Moscow Kremlin - official cult centre - is called the Iberian gate (*Iverskiye vrata*).

Now we shall look into the meaning of section 7 of Ioane-Zosime's text. "And the language has a sign: ninety-four years from the advent of Christ to the present day". There have been attempts to declare 94 an error of the copyist and to replace it with 104, because for some reason it was believed that reference to this number meant the ascendancy of the Georgian calendar over other calendars. This confusion was caused by the wrong understanding of the word *umetes*, taken in its present meaning. It is clearly stated in the text that 94 does not imply ascendancy over other calendars but a definite date after the advent of Christ. As for the phrase *umetes skhvata enata*, the fact that in the Georgian text it comes before ninety-four years should not cause confusion, for in Old Georgian the word *umetes* did not denote only 'increase', 'addition' but 'advantage', 'priority' as well (see I. Abuladze, *Dictionary of Old Georgian*). Thus, *umetes skhvata enata* means literally: "an advantage over other languages". Now let us consider the sentence as a whole: "and this language, adorned and blessed in the name of the Lord, humbled and rejected, is awaiting the day of the Second Coming of the Lord, and has this as a sign: ninety-four years from the advent of Christ to the present day". The author's message to the reader is this: the advantage of the Georgian language over the other languages is its having as a sign to the present day 94 years of the Christian era. What is this year? It is the date of the writing of John's Revelation, which according to modern



scholarship took place in 94 or 95, and possibly the date of John's Gospel too, which must have been composed between 90 and 100. There may have existed more precise knowledge about this date in Ioane-Zosime's time. Hence the exceptional importance of this date for Lazarus-John and consequently for the Georgian language as well, for it was in this year that Christ's prediction of Lazarus' falling asleep came true: "This illness will not end in death; it has come for the glory of God, to bring glory to the son of God" (John 11.4). The son of God was glorified in John's Gospel, and in the Revelation by Lazarus-John. Hence this year is a miracle for Christ and for the Georgian language as well. Herein lies Lazarus' advantage over the other apostles and the advantage of the Georgian language over the other languages, for Lazarus-John's mission is revealed in John's Gospel and in the Revelation, which, in Ioane-Zosime's view, is closely linked to the mission of the Georgian people and language. Furthermore, the *Praise and Glorification of the Georgian Language* is but an exegesis on John's Gospel and the Revelation.

Consequently it was but natural for the author of the *Praise* to attach so much importance to the above date. John's Gospel and the Revelation declared parabolically - while Ioane-Zosime explained explicitly - that the Georgian nation and its language, adorned and blessed in the name of the Lord, is a Lazarus among the nations and languages, four days' (i.e. four thousand years) dead, humbled and rejected, which must bear an unprecedented testimony to Christ, will rise in the future, regain its universal position as mankind's spiritual teacher, and at the Second Coming of Christ will become expositor of sinful humanity. It will thereby fulfil the mission of Christ-Michael and Holy Spirit-Gabriel, which is symbolically expressed by the Davati sixth-century stele depicting the raising and glorification of the Georgian alphabet by Michael and Gabriel.

1. Had there been *amkhiilos sibrdznei* "make known the wisdom" or *amkhiilos sjuli chesh-mariti* "make known the true faith" (i.e. with a grammatical object), this interpretation might be acceptable.

2. See A. Van den Born. *Encyclopedic Dictionary of the Bible*. New York, 1963; also R. Steiner. *Das Johannes-Evangelium*, Dornach, 1955.

3. It should be added here that in the *Moktsevai Kartlisai* ("The Conversion of Georgia"). St Nino is likened to Lazarus' sisters and to Mary Magdalene (*Kartlis Tskhovreba*, vol. 1, pp. 76, 86, 87); which seems to have been an accepted Church tradition - hence search for another Nino in "the New Nino" is misleading.

4. E. Chelidze. A document of Gnostic character. *Mnatobi*, 1983, №12.

5. See "The Praise of the Virgin", translated by Ekvtime the Athonite (*fonds A*, MS. 40) in which the author refers to "hidden writings", i.e. esoteric writings as his sources.

6. See E. Bock, R. Goebel, *Die Katakomben*, Stuttgart, 1961.

7. Cf. E. Bock, *Kindheit und Jugend Jesu*, Stuttgart, 1939, S. 155; also: A. Drews, *The Myth of Christ*, 1991.

8. G. Abramishvili, Z. Alexidze. A discovery in the Aragvi valley. (*Komunisti*, May 19, 1985).

9. R. Steiner, *Das Evangelium des Matthäus*, Dornach, 1969.

10. Idem. *Das Wiedererscheint des Christus in aetherischen Welt*, Dornach, 1937.

11. Cf. M. Chakhava. Praise and glorification of Georgian. *Paraleli*, 1984.

12. There exists an earlier, Pelasgian chthonic Zeus whose cult is linked to the oak (Dodona).

13. Cf. W. Humboldt. *Prüfung der Untersuchungen über die Urbewohner Hispaniens vermittelt der vaskischen Sprache*, Berlin, 1821.

14. N. Marr. *The Stages of Development of the Japhetic Theory*. Leningrad, 1933 (in Russian); also: *The Basic Problems of the History of Language*. Leningrad, 1937 (in Russian); *The Georgian Language* - a lecture delivered in Paris in 1927 (in the collected papers: "Language and History", Leningrad, 1936, (in Russian)).

15. Concerning the kinship of the Sumerian and Georgian languages Prof. M. Tsereteli, founder of Sumerian-Georgian comparative philology, notes: "The difference between Sumerian and Georgian is of course considerable but not so great and of such quality as to rule out genetic relationship between them. This is accounted for by the fact that in time immemorial Sumerian and Georgian separated from their ancestor languages, passing through stages of development and decline and changing over the millennia ... Tribes speaking the languages of the Georgian and "Sumerian" (let us call the latter this name for want of a better term) groups must have inhabited areas to the south and south-west of the Caucasus - perhaps in the Caucasus too - in areas of modern southern and south-western Georgia, whence a branch of the Sumerians moved southward to settle in Babylonia" (See M. Tsereteli, "Towards the kinship of the Georgian language," in *Bedi Kartlisa* 1-2, 1948). The idea of the kinship of Sumerian and Georgian was shared by Lenormant, Sayce, Cramerge, Joseph Karst, and others.

16. According to tradition, the Lycians were descendants of Minos' brother Sarpedon, son of Europe abducted from Phoenicia. In the Lycian language Minoan-Aegean components are fused with Luwian; the name of the Lycian city Patara is also related to Hurrian-Urartian. Hurrians are known to have been related to Minoans (see R. Gordeziani, *The Iliad and Problems of the History and Ethnogeny of the Aegean Population*, Tbilisi, 1970). Thus, the Lycians were of Palaeo-Caucasian, proto-Georgian origin.

17. O. Rahn, *Kreuzzug gegen den Gral*, Stuttgart, 1964.

18. The Armenian scholar M. Ghapantsian, in his work *Hayasa or the Cradle of the Armenians* (1948) notes quite objectively: "The chief habitat of the Moschian tribes was Cappadocia, whose capital was called Mazaca by the Greeks ... It is necessary to ascribe the Moschians not to the Phrygian but to the Georgian ethnic group" (p. 428).

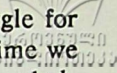
19. See *The New Testament with commentaries*, Brussels, 1964, p. 545, [In Russian].

THE SPIRITUAL IDEALS OF THE GELATI ACADEMY

A LECTURE DELIVERED AT THE L. MESKHISHVILI DRAMA
THEATRE IN KUTAISI, MAY 20, 1990

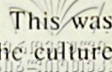
Dear friends, even in extreme political turmoil, our ancestors were not oblivious of science, poetry, knowledge. Even in times of war they cared for the development of spiritual culture. This was Georgian history. To excuse ourselves today from a similar concern by reference to our being engaged in political struggle, with no spare time for science and culture, would indeed amount to a betrayal of our historical traditions.

