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GEORGIA

AN INTRODUCTION

Geography
History
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GEORGIA : AN INTRODUCTION

Geography, history, art, literature and music : for the use of contributors to encyclopaedias, dictionaries and similar publications, and all who wish for brief but accurate information on the civilization of Georgia.

We have long found that in most publications Georgia is not accorded the place to which her historic past and cultural wealth entitle her; more serious still is the fact that accounts of her civilization often present a picture that is inaccurate to the point of distortion. It is to correct such misinformation and prevent its repetition, and to make Georgia and the treasures of her civilization better known to the Western world, that we present this « Introduction » in the hope that it will serve the cause of knowledge and be of use to those engaged in research.



GEOGRAPHY

Area The country of Georgia — in Georgian *Sakartvelo* — lies in the central and western part of the Caucasus. Her civilization is ancient, her people one of the handsomest races in the world. The area of the country at the present time is 70,100 square kilometres — greater than that of the European countries of Belgium, Switzerland, Denmark or the Baltic States.

Most of Georgia's western border is open to the Black Sea, on a coastline of 308 kilometres. In the North, her territory adjoins that of Krasnodar and Stavropol, the Autonomous Republics of Kabardino-Balkaria, Northern Ossetia, Checheno-Ingush and Daghestan. On the eastern and south-eastern frontier is Azerbaijan; in the South, Armenia and Turkey. The total length of Georgia's frontiers is 1600 kilometres.

POPULATION

The population according to the census of January 1st 1968, is 4,659,000; three million (64.03 %) of these are Georgian, 11 % Armenian, 10 % Russian (in 1926 there were not more than 3.6 %), 3.8 % Azerbaijani, 3.5 % Ossetian, and others. The density of population is high, with an average of sixty-six to the square kilometre — 6.2 times higher than that of the U.S.S.R.

The wide variety of natural conditions, especially the deeply indented, broken configuration of the uplands in the North and South, has given rise to an uneven distribution of the population, which is localised mainly in the belt of plains stretching from West to East; the mountains and passes of the Great Caucasus are more sparsely inhabited. The greater part of the population lives in regions below the thousand-metre level, where in general the land gives the highest yield. The most thickly populated zones are the Black Sea littoral, the plain of Colchis and the hills surrounding it on the North-East, East and South-East. In the western part of the country the plateau of Upper Imereti is also densely inhabited; much less so are the northern mountain regions of Abkhazia, Svaneti and Ratcha-Lechkumi, North of Imereti.

In the East the population is most concentrated in the plain of Inner Kartli, the depression of Tbilisi, the plain of Lower Kartli and the Alazani



valley (Inner Kakheti), where the land is relatively most productive; it has been cultivated since the most ancient times. In the plateau of Outer Kakheti and the mountainous region of southern Georgia conditions are less favourable in this respect, and the inhabitants are fewer. The zones with the lowest population are the mountain regions of average altitude and the high peaks of the Eastern Caucasus, forming part of Southern Ossetia, and the districts on its eastern border.

The principal towns of the Republic are : Tbilisi, the capital of Georgia, with 900,000 inhabitants; Kutaisi, 170,000, Batumi, 110,000, Sukhumi, 80,000, Rustavi, 80,000, Poti, 50,000, Zugdidi, 40,000 and Gori, 40,000.

There are 4,650 rural districts in Georgia today.

RELIEF

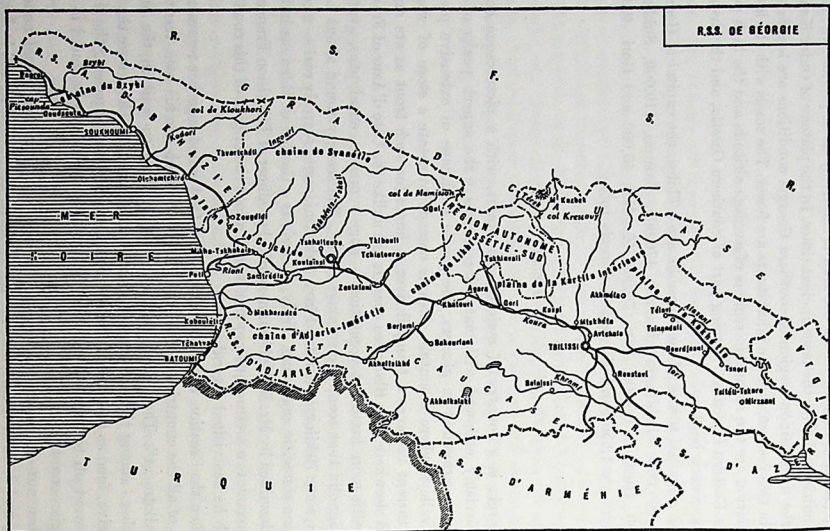
Georgia is a country of majestic mountains, with a picturesque coast, and lavishly endowed with natural resources : the superb peaks of the Caucasus armoured in glaciers, the gentle landscape of extensive plains, cool valleys where mountain streams cascade to create a store of wealth as a torrent becomes a tranquil river, a home for such trout as are rarely found elsewhere. The Black Sea coast is not unlike the Côte d'Azur of France, but with more luxuriant vegetation — huge cypresses, eucalyptus, avenues of magnolia that scent the summer nights. The scenery round about Lake Ritza, some 70 kilometres inland from Sukhumi, seems scarcely real — a copy of some romantic engraving. Truly, Georgia is a Garden of Eden, as indeed it is described by Mr. R. Hoffmann, musical producer of *Télévision Française*, who recounts a picturesque popular legend about the origins of this country, which he has visited several times.