I wish to illustrate this by the example of the person to whom I am dedicating this lecture and whose service to the Georgian state and nation is incalculable. What is most important, he was himself a paragon of all this, setting up from his capital city, Kutaisi, the great spiritual centre of Gelati. The person I refer to should today serve as an example for us, for he combined the struggle with Georgia's foes and the building of the Georgian state with an extensive religious, philosophical, and scholarly activity that is truly astonishing. The man I am speaking of is David the Builder. We have no other example in our history of a king and commander-in-chief being such an outstandingly erudite scholar, as well as a poet and creator of spiritual culture. And our ideal today too should be such activity. Our great kings followed this tradition not only when Georgia was felicitous, free and powerful but in the dark periods of her history as well. Take the king-poet Vakhtang VI, who was a scholar, commenting on and publishing *The Man in the Panther's Skin*. In other words, even in times of extreme historical adversity the interest in scholarship and spiritual culture never cooled down. Neither should we forget this today, when Georgia is swept by the national-liberation movement. Let us recall how David the Builder during his campaigns, mounted on his horse, carried with him books by Gregory of Nazianzus, Gregory of Nyssa, the writings of philosophers, and - fully armed - read them in his ambush, holding his bow in one hand and a pen in the other. A case is on record when the enemy all but overrun his hideout and the king slew one of them on the spot.



The situation is almost the same today, when we have to struggle for the freedom of Georgia and revival of her statehood. During this time we must not be oblivious of religion, culture, philosophy, science and scholarship. Only in this way can we be victorious and preserve the image the nation had from prehistoric through historical times. As you know, Colchis was a seat of ancient culture and wisdom. Hellenic culture may be said to have been a superstructure built on Colchian culture, the former arising from the latter. This is seen clearly from the myth of the Argonauts. What is the Golden Fleece? It is a symbol of ancient, mysterious wisdom that had been preserved only in Colchis at the time. Gold is a symbol of the highest spirituality and purity, while the ram is also a symbol of supreme purity of thought, reasoning and culture, and the Golden Fleece is to be found in the country which possesses this wisdom. It is suspended from an oak, the latter being an embodiment of an ancient cult which started in Colchis and then spread worldwide, Greece included. As you know, the cult of the oak occurs in Europe too, and later in Greece. However, it began from Colchis, and the first oak - the first *didi chqoni*, i.e. 'Great Oak' (the designation of the institution of Chqondideli being related to it) was that ancient Colchian oak on which the Golden Fleece was hung and for the acquisition of which the greatest Greek hero Jason had to undergo many stages of self-development and purification. He did all this in order to acquire the wisdom symbolically embodied in the Golden Fleece. The sages of ancient Greece expressed their purport symbolically or allegorically, never conveying their wisdom directly. Thus, the great oak, the Golden Fleece, and the trials the Greek hero Jason underwent in order to acquire the Golden Fleece are all symbolic. What did he find in Colchis? He found a world of ancient wisdom, prehistoric wisdom - it may be said - the earliest wisdom of mankind. At that time, all this had been lost in Greece, for the country was then at a much lower cultural and developmental level than Colchis. But the fact that Jason was introduced to Colchian mystery, that he was put through certain tests by being confronted with warriors, the dragon and fire-breathing oxen - all this shows that ancient Colchians nurtured Greece, i.e. Hellenic culture.


But the Colchians were only a part of a large group of other Kartvelian peoples, for at that early time the Georgian ethnos was located not only in the Caucasus but extended from the Pyrenees to India; this ancient Kartvelian or Iberian race had several distinct branches. These were the world of the Pyrenees, the Mediterranean world, the Minoan world, the Trojan world and Pelasgian world, the last two con-



stituting the primordial population of Hellas or modern Greece. This was the population found by the Vedic Greeks arriving in Hellas, the culture of the indigenous population being higher than that of the newly arrived Greeks, as expressed in the myth of Prometheus. Prometheus symbolically embodies the wisdom of the ancient Kartvelian or Pelasgian tribes, which formed a single world, a part of which was Colchis. That is to say, Colchis was not the only seat of this culture; it was a culture - let me repeat - diffused from the Pyrenees to the Mediterranean and Aegean worlds, and to Asia Minor where later we find the Cappadocian and Meskhan or Moschian tribes mentioned in the Bible.

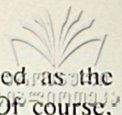
The alchemists were the ancient sages of the Caucasus, the priests of the mysteries. Guardians of mysterious wisdom, the alchemists brought the practice of that wisdom into the Middle Ages. Alchemy involved the obtaining not only of physical gold but of spiritual gold as well. It had the ideal of the golden stone. This philosophers' stone was the same Golden Fleece, sought in that pagan period by Greek sages and medieval alchemists - Hermetic alchemists. (It was called the Hermetic way because it stemmed from the wisdom of Hermes Trisgemistus, a legendary author.) The Caucasus was called "the mountain of philosophers" where - in their symbolic language - was located the ore of heavenly faith or the Golden Fleece. In other words, in the Middle Ages the Caucasus was considered a land of heavenly wisdom, for it possessed the ore of heavenly faith. The ore - symbolically, of course - indicated this wisdom, that is to say, the wisdom of ancient Colchian mysteries, or the wisdom of the Golden Fleece. The expedition of the Greeks against Troy - that proto-Kartvelian, proto-Georgian, or Colchian world - had the objective of carrying away the wisdom that the Greeks lacked, this wisdom being symbolically embodied in the Palladium or a statue of Pallas Athena, which was preserved only in Troy, and not to be found in Greece. This is how Georgia, the Georgian world, and the ancient Colchian world were represented in Classical mythos and poems. As you know, in his wanderings Odysseus comes to visit Circe, the sister of Aetes, and the son of Circe and Odysseus was Latinus - the progenitor of the Latins or Romans. Symbolically, this means that the Latins and Romans too are of semi-Georgian descent, for the Colchian Circe - the aunt of Medea and sister of Aetes - was the mother of Latinus, the eponym of the Latins.

Consider too Theseus' visit to the kingdom of Minos in Crete. He slew the monster Minotaur confined in the labyrinth; and then escaped from the labyrinth with the help of the thread given to him by Ariadne. As is known, Minos was Aetes' son; Aetes' sister Pasiphae was the wife of



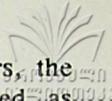
Minos - a situation that suggests the very close relationship of the various cultures of that period. The ancient Minoan culture, dating from the third millennium B.C., is of the same age as Colchian. The determination of the age of Kutaisi, the seat of Colchian culture, at approximately 3000 years (some mention 2500) is a puerile mistake. Although it is not possible to determine the precise age of Kutaisi, it surely is a much older city and centre, in my view, at least 4000 or 5000 years old. The first name of Kutaisi, as you well know was *Aea*. The name is symbolic of the culture of mysteries, for the sounds of the word expressed ancient mysteries. In ancient mysteries a sound combination called *Aea* expressed definite wisdom and the character of mysteries. *Aea* was an ancient seat of mysteries or centres of wisdom. The origin of Colchis and its capital should be sought many millennia earlier, whereas the creation of the myth of the Golden Fleece may be said to date from a much later period, when that wisdom was on the decline and that culture was no longer at its highest level. Of course, it was even then at a much higher level than that of the contemporary Greek culture. In other words, these Colchian mysteries and the city of *Aea* were already on the wane when *Aea* was visited by Jason. The two stems *Cut* and *Aea* merged, forming the name *Cutaia*. Thus, the ancient Colchian capital city appears to have been on this spot.

As you know, the location of Phasis is a subject of much controversy in scholarship. Today it is not possible to establish its exact location because of the change of the sea. However, archaeological excavations permit us to determine its location near Vani - in the vicinity of Nokalakevi, Vani and Kutaisi. This area was the centre of the ancient Colchian culture, and Phasis seems to have been located in this zone rather than near the present-day coastline. This later Phasis was in a different location than the ancient, prehistoric Phasis, the change in location being the result of the change in the coastline. Authors of the first and second centuries, of course, speak of the Phasis that was situated in the vicinity of modern Poti. An ancient city site has been discovered at the bottom of lake Paliastomi, but the earliest Phasis was approximately to the right of the present railway; the sea must have been to the left of the railway, while land started on its right side. It was in this area that Phasis and other Colchian settlements, the centres of the ancient culture, began. This was the situation in the prehistoric period. As I have noted, the tradition of locating phasis here continued into the Middle Ages. It was known in the ancient world that Colchis was the land of the Golden Fleece and ancient mysteries, the country of King Aetes and Medea.