When the Creation was finished the Lord God called together representatives of all the countries of the earth, to give to each one his own territory or "allotment". They assembled in great numbers to wait in the ante-chamber - among them, naturally, being four Georgians. These were the last to arrive, fond as they were of idling in the sun. By way of passing the time, they went off to visit one of those delightful little inns to be found in the Georgian countryside.

When our Georgians returned to the ante-chamber they found nobody there, and decided to knock at the Lord's door. He opened it, and looked at them in dismay.

« I have distributed all the land on earth : there is nothing left for you ! »

The four visitors, far from giving way to despair, set themselves to charm



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and delight the Lord. They sang, they danced, they beat out the liveliest of measures on their drums, until the Creator could hold out no longer.

« You sing and dance so well, you seem to be so full of joy in life that I cannot let you go away empty-handed ! Take this corner of the earth that I was keeping for my own use, settle yourselves here, increase and multiply ! »

And that, as they will tell you in Georgia, is how the Creator came to take up His abode in the clouds, for want of a place on our planet — and how the Georgians found themselves in possession of Eden !

There is a great diversity of natural conditions in Georgia. The snow-covered peaks and glaciers of the Great Caucasus alternate with plateaux and with the plain of Colchis in the East — all fields and orchards, vineyards and citrus fruit — while along the coast there are watering-places and sun-drenched seaside towns. The territory falls into three natural divisions : —

1. The region of the Great Caucasus ; 2. the high plateaux of southern Georgia ; 3. the region of enclosed plains, smooth and gentle in relief.

The Great Caucasus constitutes the northern part of the Republic. It is in the structure of this region that the principal geological formations are found, consisting of crystalline blocks of granite, slate, porphyry, limestone and other mountainous substances. The highest part of the Caucasus is the Central Chain, with a relief of strong contrasts in its steeply pointed crests and wild, narrow passes. Mount Chkhara with an altitude of 5,200 metres is the highest point of the Caucasus Chain in Georgia, where the mountains' average height is from 3,000 to 3,500 metres.

The Central Chain branches out, in Georgia, into the ranges of Gagra, Bzibi, Kodori, Svaneti, Egrisi, Lechkhumi, Ratcha, Gudisi, Alevi, Kartli and Kakheti. In spite of the steepness of the ascent, caravans bound for the northern Caucasus travelled the routes and paths of the Central Chain from the most distant times. The principal pass is Jvari, at 2,384 metres, through which the Georgian Military Highway is laid. There are many other passes, the two most important being Mamissoni at 2,829 metres and Klaukhoru at 2,816 metres. Among these inaccessible slopes and crags of the majestic country of the Great Caucasus, Prometheus — in Georgian, Amirani — was chained.

The plateau of southern Georgia falls into two geological subdivisions : a volcanic plateau, and the folds of land which form its northern border. The volcanic plateau comprises the lava terraces of Javakheti, Tsalka, Gomareti and Dmanisi, with a series of volcanic cones in echelon from North to South, as if they had been set down upon these terraces. The zone of peripheral ranges extending parallel to the Equator includes those of Ajaria-Imereti and Trialeti, the cirque of Akhaltzikhe and the mountainous region of Borjomi-Bakuriani.

The region of plains. Colchis, the largest plain in Georgia, is clearly defined by natural boundaries, as is the plain of Alazani in Kakheti in the East.

The plain of Lower Kartli extends in a stepped incline the length of the river Mtkvari (Kura) from Tbilisi to the mouth of the Khrami. Its width is that of the Mtkvari valley, and its affluents from the right are the Khrami and Algueti. East of Lower Kartli is the plateau of Iori, lying from North-West to South-East (average altitude 700 to 800 metres).

The narrow plain of Inner Kartli — enclosed between the mountain chains of the Great Caucasus, the northern flanks of the peripheral heights of the plateau of southern Georgia and the eastern slopes of the Surami range — occupies the geographical centre of the mountain systems of Georgia.

CLIMATE

Georgia lies on the border between two climatic zones, the temperate and the sub-tropical. Her territory comprises five climatic regions, with differences in conditions of atmospheric circulation, levels of temperature and degree of humidity.

Region of the High Caucasus. The Great Caucasus massif lies within the zone of confluence of maritime and continental climatic influences, and consequently the atmosphere in this region is continuously disturbed. The atmospheric currents that sweep across it are either diverted by the mountains or checked and modified. The main mountain chain protects Georgia in the North from the intrusion of continental air, and also retards the outflow of subtropical humid air.

The High Caucasus lies within two climatic sub-regions : the West, which is humid, and the East, considerably drier. The difference in climate between the two sub-regions is due to their respective distances from the Black Sea, and to the general structure of the Caucasian massif : the clouds coming in from the sea are trapped in the high ranges lying from North to South.