She was the founder of the first mysterious science that served as the basis of medicine. (The word *medicine* is related to Medea.) Of course, at that time medicine was at the level of treatment with herbs, a treatment that had attained its peak precisely here - in Colchis. It was here that the Argonauts found the herb - 'blood of Prometheus' - with which Medea treated the sick; here was the garden of Hecate, the most ancient garden of medicinal plants into which Medea led the Argonauts and in which she introduced them to the knowledge of the medicinal wisdom that existed in Colchis. And it was precisely from here that this ancient medicinal wisdom spread throughout the world, in the same way as the culture of metallurgy diffused from Colchis and the Tubals, Kartvelian tribes of Asia Minor, the tradition continuing into the Middle Ages. Thus, just as in the early world there was knowledge of Colchis being the homeland of the primary mysterious wisdom, so too in the Middle Ages the Caucasus - as noted above - was called the Mountain of Philosophers- the repository of the ore of heavenly faith and the homeland of the philosophers' stone or *Mons philosophorum*.

In the Christian movement in Europe, this philosophers' stone was otherwise called the Grail, the two words being semantically identical. Traditionally the Grail is the sacred cup used by the Saviour at the Last Supper. The cup had wine in it, and taking the cup, he addressed his disciples: "Drink from it, all of you. For this is my Blood, the blood of the covenant, shed for many for the forgiveness of sins" (Matt. 26.28-22). Then, according to one tradition, when he raised the cup for his disciples to see, it was not an ordinary cup but one of precious jasper. After the crucifixion of Christ, his secret disciple, Joseph of Arimathaea, indeed filled that cup with the Saviour's blood. Present at the crucifixion were not only the other disciples and the women-anointers, but also his disciple Joseph, referred to in the Gospel as the secret disciple of the Saviour. In Georgian frescoes and icons Joseph of Arimathaea is depicted with a cup in his hand (this motif is frequent in our chased art as well), filling it with the Saviour's blood. Subsequently, according to tradition, Joseph of Arimathaea took the cup to Ireland. Later, in mediaeval Europe, this cup was traditionally in possession of European knights: the knights of the Round Table and those of the Grail. Following the start of the Crusades, European knights, arriving in Jerusalem, absorbed the wisdom of Jerusalem or the East; thus, these two wisdoms - European-Christian and Eastern - merged. Approaching the Caucasus as well, the Crusaders established close contacts with David the Builder's Georgia. It was through this relationship that the two wisdoms fused: Georgian and



European. It was in the Caucasus - the Mountain of Philosophers, the seat of the ore of heavenly faith - that the two movements merged, as recorded in the Chronicles of the Crusaders and in the work of the twelfth-century German poet Wolfram von Eschenbach. This Grail, used by the Saviour at the Last Supper, was brought to Georgia in the reign of David the Builder, as we learn from Von Eschenbach's poem, in which David the Builder is referred to as King-Priest John. Wolfram von Eschenbach's *Parzival* is a work in which events are described symbolically, with no real names of countries given. Instead of direct reference to countries, we have legendary or mythical lands figuring in the poem. Georgia is, of course, not mentioned directly, but it is suggested as a country adjoining the Caucasus Range. Here is the beginning of spiritual wisdom, the beginning of everything that later developed in Europe and in the world at large. It is also indicated in the poem that it is here that the Grail is - this highest symbol of Christianity - in this country over which King-Priest John reigns combining king and priest in his person. What does the combination of king and priest mean? Let us recall David the Builder holding a church in his hand in the Gelati fresco. Why is he holding a church in his hand? Because he was an equally great statesman as he was a churchman; he was an equally great king as he was a theologian. Although we have no official evidence of his ecclesiastical rank (this seems to have been kept secret), that he had such rank is intimated in the Crusaders' Chronicles, where he is called King-Priest John. In those days there existed a tradition of secret priesthood and monkhood. Kings often became monks in secret, assuming confidential names. David the Builder appears to have had such a name, for the Crusaders unanimously refer to him as John and King-Priest John. The implication is that he was both a mainstay of religion and of the state and the political life of Georgia, combining these two principles in himself.

But David the Builder had a preceptor - a leading personality - so to speak, father of the king and of the state. That was the Bishop of Chqondidi. Why was his name given to the institution uniting ecclesiastical and political power, the institution that was actually the supreme authority in the Georgia of the period? To be sure, the king was an absolute monarch, but the Chqondideli was the symbol of supreme authority, hence the saying at the Court that the Chqondideli was the king's father, and the same appellation is used in reference to him by the historian of David the Builder. This much we know from history, and that is why in Christian Georgia this institution was given the name



Chqondidi, i.e. the name of the cult of the 'great oak' (*chqoni* meaning 'oak') and *didi* 'great'. This was because in ancient Georgia that is Colchis - the worship of this great oak had survived, while in the Christian period the name was given to an eparchy. The name 'Chqondideli' was preserved to express the traditional unity existing between the wisdom of the pagan period and that of the Christian era. This unity might have been given the name of Martvili or some other Christian name, but Chqondideli was retained. Priority was given to this name, I believe, to indicate the importance of David the Builder's role in the coming together of the two wisdoms. It does not indicate the superiority of pagan wisdom. But it does indicate the key role David the Builder personally played in the merger. He is depicted in the Gelati fresco upholding a church. No other king was accorded this honour, as a glance at the royal images in frescoes will show. You cannot find a single other Georgian king holding a church in his hand, because we have had no other king who combined in his person Church and secular wisdom. And it was at Gelati that this merger took place - the merging of the ancient wisdom given in the myth of the Golden Fleece and the history of Colchis with biblical and Christian wisdom.

I linked this lecture to Gelati to let the residents of Kutaisi know what city they are living in and what place Gelati is. I can state with full responsibility that the world has not had a similar centre of medieval wisdom and education, and this is recognized not only by Georgian scholars but by foreigners as well, and even by Russians. I shall read to you the unprecedented view of the greatest modern Russian scholar, Acad. Losev, on Gelati and Georgian Neoplatonism. This aged man visited Gelati, at which time I met him for a talk, and he later published an article in a Georgian journal. I want to introduce you to it, but, before I do, let me tell you that there was nowhere in Europe a cultural seat like Gelati, not even in Byzantium. There was at that time in Europe the Platonic Academy in Chartres which was comparable to Gelati, but neither that academy nor any other seat of culture in that epoch could boast of a philosopher of the calibre of Ioane Petritsi. Here is what David the Builder's historian has to say:

"In that place he assembled men of upright life adorned with every virtue, not only those who could be found in his own kingdom: whenever he heard about someone of special piety and goodness, with perfection and abundance of spiritual and bodily virtues, in any part of the world, he sought that person out, made extensive inquiries and had him brought to that place, and allowed him to settle there. Liparit's lands remained uninhabited; but these, to-

gether with many other villages ... he made over to those who stayed there to be servants of the Mother of God. These were assured of a living free from want. Indeed, there is now a second Jerusalem of all the East for learning of all that is of value, for the teaching of knowledge - a second Athens, far excelling the first in divine law ..." (*Kartlis Tskhovreba*, vol.I, pp. 330-331)*.

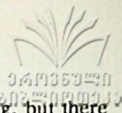
In short, Gelati was the kind of religious and spiritual centre that Jerusalem was in Christian culture, and, in addition, it was a seat of Classical Greek wisdom, similar to the Greek capital Athens but far excelling it because the pagan wisdom was enriched by the wisdom of Christianity. In other words Gelati was Athens at Christian level.

What was taught at Gelati and wherein lay the greatness of this cultural centre? As you know, mediaeval - particularly Western - Christianity obscured everything that was humanistic, being opposed to whatever was thought to be worldly; only the divine side was pushed to the fore, while humanistic wisdom was relegated to the background. Classical wisdom was generally declared unlawful, though the great Christian Fathers, e.g. Basil the Great, insisted on the study of Classical wisdom, saying that wisdom that could help in the salvation of the soul could be gleaned from ancient books too. Justin the philosopher, the first Christian Father, said that Socrates and Plato were the same servants of Logos or Christ as were the Fathers. However, since these early Greek philosophers lived in the pagan period, they had only a partial opportunity to serve Logos. Justin's view was opposed by the Byzantine Church, but at the time of the emergence of Gelati, this opposition had already been overcome in Byzantium and the interest in ancient Greek wisdom or philosophy was so great that the dogmatic representatives of the Church were unable to suppress it. But although the study of Classical philosophy had commenced in Byzantine theological academies, the level of such study at Gelati was much higher than in Byzantium and Europe, for the whole of Classical Greek wisdom was taught here, as seen in Petritsi's works.