Low extremes of temperature are found in all this region, the average temperature in July at an altitude of 2,000 metres being 14°. The distinctive features of this part of the country are strong solar radiation, plentiful sunshine and pure air — conditions which, in addition to the thermal springs, contribute to the high efficacy of the health resorts of the High Caucasus.

Subtropical region of Colchis. The whole of the plain of Colchis is under the climatic influence of the sea, from which it receives a gentle and stable

climate, with mild winters in which the temperature in the coldest month does not fall below 4° ; in Gagra, where the winter temperature is nearly that of Marseille, it is a steady 7° . The annual average temperature in Gagra (15.1°) is almost the same as in Nice (15°), although the summers are hotter and the winters colder than in the Mediterranean, with drier springs and summers and finer summer weather. The July isotherm of 23° covers the whole of Colchis, as far as and including the foot of the mountains. In summer all these shores enjoy light breezes, often with a perfectly cloudless sky. The pleasantest season is the autumn. In mid-September the air grows cooler and less humid, and in the first half of autumn the weather is usually fine. The sea yields up slowly the heat it has absorbed in the course of summer.

Region of enclosed plains. In these plains, extending from the Likhi chain in the East to the south-eastern frontier of the Republic, the climate is continental. In Inner Kartli and Inner Kakheti it is Mediterranean, with long hot summers and cool winters. The climatic indices of the Mtkvari valley are very close to those of Madrid and Barcelona, the average annual temperature in Tbilisi being 12.5° and in Madrid 13.3° . The intermontane plains of Inner Kartli and Kakheti have three torrid months, with an average monthly temperature of 22.8° to 25° .

High plateau of southern Georgia. Two climatic sub-regions are found here — that of the terraces, at altitudes from 1,500 to 2,200 metres, and that of the peaks and volcanic summits above them. The highest of the terraces, Javakheti, entrenched in the East behind the high crest of Arsiani and the plain of Erusheti and largely open to the South, is subject to continental climatic influences.

Winters in this region are long and cold, with average January temperatures well below zero — Akhalkalaki has experienced the absolute minimum of 31° . The weather in winter, as in summer, is generally calm and dry, except among the high peaks where rains are much more frequent. At this altitude the air above the plateau reaches only a moderately high temperature, the average for August at Akhalkalaki (1,700 metres) being 16.7° .

Region of the mountain chains of Ajaria-Imereti and Trialeti. Temperate mountain climate with moderate humidity. In the upland valleys and cirques, where the climate is drier and sunnier, there are many sanatoria and health resorts. At one of these — Bakuriani, at 1,660 metres — the average temperature for January is the same as at Davos, 7.4° , although Davos is 100 metres lower; the average in July and August is 14.8° , while at Davos it is no higher than 12° . The calm winters, with a steady snowfall



and many days of fine weather, make Bakuriani a sports centre of repute. The rest of this region is favoured with the same healthy climate.

WATER SUPPLIES

The many rivers in Georgia belong to the basins of the Black Sea or the Caspian Sea. Some of the numerous great watercourses are the Alazani, Inguri, Rioni, Kodori, Bzyb, Tskhenis-Tskali and Terek; these, and others, are supplied by the eternal snows and glaciers of the Great Caucasus. The principal rivers with their source in the Imereti and Trialeti chains are replenished in the same way: the Ajaris-Tskali, Chorokhi, Natanebi, Supsa, Khanis-Tskali and the upper course of the Mtkvari (Kura) affluents.

Between the zone of the high mountains, where the rivers are filled by thawed snow and rain showers, and that of the hills there is a karst region. The watercourses of this zone are a feature of the districts of Abkhazia, Mingrelia and Ratcha, where most of the many lakes lie in sink-holes. Larger lakes, such as Ritza and Amtkhel, were formed by landslides from the slopes of deep valleys, damming the waters into rivers.

The principal river is the Mtkvari, 15,15 kilometres long. A stretch of 384 kilometres in the middle part of its course supplies Georgia with water. It flows from sources in Turkey, with its mouth and lower course in Azerbaijan. Its affluents from the left include the Great Liakhvi, the Ksani, Aragvi, Iori and Alazani; from the right, the Dzama, Tana, Tedzami and Khrami. These combine to supply the waters of this powerful river.

The volcanic plateau of Javakheti contains the greatest number of lakes in all Transcaucasia, the principal ones being Paravani, Tabiskuri, Khanchali, Khozapini, Madatapa and Sagamo, which all hold considerable reserves of water.

VEGETATION

Georgia is rich in flora, original and varied. The flanks of her mountains and valleys are clothed in fine forests, chiefly of deciduous species growing at medium and low altitudes. Although man's activities in the course of centuries have effected some changes in the vegetation of these zones, nonetheless it has retained its original forms, and survivals from vanished ages are found by the side of cultivated plants.

The slopes surrounding the plain of Colchis are covered with handsome forests of deciduous trees up to an altitude of 800 metres, among them



several species of oak, beech, chestnut, hornbeam, alder, lime, maple and ash; box, which grows only in the calcareous soil of the mountains of Abkhazia, Mingrelia and Ratcha; rhododendron poticum and cherry-laurel, sweeping a sumptuous mantle over the humid flanks of the western mountains, and holly and azalea which flourish in all sorts of conditions. Typical specimens are found to this day in Colchis of tertiary flora sensitive to cold, such as the oriental plane and the yew.

The forests of south-eastern Caucasia are less rich in archaic species. In the deciduous forests of the East there are two dominant species, oak and hornbeam, found in varying proportions.

The northern peaks of the tableland of southern Georgia are covered with mixed woods and conifers, at altitudes of 1,250 to 2,300 metres. The conifers have a high industrial value, and their timber is floated down from distant parts of the mountains.

The plain of Colchis is almost entirely covered with orchards, subtropical crops and vineyards, and forests there are scarce. The vegetation of the coastal plain has been fundamentally transformed by the efforts of man, where exotic plants imported from hot climates have been substituted for the flora natural to the region.

There are few forests left in the enclosed plains of Georgia. On the lower part of the mountain sides they have given place to cultivated land, while they cover the middle of the slopes to an altitude of 1,800 to 2,100 metres.

In eastern Caucasia, where the climate is more continental and relatively drier, the forests reach to 2,300 metres. In Dusheti at this level one may find dense pinewoods interspersed with rhododendron, birch and dwarf mountain ash. On the upper slopes above the forests, where the subalpine and alpine vegetation begins, the pasture-lands are strewn with rhododendron and myrtle. Higher still the pastures become more and more widely scattered, islands of green verdure, until at last they disappear in the eternal snows.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Nature has lavished her riches on Georgia, and within this small territory a wide variety of elements are found: minerals, waterpower, vegetation of all kinds, fertile soils, climatic conditions favourable to agriculture, watering-places and spas. Georgia is one of the foremost among the republics of the Soviet Union in reserves of waterpower. Her rivers have served to irrigate the land since the most ancient times, and today the waters of the Mtkvari, Alazani, Iori, Great Liakhvi, Ksani, Khrami, Aragvi, Rioni and Tskhenis-Tskali are used for irrigation.

There are large quantities of minerals, especially coal, in Georgia. Parts of the country are oil-bearing, and at the present time there are dozens of known sources of petroleum, with oilfields in Kakheti and other regions. The principal ones are at Mirzaani, Besser Chiraki and Eldari, in Kakheti, although petroleum is extracted only from the first two.

The most important subsoil product in Georgia is manganese, which is mined in the West in the district of Sachkere. The high grade of metal in the ore, absence of noxious alloys, ease of disposal and abundance of quantity join with a favourable geographical situation — near the Black Sea ports — to make the Chiatura mines a particularly valuable undertaking. In quantity and quality, the ore from Georgia's manganese mines compares well with those of India, Brazil and Ghana.

In many parts of the country iron ore is found — pyrites, magnetite, haematite, limonite — and there are several mines of non-ferrous metals such as lead and zinc, etc., and a few copper mines. Georgia is very rich in non-metallic minerals, and takes first place in the U.S.S.R. for quality and quantity of barytes, the precious raw material of the chemical industry. The discovery of benthonic and sub-benthonic clays in parts of the country is of great value economically. Andesite, a substance impervious to acids, is found in many regions, while in the South near the town of Akhaltsikhe diatomite is extracted, a substance with chemical and physical qualities that render it useful in electro-technical processes.

Excellent lithographic stone is found in the Algheti basin and other regions. Among the non-metallic minerals may be mentioned the dolomites of Abanoi, Kvakhchiri, Motsameta, Ghelati, Tkvarcheli, Ghegua etc., the agates of the district of Akhaltsikhe and the chalcedony of the district of Zestafoni. Near the salt lakes of the arid regions in the East (Mukhravani, Azamburi, the Great Lake of Gldani, Nadarbazevi etc.) there are deposits of mirabilite (navite sodium sulphate).

Building materials are found in almost all parts of the country — stone, marble, marl, gypsum, tufa, limestone, fireproof and ceramic clays, slate etc. Georgian marble is well-known in many varieties, some of as high quality as the finest Italian and Greek marble, and is widely used on building sites in large towns.

THERMAL SPRINGS

Georgia is famed for her thermal springs, up to a thousand in number, with a variety of waters — some unique. Among the best known and the finest of these are the radio-active waters of Takhaltubo, the sulphur springs of Abastumani, the effervescent sodium hydrocarbonate waters of Borjomi —

these waters, very like those at Vichy, are famed throughout the world — the sulphurous sodium chloride waters of Menji, resembling those at Matsesta, the calcium sodium hydrocarbonate waters of Saïrme, the calcium chloride waters of Luguela, the effervescent alkaline and ferruginous waters of Utsera, the warm sulphur springs of Nunissi, the alkaline-salt effervescent waters of Zvare and the alkaline-salt springs of Javi resembling those at Essentuki, the hot alkaline sulphur springs of Tbilisi, and others. The springs of Tbilisi are similar to those at Cauterets and Barèges, in the Pyrenees, at Bataglia in Italy, at Aix-les-Bains and Baden, near Vienna. Also deserving of mention are the mineral muds of Akhtala. Many of these springs and muds are the site of watering-places which are famous throughout the whole of the Soviet Union.