And it was not only ancient Greek wisdom that was revived here but also Chaldean, Egyptian, and that of all the other cultural seats of the ancient world. The philosophers at Gelati integrated all this organically into Christianity and the Bible. For them biblical wisdom was inseparable from ancient Greek wisdom. This is why this "new Athens far excelled the first", as stated by David the Builder's historian.

* The passage is quoted from the manuscript of Katharine Vivian's translation, pp.11-12.

Now I shall quote Acad. Losev's words on Gelati:



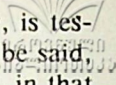
"Georgian Neoplatonism is anthropocentric. Here man is the basis of everything, but there is a great difference between Georgian Neoplatonism and German Neoplatonism - between Eastern and Western Neoplatonism. The Neoplatonism followed by the representatives of the Georgian Renaissance (and, by the way, Losev shares Acad. Shalva Nutsubidze's views that the Renaissance commenced in Georgia much earlier than in Europe - at the end of the eleventh century instead of, as in Europe, the end of the 13th century - Z.G.) - Ioane Petritsi and Rustaveli - is anthropocentric. However, it is an anthropocentrism that does not abolish respect for nature - the nature worshipped by the ancients, particularly, the stars and their regular revolution. This anthropocentrism does not destroy nature, as was the case in the West; nature became enriched by man coming to it with his subjective needs and by turning into personality desirous of sensing and reshaping everything. Individual studies of Neoplatonism had been carried out but none with such a deep insight into this philosophical teaching. We should learn from the Georgians, and the more we learn the more will Russian-Georgian friendship grow".

Thus, according to this prominent Russian scholar, Russia should not look down upon Georgia, acting like a Big Brother, but should learn from Georgia. The same was the stand of the great Russian writer Andrey Belyi who frequently visited Kutaisi, for he knew well that this was the centre of ancient Colchian culture. These are his words: "when we roamed the woods the Georgians were creating the highest culture, so we should learn from the Georgians, and we must stop talking of their alleged nationalism and chauvinism, and should heed all that comes from Rustaveli and Georgian culture". This is the attitude of highly educated Russians toward Georgia, a sharp contrast to the attitude of an imperial, but destitute Russia that looks down upon Georgia. I am telling you this also to make you fully aware of the significance of Kutaisi as a cultural centre, and to reverse the tendency of the Kutaisi intelligentsia to move from Kutaisi to Tbilisi, to end the tendency of all the intellectual powers of Georgia to concentrate in the capital. Why should such a centre of ancient wisdom and intellectual culture as is Kutaisi be depleted of its intelligentsia? Isn't this a national tragedy? What will happen to the rest of Georgia if all of us flock to Tbilisi? Ultimately we shall lose Tbilisi too, for anti-Georgian tendencies and an influx of non-Georgians are increasing in the city. This is why I wish to draw your attention to the urgent need of preserving the tradition centered in ancient Colchis and Gelati.

I shall now speak at length about the disciplines taught at Gelati Academy and about why we can assert that this seat of wisdom and scholarship was unique in the medieval world. Here the seven liberal

arts, consisting of the trivium and quadrivium, were taught, just as they were in the rest of the medieval world, including Byzantium and Western Europe. The trivium consisted of grammar, rhetoric, and logic; the quadrivium, of arithmetic, music, geometry, and astronomy. These branches of knowledge were taught at Gelati at a level unsurpassed anywhere else. This was due to the fact that the great and wise king David the Builder brought together the greatest scholars and sages of the time and appointed Ioane Petritsi - that luminary of world philosophy and science - as their teacher. Incidentally, when Acad. Losev visited Tbilisi, in my conversation with him I expressed my great admiration and respect for the Russian philosopher Solovyov. He was a great nineteenth century Orthodox Christian philosopher and theologian, unequalled in his day. Losev smiled and said: Why do you talk about him when you have Petritsi in your background? I was fully conscious of Petritsi's greatness but refrained from comment out of politeness. It was Losev who took the initiative, saying that the day before he had visited the Academy at Gelati where he had knelt and prayed (incidentally, he was a profoundly religious man) to the reverend Father Ioane to intercede for him. He had come to Gelati specifically to pray to the soul of Ioane Petritsi and to see the place where that great man had flourished. By the way, the publication in Russian of Proclus' *Elements* with Petritsi's commentaries is credited to Acad. Losev. Unfortunately, the translation is not without flaws, but this can be remedied. It should be said, however, that study of Petritsi has barely commenced, for he can be likened to a great sphinx into whose world we his students have so far gained but little insight. Regrettably, at this time we have not yet determined the purport of some of Petritsi's terms or statements, and not yet risen to his level of thinking.

The seven liberal arts were taught here then as they were in other schools at that time. But in the Academy here an emphasis was given to the human personality and its faculties that was quite unlike the practice elsewhere. Medieval scholastic Christianity typically focussed only on God and was oblivious to the human personality. In a sense, medieval Scholasticism tended toward Monophysitism. But interest in God alone is not full Christianity; complete Christianity calls for the union of God and man, for our Saviour Jesus Christ was not only God but God and man. Both sides are essential to Christian wisdom and both were given due attention in Gelati. This approach results in genuine, Dyophysitism, a way of thinking that considers the divine and human as an harmonious whole.



The emphasis given at this academy to the human personality, is testified to by the presence of the great Rustaveli - as great, it may be said, as Petritsi. The human personality is central to Rustaveli. In fact, in that the emphasis on the human personality and human wisdom is the essence of the Renaissance, one can argue that the Renaissance began precisely here with Rustaveli and Petritsi, and developed in Europe only later.

Not only were the seven liberal arts taught, under the direction of Petritsi, in the context of harmonic study of God and man but another element was added: a study of the universe. Just as the cognitions of God and man are indivisible, so are these inseparable from a cognition of the universe. A study of the universe, which, as you know, really began in Europe only in the 16th-17th centuries, flourished at Gelati in the 12th century. Petritsi's works exhibit a high level of study of the universe and of the stars at Gelati. Petritsi also speaks of the wisdom of the Chaldeans and of Abraham, which was stellar wisdom. Setting the Gelati Academy the task of studying this wisdom, he states that Chaldean wisdom does not contradict the Bible, for the Bible - especially in the Psalms - refers to celestial bodies that are endowed with reason and soul, and that the "sun recognized its time of setting", and that if it recognized the time of its setting it would not lack knowledge of its rise. In other words, the sun and the stars are intelligent beings. This does not contradict Christian, biblical wisdom. Petritsi quotes from the Psalms: "The heavens tell out the glory of God" (19) against those who believed (apparently for certain dogmatic reasons) that astrology or stellar wisdom was unacceptable and should be rejected. To be sure, astrology was unacceptable to Christianity, but astrosophy or stellar wisdom was legalized in Georgia and Christianity did not oppose it. Father Ioane was not only a philosopher and teacher but also a preceptor, ecclesiastic, and a dogmatic Christian, in the best sense of the term. Dogmatism should not be taken inevitably as something negative. There can be a narrow dogmatism, but respect for dogma is not a negative phenomenon, and Petritsi's dogmatism was certainly not negative. He used it in his role as teacher, to reconcile human and divine wisdom, calling at the same time for the study of the Classical world and its mythology and wisdom in order to integrate mankind's wisdom. Here are several passages from Petritsi's works that illustrate his willingness to use in his studies all aspects of human and divine knowledge. In one of his commentaries Petritsi speaks of ancient Greek, or Orphic, mysteries. The word Orphic is derived from the name Orpheus. And who is Orpheus? He is an an-

cient Greek hero closely related to ancient Colchis, that is, to ancient Georgia or the Kartvelian world.