Georgia's resources of energy and minerals, together with naturally favourable conditions, ensure a steady development of agriculture. The wide range of climatic conditions permits of different branches of it being developed : in the subtropical climate of the coastal lands, fine produce such as tea, lemons, oranges, mandarins etc. is grown in quantity, and valuable plant species such as eucalyptus and bamboo. The climate and soils in the neighbourhood of the mountains are well suited to the cultivation of vines and fruit trees. The moderate humidity, abundant sunshine, mild winters and long hot summers in Imereti and in Kakheti and Kartli in the East give favourable conditions for the production of cereals, vines and fruit.

Viticulture is a highly important branch of agriculture in Georgia. It has a very ancient tradition — Transcaucasia is even thought to be the cradle of the vine — and Georgian wines are famous. The red table wines, resembling those of Bordeaux and Burgundy, are not excelled by the best wines in their class and have won gold and silver medals at international exhibitions in Yugoslavia, Hungary, Belgium etc. Georgian wines and brandies have gained seventy-seven awards in the last five years — twenty-six gold medals, forty-eight silver and three bronze. Teliani, Napareuli, Tsinandali, Mukuzani, Saperavi and others are the finest in the range of dry wines. Among the medium dry, Kindzmareuli, Khvantchkara, Tvishi, Tetra, Akhasheni and others are of high repute. Georgian wines are exported.

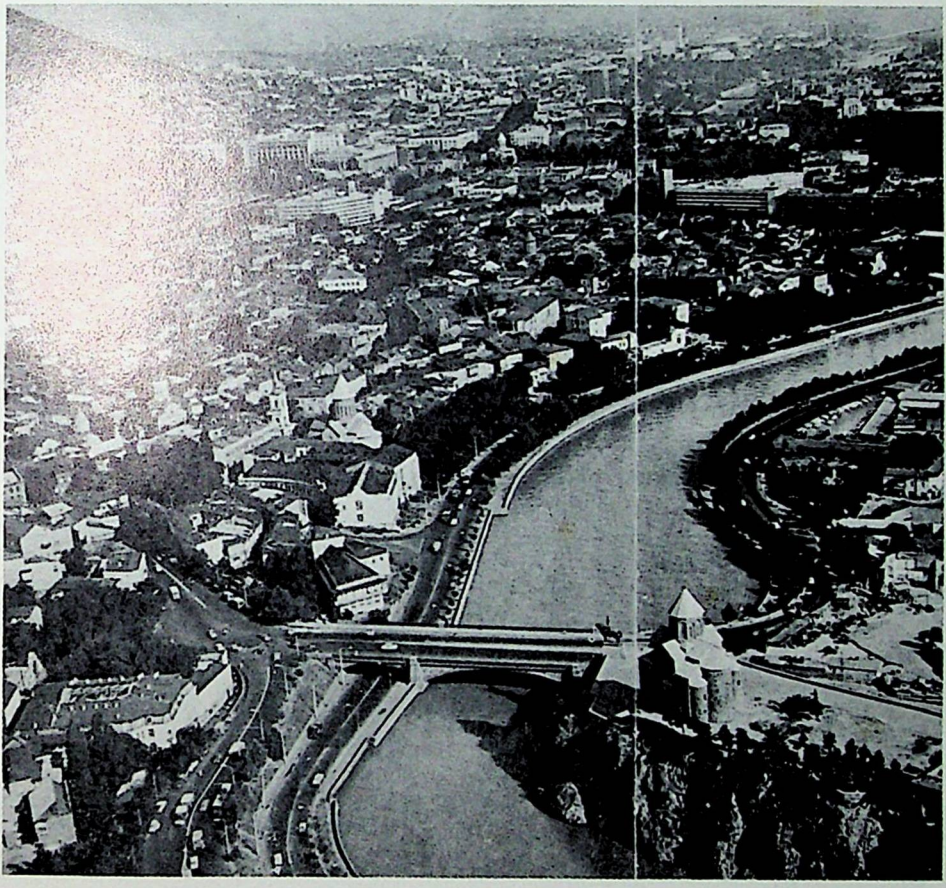
The cultivation of the vine is something of a cult : the Georgian devotes himself to it with ardour, and in any climate where the grape will grow the humblest of farmers has his vineyard. Here we may recall that it was with a cross cut from a vine-stock that St. Nino converted Georgia to Christianity in the year 332.

Translated from the French by
Katharine Vivian.

Nino SALIA.