But before I say more about Orpheus and his role in Petritsi's integration of all parts of human knowledge, let me point out a fact that the scholarly community is not well aware of: that the ancient Greek culture, mythology, and mysteries presumably derived from the proto-Greek or Pelasgian world was in reality a product of the Kartvelian world. The gods of the ancient Greek pantheon were the same as the gods of Kartvelian or Pelasgian provenance, and all ancient Greek heroes are related to prehistoric Georgia. Heracles was connected with prehistoric Iberia; he goes to the Pyrenees to bring back the apples from the garden of the Hesperides, this being the symbol of supreme wisdom. Theseus goes to the selfsame Kartvelian world - that of Minos in Crete - in order to gain possession of that wisdom in the form of the Labyrinth. Jason and other Greek heroes come to Colchis to gain this wisdom.

Now Orpheus is another Greek hero closely associated with ancient Colchis, also called Egros. The father of Orpheus is referred to as Egros or Egri. Orpheus' purpose was to revive that ancient Pelasgian or proto-Georgian wisdom, to convey it to Greece and to integrate it with the more primitive Greek culture. Hence this great artist of antiquity appealed to Petritsi who advocated the merger of Orphic- and Christian wisdom. Petritsi used 'my Orpheus' in reference to the Apostle Paul. At that time such a reference was shocking because of the condemnation of everything pagan by the Church. However, such great ecclesiastics as Petritsi managed to revive Classical, pagan wisdom and adapt it to Christianity, in the same way as they sought to adapt the pagan philosophy of Neoplatonism to Christianity and to give it a Christian interpretation. In speaking of the benefit to Christians of praying for example, Petritsi associates Orpheus with Christ: "Now let us speak of this spiritual organ (i.e. prayer), for from it stems the Orphic book and the good conveyed in it, coming from the super-powerful (mind) as it were". In other words, Petritsi stresses the great good to be found in Orpheus' book.

Let me give you another example of Petritsi's practice of relating the Classical, pagan world to Christianity. In considering the Divine Spirit's choice of Iese's son David to be the creator of the Psalter, Petritsi writes: "And in this man and king he excited the musical power of his strings so as to adorn the path of souls to the father of souls in this book". Then he goes on to mention the "supreme wisdom" of Abraham and the Chaldeans. Finally, says he, the Apostle Paul, the preceptor of our



Church, preached "the Divine wisdom hidden in mystery - the wisdom ordained by God from the beginning for our eternal glory, and which none of the rulers of the world had perceived". In other words, according to Paul, this wisdom existed from the beginning of the world, but it was hidden. Far from rejecting this wisdom, one should revive it. This original wisdom is found not only in the Old Testament but Classical pagan wisdom, Orphism, the teaching of the Chaldeans, Platonism, and Neoplatonism. Paul, says Petritsi, "illumines these intelligent towers with a single light". We can also add that the Gelati Academy, and preeminently the person of Petritsi, shed great light upon the wisdom of the ancients and performed a great service in uniting it with Christian wisdom.

Now, how does Petritsi use the names and characters of Classical mythos? As noted above, his purpose was to create wisdom about man, and this wisdom is presented not in the dry terms employed in modern science, i.e. in figures and formulae, but in mythological names or correspondences. Petritsi points out the need for the disciplines taught to prove the existence of God and of the Trinity. In those times geometry was not studied in the same way as we study it today, - dryly, by formulae and drawings. For Petritsi the purpose of geometry was to prove the existence of God. How did geometry achieve this? Petritsi cites the example of the sphere which has three elements: centre, radius and circumference. The centre is God the Father, the radius is God the Son, and the circle is God the Holy Spirit. In actuality, this entire sphere is a unity of this Trinity. That is why it is said that the Trinity is one, of single essence, even though it has three elements. The Trinity is not three Gods but one, appearing in different modes or hypostases. Thus does geometry prove the existence of the Trinity, for space does not exist without a centre, nor does the extension of a point exist without a radius; neither does space exist without the volume of this sphere. Trinity is that which is given in the relationship of the centre, radius, and circle. This suggests that the world has a beginning, that this beginning is threefold, and that the Trinity is the basis of the world. Were what materialists and atheists assert true, there would exist neither the centre, nor the radius, or the sphere, and all would be nothingness.

How was arithmetic taught in Gelati? Not by dry addition and subtraction. Are the first three figures the basis of all other numbers? Imagine a figure, a possible figure in the world, that does not involve one, two, and three. Is not one the basis of everything, and two derived from it? From two is derived three, and from three are derived all the



numbers. That is to say, the entire universe of numbers is derived from these three elements: one, two, and three. In the same way are all things derived from the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The Trinity here is one, two, and three, as the basis of all numbers or of the world. Today's science - physics and Mathematics - has arrived at the conclusion that only numbers are real in the world, that the entire constellation - the planets and galaxies - can be expressed numerically. Everything has its number, every atom has its number, the whole composition of matter, of the universe is a number, and the only reality is number. Everything else may disappear - matter, the universe, the galaxy - but number will never disappear; it cannot disappear because number is eternal. The first three numbers are the eternal principle, and this is the Trinity. The arithmetical or mathematical exposition of the Trinity and its role in the creation of the universe is the basis of Petritsian arithmetic.

How was music taught at Gelati Academy? Petritsi mentions three voices: *mzakh*, *zhir* and *bam*. *Zhir** is an ancient Colchian root denoting two or the second voice. In old Georgian the second voice in music was called *zhir*, the first voice *mzakh*, and the third *bam* or *ban*. Can there be a music without three voices or parts? These three voices form the basis of all music. Thus, what is in geometry the point, radius and circle, or in arithmetic the numbers 1, 2, and 3, is in music the three voices or parts: *mzakh*, *zhir*, and *bam*, this serving to prove that the Trinity is the basis of music too. Thus, these three sciences suggest the existence of God.

Further, Petritsi tells us how grammar relates to the existence of God. Incidentally, grammar was not taught then as it is today, i.e. as a series of grammatical laws and rules. Its study dealt with the depth of the word - its primary meaning or essence. Grammar embraced everything that can be related to word and speech, the Divine word being the primary basis of everything. Every word - like every number - has its basis or primary word. All words were born of the first word, and it was this first word that emerges, according to the Gospel of St. John, as Christ, the Word, God: "When all things began, the Word already was. The Word dwelt with God, and what God was, the Word was" (John, 1.1-2). It was this that Grammar argued.

What did philosophy or dialectic seek to prove? Again and again the existence of God.

* In modern Megrelian *zhir* means 'two'.

What was the ultimate purpose of rhetoric? To demonstrate the existence of God and to arouse in man the divine principle and spark.

And finally, the most important branch of learning - astronomy. Its purpose was not the creation of a dry mathematical study but of a spiritualized one. It was actually not astronomy but astrosophy. You all remember that in *The Man in the Panther's Skin* Rustaveli addresses the heavenly bodies as living beings, that in his letters Avtandil speaks to the planets as live creatures or souls that must help him on the road of life. He addresses the sun as the supreme luminary - however, it is not the sun visible to the eye but the spiritual sun, i.e. Christ who is the creator of the world and the beginning of everything. This was the kind of astronomy that was taught in Gelati in that period. Through the existence of the planets it demonstrated the existence of God, arguing that this vast intelligent world or cosmos cannot be irrational and devoid of a guide; it must have a rational basis, and be ruled by intelligence. This was the purpose of the study of astronomy in Gelati.

Much more could be said about the wisdom that flourished in Gelati and, as I have said, this had no precedent. Neither did the world at that time have a monarch to match David the Builder in education, knowledge and erudition. The fact that he combined in himself two supreme authorities - ecclesiastical and secular - also makes him stand out from other rulers. In Western Europe of his time we find monarchs who were barely literate. The single exception was the English King Alfred the Great, who alone is at all comparable to David the Builder. Alfred too was a scholar and translator, but as a thinker, philosopher and commentator of Scripture he was certainly not on a par with David.

All this was reflected, as I have said, in the Chronicles of the Crusades and in Western romances of the period, in which works David the Builder is referred to as King-Priest John.

The bringing of the Grail to Georgia is a fact and I assume Gelati must have been where it was brought to rest. When the scaffoldings are removed after this current renovation is completed, you may go up and see that each mural ensemble is connected with that cup. The archangels hold the cup; the apostles hold the cup, and all the motifs seem connected with this cup. Christ, held by the Mother of God, has a cup drawn on his forehead. This is precisely the Grail; it is a representation of the cup which was doubtless brought here, as indicated in Western romances and the Chronicles of the Crusades. The presence of the cup here points to Gelati as the principal centre of Christian culture in the Middle Ages. It was a major seat of Church and secular education. Let



me repeat that Church and secular were not separated, so that here one received both secular and theological knowledge - as a harmonious whole.

This is what I wished to tell you about Gelati.

Over recent years the works of Konstantine Gamsakhurdia have been studied from many angles in Georgia and elsewhere in the world. His biography, literary method, language and style have been examined both in themselves and vis-à-vis various literary trends. His works have been discussed from the historical, socio-political, and other points of view. However, the writer's Weltanschauung - his religious and philosophical credo - has so far not been seriously discussed.

My present purpose is to shed light on some peculiarities of K. Gamsakhurdias's literary legacy in relation to the Bible and Christian culture, focusing attention only on such aspects that have been touched upon heretofore only cursorily by researchers.

Love of the Bible and the Gospel was inculcated in Konstantine in his childhood by his parents. Although his father Svimon Gamsakhurdia was not much of a scholar, he reared his son on the Psalter and *The Man in the Panther's Skin*. (Generally speaking the Gamsakhurdias were distinguished for literacy; they served as stewards at the Dadiani court.) Konstantine's mother was a pious woman, devoting much time to praying and fasting. The child was placed in the charge of the village deacon, whom he assisted during the mass. "The deacon Evgeni Koiava instilled in me a love of the Bible, the Gospel and the church", the writer tells us in his *Memoirs*. His nurse Ekaia always talked about the Saviour and St. George, cultivating in the child religious reverence and hope in God, which remained with him throughout his childhood and adolescence. This is how the writer describes his experiences when he was arrested for the first time at the gymnasium on charges of having set up a patriotic organization under the name of "Nine Oaks": "That first arrest was the happiest moment of my life. Possessed with the feeling of happiness, I repeated these fine words: "How blest you are, when you suffer insults and persecution and every kind of calumny for my sake" (Matth. 5.11) (*Memoirs*). These words of the Gospel became the writer's credo in his youth. "I secretly had a small icon of St. George on my chest and I fought on ... ", he wrote in a letter sent from Germany. Saint George was his favourite image and a major factor in his work.

Then came the years of studies and travel. In Berlin, Rome and Paris, the writer studied Catholic theology and philosophy, culture and art, absorbing Christian mysticism and the teachings of Swedenborg and

Steiner. However, the maladies of the age did not bypass him either. The virus of aestheticism, Nietzscheanism, and Dionysianism found its way into his soul. From that period a duality began to develop in him, which found reflection in his first novel *The Smile of Dionysus*, whose principal character is split between Christ and Dionysus. This duality was found not only in the writer but also in European culture of that time. This is the dualism of Julian the Apostate, Goethe, Wagner and Nietzsche. This duality left its imprint on Georgian spiritual culture, mythopoeia and popular religious beliefs. Let us recall the festivals of the icons in Pshavi and Khevsureti - Mindia* the snake-eater who entered into a compact with the Kajis**, the snake being a symbol of pagan wisdom. Or recall in Svaneti: the pagan festival *lamproba*, and others.

The Faustian split of European culture had its archetype in Georgia. Faust's tragedy is that of being a double - Mephisto is a negative double; Ochonpinte with goat horns is a similar double for Mindia. (The goat is Dionysus' animal.). In Faust's own words, he has two souls: one pulling him down to earth, and the other "striving towards the heaven where the spirits float in the ether". It is the same with Mindia: universal love of all beings (Christ's impulse) is one side of him; the demonic principle (Ochonpinte), the other.

It is the tragedy of this split that is given in *The Smile of Dionysus* and *The Rape of the Moon*. According to one view, these are anti-Christian works but at closer examination they appear rather anti-Dionysiac or anti-pagan. All those who look into the essence of these works will come to this conclusion, as does, for example, Akaki Bakradze who has written a brilliant analysis of *The Smile of Dionysus*, entitled *The Suicide of Dionysus*. And indeed the novel describes the spiritual suicide of the principal character, caused by the ecstasy of Dionysiac intoxication. The novel deals with the crisis of paganism or Dionysianism. Therefore, it ought to have a logical sequel, "The Seraphic Night of Konstantine Savarsamidze", dealing with the spiritual revival of the personage, his return to Christ's path. However, the sequel was never written, owing to the author's exile to the Solovki archipelago. But the writer's tendency toward spiritual renewal was manifested in his work *David the Builder*, in which the triumph of Christ's path is apparent in the description of the life and activity of David the Builder, knight of St.

* See Konstantine Gamsakhurdia, *Mindia, Son of Hogay*, Moscow, 1966, Progress Publishers, (in English); Vazha Pshavela, *Three Poems*, Tbilisi, 1981, Ganatleba, (in English).

** devils, demons.



George and of Christ. Consider also the affection with which the Christian bishops - Giorgi Chqondideli, Kyrion Mangleli, and Stepanoz Tsilkneli - are depicted in this novel. Other episodes indicate a strong spiritual tendency in the writer: the superb scene of the meeting of King David and Godolia, an anchorite of thirteen years; the exorcism performed by David and Padla, bishop of Bodbe; King David's fight, sword in hand, in Varazi castle with the devil who had come to the Varazi family in the guise of an Arab architect and built for it a castle not to be destroyed by earthquake ("The Secret of Varazi Castle", *Works*, vol. IV). Do these passages not show a profoundly Christian writer? Or take the mystic image of the Black Mother of God in the novel, the sacrificing of the beloved Dedisimedi by the king and his taking the path of the Black Mother of God and asceticism to save the nation and faith?

In an open letter written to Ulyanov-Lenin, the writer notes that his road to the ideal of human equality was that of Saint Augustine, and that the mystic wedding of St. Francesco to Mrs. Poverty was a document of general human ethics, as valuable to him as Karl Marx's *Manifesto of the Communist Party* was to Lenin. In the same period he founded the Society of Christian Mystics in Tbilisi. His poems "Maria Stella", "Christ in Paris in 1999" and "Mother, Mystic Lady," which may be called masterpieces of Christian lyric, belong to the same period.

K. Gamsakhurdia's short story *Taboo* was written in the same period. It describes the triumph of St. George over the Satan of Bolshevism, symbolized by a scorpion born to the hermaphrodite Khvaramze through union with the red devil. First the red devil set the Margalis and the Ap-sua against each other, then caused the offspring scorpion to exterminate them with its venomous sting. Is this not a concrete prediction of the future?

Those who speak of Konstantine Gamsakhurdia's characters being 'unchristian' remind me of those students of Rustaveli who assert the 'unchristianity' of Rustaveli's characters and of Rustaveli himself. I suspect they are themselves fuzzy about the essence of Christian writings and the Christian religion. Further, they fail to understand that "great philosophers and didacts teach us how a man must think and live, while great writers point out how a man must not think and live" (K. Gamsakhurdia). This is demonstrated by such outstanding representatives of critical realism as Balzac, Flaubert, Tolstoy, Gogol, Shchedrin, and Ilia Chavchavadze. Isn't Chavchavadze's *Do You Call That a Man?* a highly Christian work even though no explicit Christian dogma or preaching can be found in it? That much for negative characters. But even in depicting

a positive character, a Christian belletrist - unlike a hagiographer - does not aim at showing the religiousness and devoutness of his character but at depicting him as a true-to-life type.

Whether this or that personage is Christian in spirit should be determined by his attitude toward life and by his character. A person's Christian conscience, or even his subconscious Christianity, is primarily revealed in his life credo and practice, his ability for sacrifice, his devotion to his friend ("Love your neighbour as you love yourself (St. John), It is revealed in a character's finding a correct relationship between his personal needs, and social needs, giving priority to the social over the personal; he must be willing to negate himself and take up the cross of social service ("... he must leave self behind; he must take up his cross and come with me") (Matt. 16.24).

In this context let us consider the characters in *The Man in the Panther's Skin*. Their mutual devotion and their placing service of their friends and society higher than their personal happiness are the primary indication of their Christianity. The same is the spurning of earthly well-being and judging it by the future bliss of life in the other world:

"I am such an one... to whom death for a friend seems a sport and a play" (7671-2) or "I cannot be false, I cannot do a cowardly deed; he would shame me when we meet face to face in that eternity whereto we both shall come" (778₃₋₅)*.