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View of part of Tbilisi





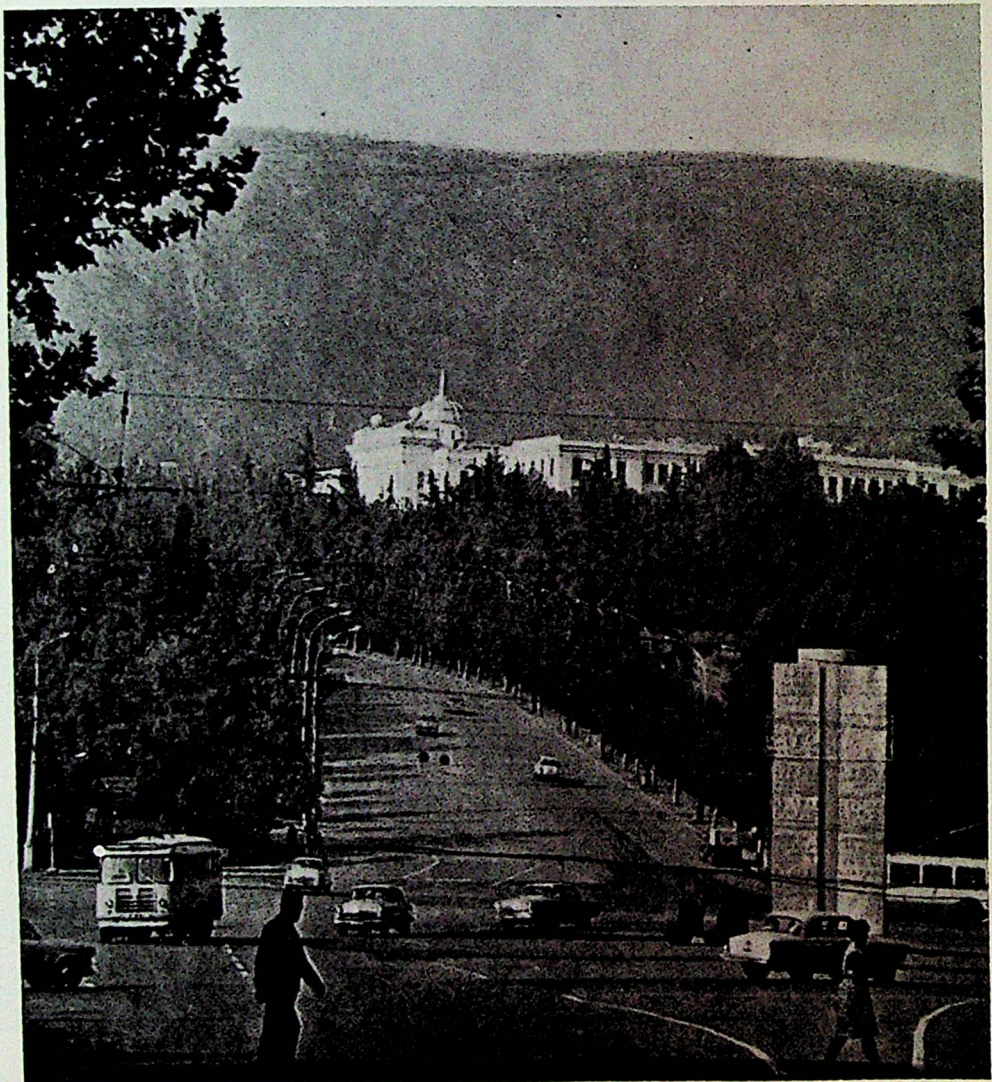
Mtskheta, ancient capital of Georgia



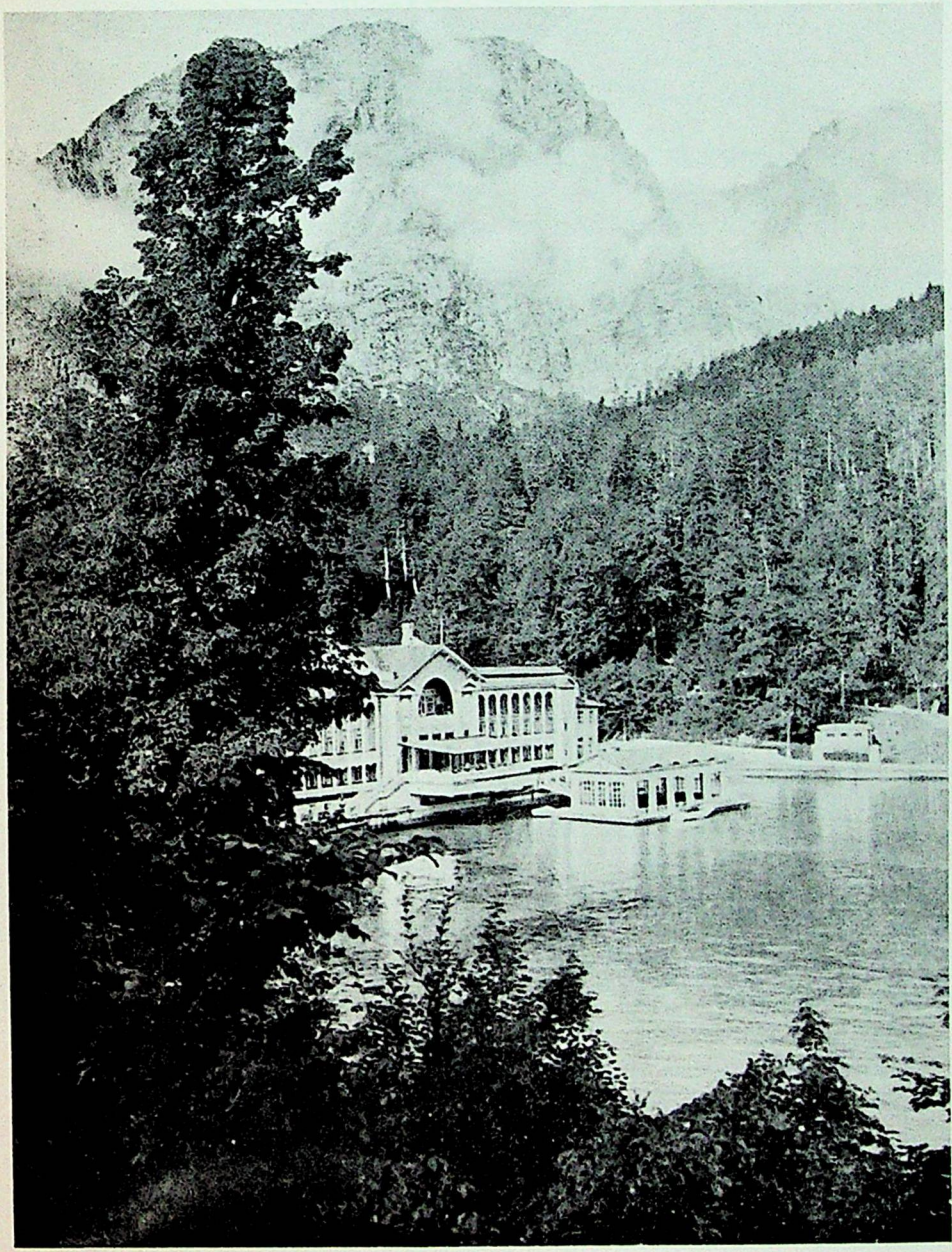
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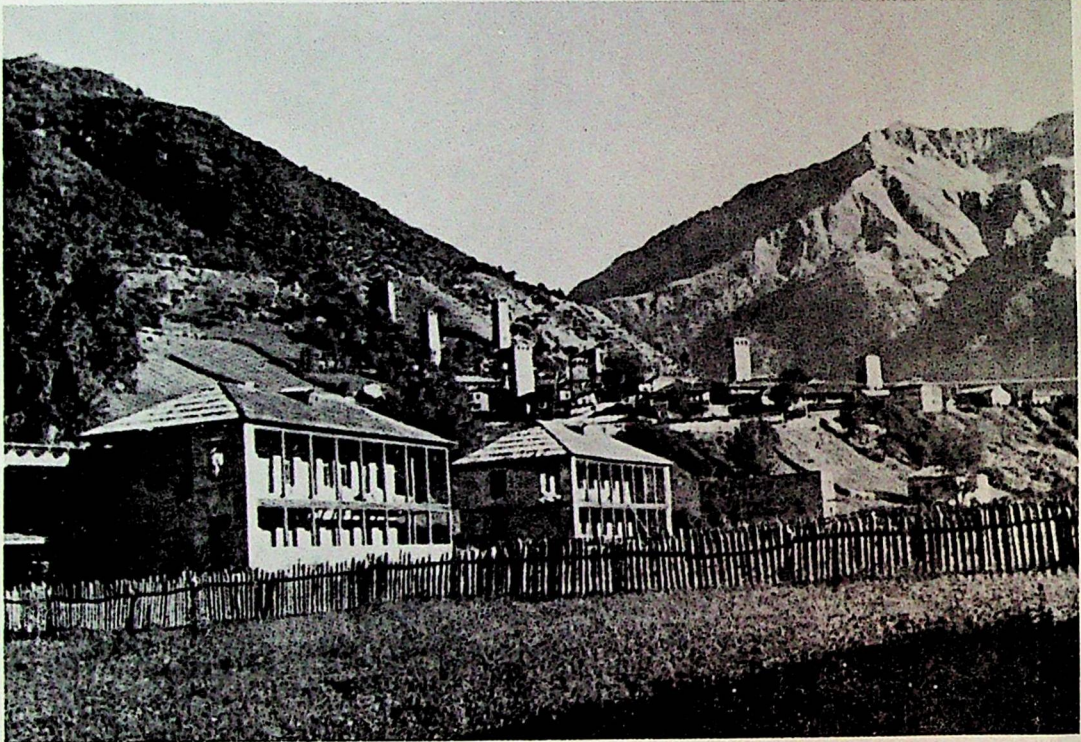
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State University of Tbilisi



Lake Ritza



Mestia (Svaneti): medieval towers.



OUTLINE OF THE HISTORY OF GEORGIA

GEORGIA IN THE FIRST MILLENNIUM B.C. AND THE FIRST FOUR CENTURIES OF OUR ERA

The Georgians are one of the most ancient peoples in the world, who in the course of their long and troubled history have been a prey to invaders of every race. Under the ever-present threat of devastation they have succeeded in preserving their national identity, their language and their culture.

The territory of present-day Georgia, as well as the coastal and mountain regions of north-eastern Asia Minor, has been inhabited by Georgian tribes since remote antiquity. The Kartlians occupied the eastern and southern part of this area, the Svans were settled chiefly in the northern regions of Western Georgia and the Mingrelo-Laz along the littoral of the East and South-East of the Black Sea. Traces of every essential stage in the evolution of society can be found on Georgian soil. Man was living there in the paleolithic and neolithic ages, and many cave dwellings of that era are to be seen there.

After the Stone Age, which in Georgia ended five thousand years ago, the people learned to work in metal, and bronze weapons and tools began to appear. Agriculture and animal husbandry became the main branches of the economy, and soon such a high degree of perfection was achieved in the making of metal implements that people came from other countries to serve an apprenticeship in this craft. The Caucasus in ancient times was regarded as the birthplace of the art of metal-working.