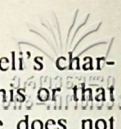
What would have demonstrated Avtandil's Christianity better: the preaching of dogmata, performance of church rituals, continuous prayers and fasting, or such devotion to his friend, such awareness of the transience of this world, and such faith in eternal life:

"I will not do it! What avails me the knowledge of the philosophizing of the philosophers! Therefore are we taught that we may be united with the choir of the heavenly hosts" (772₃₋₅) ?

Rustaveli's 'unchristianity' is also presumed because of the absence in the poem of any reference to Christ and the Mother of God. Such critics are oblivious of the fact that a person's devoutness is often seen in his not mentioning a sacred name rather than in bandying it about vainly.

The magnanimity and generosity, mercy to the defeated foe, pity of the poor and destitute, noble altruism - these are the main pointers of their Christianity rather than permanently crying "God have mercy upon us!"

* All the quotations of Rustaveli are taken from M.S. Wardrop's translation of *The Man in the Panther's Skin*, London, 1912.



Such 'critics' have many more arguments to offer: If Rustaveli's characters are Christians, they query, then why did they commit this or that sin or rash act? They overlook the fact that genuine literature does not present ideal models of character but humans engaged in everyday life with their virtues and shortcomings; absolutely perfect ideals are not to be found in real life.

Even the Bible and the Gospel do not hide the flaws and foibles of the apostles and holy men - Peter's falling away from his faith on Christ's account, the arrogance of the sons of Zebedee, and the crimes of David and Solomon in the Old Testament, and so on. Herein lies the faithfulness to life and the persuasiveness of the Bible. The fact that Avtandil committed murder and had an intrigue with Patman, that Taniel assassinated Khvarazmsha - these taken in isolation from the rest of the novel cannot serve as an argument in favour of pronouncing these characters unchristian as well as calling Rustaveli unchristian for depicting them. This is like pronouncing Goethe's Faust or Stendhal's Fabricio unchristian and questioning these writer's Christianity.

Konstantine Gamsakhurdia's characters primarily fall victim to their service of the social ideal. Care for personal happiness, selfishness, and avoidance of sacrifice are unknown to them. Have the great master Arsakidze, David the Builder, Giorgi Chqondideli, Stepanoz Tsilkneli, and Niania Bakuriani not been brought to Georgia's altar for sacrifice? Do they not show their faithfulness to Christ's chief precept by their service of the social ideal?

The 'judges' of Konstantine Gamsakhurdia's works are most fond of discussing the unchristianity of Arsakidze. "Konstantine Gamsakhurdia's characters are pagans", S. Sigua maintains in his book *The Structure of Konstantine Gamsakhurdia's Prose*. "David the Builder is more loyal to paganism than to Christianity". S. Sigua writes elsewhere: "The writer made the pagan Arsakidze build Svetitskhoveli". Other critics bring similar charges. The cause of this, I feel, is an incomplete knowledge of the essence of Christianity, and, generally, of religion.

Those who have a good knowledge of the history of religion are aware of the existence of two types of religiousness: religiousness of the chosen, the philosophers and spiritual aristocrats; and religiousness of the common people, i.e. the form of religiousness accessible to the masses, defined thus by Goethe in his conversations with Eckermann:

"There are two standpoints from which biblical questions can be discussed. The first postulates that there exists a primary religion and that nature and soul in their pure being are of

divine origin. This point of view will remain eternally permanent, continuing until beings endowed with God's grace possess the earth. But it is allotted only to the chosen. It is so noble and elevated that it can never become universal.

There also is a Church standpoint that stands closer to ordinary human life. ... But it too, with its variable nature, will continue only so long as there are weak human beings on earth. The unshadable light of divine revelation is too pure and blinding for poor wretched persons to perceive. It is here that the Church steps in as a charitable intermediary. By diminishing and weakening the light it brings relief and benefit to many.*

The following becomes obvious: the creative religiousness of the chosen - the supermen -, manifested in the piety of mystics and esotericists, is one thing, and religiousness of the common people, manifested only in the outward perception of Church service, is another. Clearly, this does not mean that the Church is superfluous to the chosen and supermen. It simply means that the most mysterious, inner essence of the Church is accessible only to the chosen and philosophers.

According to Dionysius the Areopagite and Meister Eckhart, the supreme goal of religion is theosis or man's elevation to God, which only the chosen can attain, "for though many are invited, few are chosen" (Matt. 22.14). Such is Dionysius', Eckhart's and Goethe's conception of religion. Theosis is the lot of a creative personality that differs from waiting, passive and inactive souls who only seek God and His grace - they seek because they lack it.

"The more man renounces himself for God's sake and merges with Him the more he is God and the lesser he belongs to the creation" (Meister Eckhart).

God is sought by a man poor in God - one who does not feel in himself the power of a creative God, like Michelangelo for whom God is far away and perhaps of questionable existence. A man in quest of God is barren: in soul and destitute in God, that is why he seeks one.

* Doch gibt es zwei Standpunkte, von welchen aus die biblischen Dinge zu betrachten. Es gibt den Standpunkt einer Art Urreligion, den der reinen Natur und Vernunft, welcher göttlicher Abkunft. Dieser wird ewig derselbige bleiben und wird dauern und gelten, solange gottbegabte Wesen vorhanden. Doch ist er nur für Auserwählte und viel zu hoch und edel, um allgemein zu werden. Sodann gibt es den Standpunkt der Kirche, welcher mehr menschlicher Art. ... doch auch er wird in ewiger Umwandlung dauern, solange schwache menschliche Wesen sein werden. Das Licht ungetrüber göttlicher Offenbarung ist viel zu rein und glänzend, als daß es den armen, gar schwachen Menschen gemäß und erträglich wäre. Die Kirche aber tritt als wohlthätige Vermittlerin ein, um zu dämpfen und zu ermäßigen, damit allen geholfen und damit vielen wohl werde, J. P. Eckermann. Gespräche mit Goethe in der letzten Jahren seines Lebens. p. 664. Aufbau-Verlag, 1987.

A man in theosis, however, is full of God's grace, felicitous in God. This is the difference between the two.

Benign theomachy is also inseparable from the path of theosis. This ought not to be confused with negative theomachy: black magic and atheism. Meister Eckhart likens God to the king who would send a knight he had trained on a long journey, then - posing as a stranger - would waylay him at night, and fight him. He tested the knight in this combat, bestowing felicity on him accordingly. In the same way did the Lord encounter Jacob in the dark and wrestle with him. To be sure, in the combat God "struck him in the hollow of his thigh..." (Gen. 32.25), but later he blessed him.

The religion of the great master Arszakidze is that of theosis, i.e. benign theomachy. That is why the biblical story of the combat between Jacob and God is so close to his soul. His depiction of this combat leads religious Philistines to accuse him of heresy. Arszakidze's credo is conveyed in his words addressed to Shorena:

"And only today, Shorena, did I understand that, after all, life on this earth has been arranged by its master quite well. Whatever happens to man in this world helps him to find his god and at last himself. Believe me, Shorena, man's highest duty lies not in searching for the god of the paupers. He himself must become a rival of God the Creator".*

It is the benign rivalry with God, attained through theosis, that prompts the gravely wounded Arszakidze, lying on a stretcher at the consecration of the Svetitskhoveli church, to utter the biblical: "Let there be light". God uttered these words at the Creation; Arszakidze, at building Svetitskhoveli. This is the sense in which Jacob and Arszakidze fought God. (The nation that Konstantine Gamsakhurdia likened to Jacob fought God in the same sense: "The German nation is a Jacob wrestling with God" (*Anno*, 1923, *Literary Paris*).

"Faith divorced from deeds is barren", says the Apostle James in his letter (2. 20). Arszakidze's religious faith is manifested in deeds rather than words. He expresses his religion in the building of Svetitskhoveli rather than in hypocritical talk, or diligent attendance at vespers or matins. Further, his antipathy for some negative churchmen and shunning their prayers do not bespeak his atheism, contrary to the conclusion drawn by the critic A. Marchenko. His critical remarks, incidentally, are based on a falsified translation of the novel made in Moscow, in which,

*. Konstantine Gamsakhurdia. *The Hand of the Great Master*. Moscow, s.a., p. 326 /in English/.

for example, the scene of the death of King Giorgi and the hymn for the repose of his soul have been omitted, while Arsakidze is reputed to have said: "Man does not need God", a sentence which is not to be found in the original.

The Hand of a Great Master reflects the period of Georgian history when this country, especially its mountain areas, was the arena for the struggle of Christianity and paganism - a struggle recorded primarily in Georgian historiography. But the struggle was waged not only on battlefields, but in human souls as well. In moulding his characters, the author, in faithfulness to life's reality, depicted Arsakidze and King Giorgi occasionally as having dual personalities. Giorgi, for example, engages in hedonistic and amorous escapades at hunting and banqueting, and his faith is shaken through Parsman's magic and astrology. But he is not devoid of conscience: he is haunted by the mystic vision of the Oltisi church burnt down accidentally by his troops, and he believes fanatically that St. George of the Serpent will finish him up by breaking his back because of his having approached the icon insincerely. (Eventually, this presentiment comes true.). More positively, he sees Christianity as the cement that will unite the Georgian state, and it is in the name of Christ and united Georgia that he organizes a military campaign in Pkhovi. Before his death, moreover, he becomes filled with repentance, and dies as a true Christian, listening to the hymn for the repose of his soul read by an unknown deacon brought to him by Ushisharaisdze.

Even David the Builder, the greatest of our kings, had a period of religious doubt. David's historian quotes him as saying about Svetitskhoveli: "Ah, how do you know, what is in that promontory and what we are worshipping". The path of religious knowledge is not straight: he who has not felt the venom of scepticism has never entered the depths of religious insight. That is why Dostoevski said about his atheistic opponents: these miserable wretches cannot outdo me even in the power of denying God. A similar denial of God is to be found in Eschenbach's *Parzival*, by a character who ultimately returns to God. This is the path of the Prodigal Son.

This duality is characteristic of Arsakidze too. He - a Christian architect - is not oblivious of the cult of the oak and, on recovering from smallpox, sacrifices a cock to the oak. But Arsakidze achieves happiness by building Svetitskhoveli, for he - like Jacob - challenged the Creator. He is a God-like creator of light.

“No other nation has been able to highlight religion through the optic of poetry. The Georgians have walked along Christ’s bloody path without removing their eyes from Dionysus’ flower-bedecked forehead”, wrote Konstantine Gamsakhurdia in one of his essays. There are probably few writers who have succeeded in highlighting Christianity through the optic of poetry as we find in his novels.

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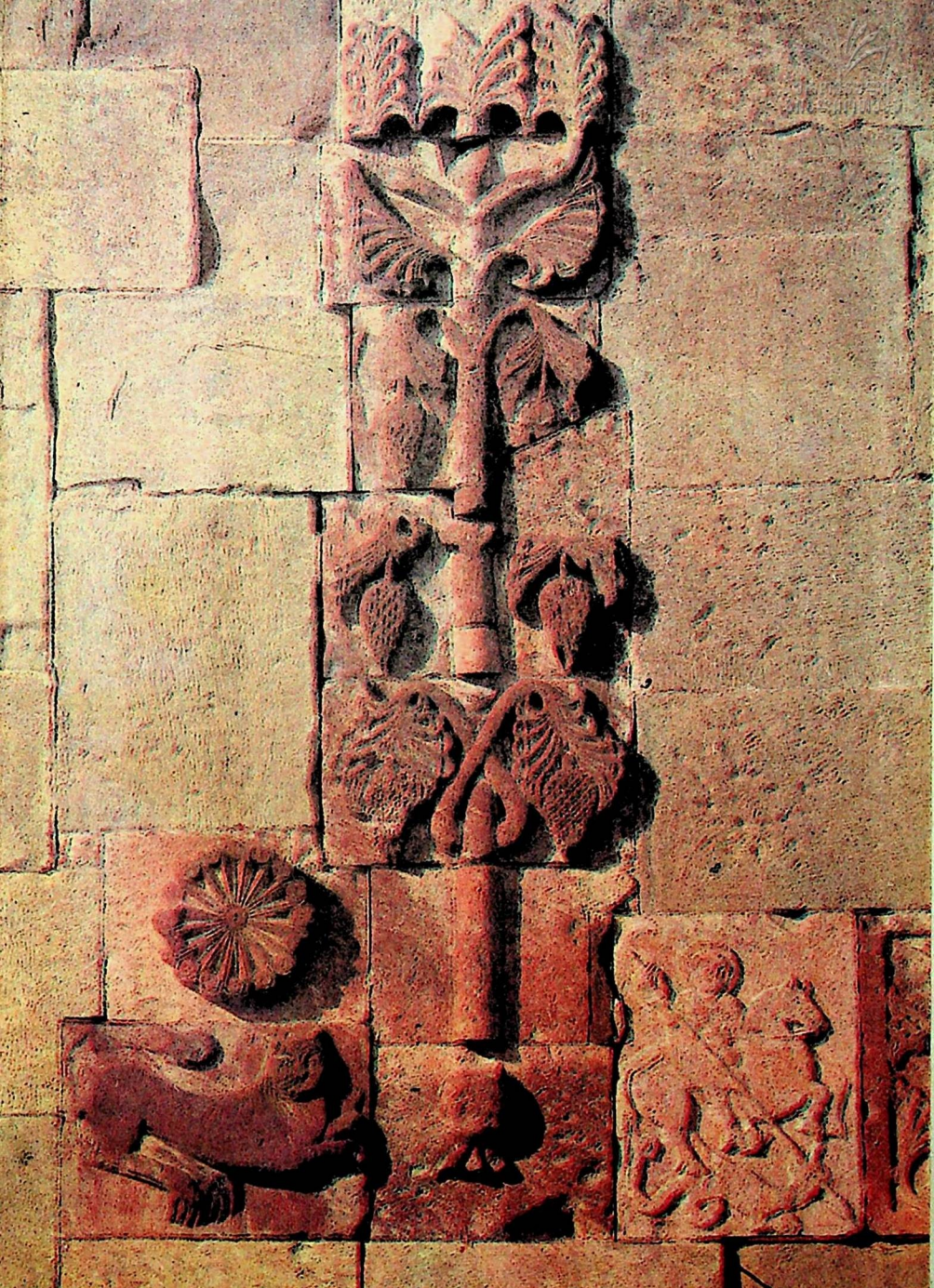
Звиад Константинович Гамсахурдия
ДУХОВНАЯ МИССИЯ ГРУЗИИ
(на английском языке)

T he Georgian language (nation)
is preserved until the day of the
Second Coming to testify to Him, in
order that God judge (expose) all the
languages through this language.

And this language has been dormant to
this day, and in the Gospel this
language is called Lazarus.

Praise and Glorification of
the Georgian Language

Ioane - Zosime, 10th cent.



ZVIAD GAMSAKHURDIA was born in Tbilisi in 1939, the son of a widely popular writer Konstantine Gamsakhurdia. When still at school he was arrested for his patriotic and antidictatorship activities. In 1976 the Helsinki Group of Georgia (now Helsinki Union), - was established under his leadership. The Group published the illegal periodicals *Okros Satsmisi* ("Golden Fleece") and *Sakartvelos Moambe* ("Georgian Herald"). The editor of them was Z. Gamsakhurdia.

In 1977 the members of the Helsinki groups were arrested all over the Soviet Union and Z. Gamsakhurdia with them. In 1978 the United States Congress proposed Z. Gamsakhurdia as a candidate for the Nobel Prize of Peace, together with other members of the Helsinki organizations in the Soviet Union. On his release from prison in 1979 he continued his political activities. Z. Gamsakhurdia is one of the main organisers and active participants of all the protest acts held in Georgia.

In late 1989 Z. Gamsakhurdia greatly contributed to working out the law of the multiparty elections, its adoption and its realization.

On the 28th of October, 1990, an absolute majority of Georgia's population supported the *Mrgvali Magida* ("Round Table") political organizations and its acknowledged leader Z. Gamsakhurdia, and at the first National Parliamentary Session he was unanimously elected Chairman of the Georgian Supreme Council.

In 1991 the Supreme Council elected him President of Georgia, which was confirmed by the nationwide election held on May 26, 1991.

Besides his political activities he is a writer and translator, a philosopher and theologian. He is married and has three sons.