The Bronze Age in Georgia, dating from the second millennium B.C., is marked by an original and distinctive culture of a high level. In Trialeti, in the district of Tsalka — considered to be the principal centre for this form of art — some magnificent specimens have been discovered in an ancient tomb: a gold cup set with precious stones, a silver goblet, a silver-gilt carboy, a four-wheeled cart and various other ornaments and tools.

New forms of activity were developed during the Bronze Age which led to a closer association between the tribes. It was in that epoch that big tribal unions were formed in the South of Georgia, such as the confederations

of Diaukhi (later Tao) and Colkha (later Colchis) which lasted until the eighth century B.C.

Assyrian and Urartian cuneiform inscriptions from the twelfth to the eighth centuries B.C. give a picture of strife with strong communities in the south-western regions of historic Georgia. The Georgians are mentioned — under the names of Muskhi (Meskhi), Tubals or Tabals and Kasques (Kaskhi) — as neighbours of the Assyrians of some consequence. Their reputation for skill in metallurgy was world-wide, the earliest reference to it being found in the Bible where Tubal-Cain, a member of a Georgian tribe, is called “the father of metallurgy”.

Colchis and Iberia

Georgia's economic situation improved rapidly with the development of iron working. In the sixth century before Christ the kingdom of Colchis was formed, in the fourth that of Iberia (Kartli — Eastern Georgia). Written sources as well as archaeological remains testify to the high level of production, the vigorous development of trade and the quantity of minted silver coin — known as *kolkhuri tetri* — in circulation both within the kingdom of Colchis and outside it; many of these coins adorn contemporary numismatic collections.

King Pharnavaz is regarded as the founder of the kingdom of Iberia, with its capital of Mtskheta. Iberia became a great kingdom in the third century B.C., and the results of archaeological excavations show that Mtskheta in those distant times was a rich and powerful city. The huge acropolis and the architectural monuments discovered round about it are evidence of its great economic and cultural prosperity.

Colchis and Iberia were in close communication with the Greeks, Achaemenid Persia, the Seleucids, the Pontic kingdom and other powers, on political and economic questions. From the seventh to the fourth centuries before Christ the Georgian states played an important part in the life of the ancient world.

Georgia and Greece

In the sixth century B.C. Greek colonies of considerable size and importance were already in existence on the land of Colchis : Phasis (now Poti), Dioscurias (Sukhumi), Chiuen (Ochamchire) and others. The Greeks had known of the existence of the Caucasus from mythological times, and often made it the scene of their heroes' exploits. Prometheus was chained to a crag in the Caucasus mountains; Pnixios, escaping from his stepmother,

took refuge with King Aëtes of Colchis whose father was the Sun; the Argonauts set sail for Colchis in search of the Golden Fleece. The position of Colchis and the Caucasus range in the continent of Europe is described with remarkable precision in the legend of the Argonauts, so that it was not by chance that the ancient Greeks associated Caucasia with their mythological tales. The trade route joining the Hellenic world to the Far East, Persia and India usually crossed the Caucasus, the countries then called Colchis, Iberia and Albania — today Western Georgia, while Eastern Georgia is Azerbaijan — following the Phasis (Rioni) and Cyrus (Mtkvari) rivers and the coast of the Caspian Sea. The Greeks came to Colchis to exchange their products for goods from Asia and Caucasia, the Greek merchandise being carried from there to Iran and the Far East.

It was in the Black Sea basin that rivalry developed between the Greeks and the Colchians. The Colchian population spread far to the West along the southern shores of the Black Sea, while their activities in the North extended as far as the Crimea. Greek tradition has it that they founded the kingdom of Panticapaea in the Crimea with a Colchian dynasty. In view of the dominant situation of the Crimea, meeting-place of all the routes from the North to the Black Sea, it is obvious that the Colchians' only purpose in establishing this kingdom could have been to ensure for themselves contact with northern and eastern Europe.

From the first century B.C. the kingdoms of Colchis and Iberia were engaged in incessant warfare with aggressors who attempted to bring them into subjection. The first of these wars was the Roman invasion.

Georgia and the Roman Empire

When the Romans came to Caucasia they found in the South the three kingdoms of Colchis, Iberia and Albania. Pompey conquered Albania in the first century B.C. (67-66), Iberia in 65 and finally Colchis in 64-63. The Caucasian kingdoms were compelled to accept the Roman protectorate, and soon the relations between Rome, Colchis and Iberia were such that the subjects of both kingdoms were considered as friendly to the Romans, their bond with whom was forged by Caesar's proclamation of investiture at the coronation of the kings of Colchis and Iberia. In the second and third centuries A.D. the Roman emperors were compelled to recognize the power of the Iberian State and endeavoured to maintain friendly relations with it, heaping favours and presents on the kings of Iberia.

In the year 35 A.D. when Artaban, King of the Parthians, entered Armenia — at that time a dependency of the Roman Empire — Tiberius



asked King Pharsman of Iberia, an ally of Rome, to invade it. First Pharsman's brother became sovereign of Armenia, and later his (Pharsman's) son. Pharsman however had to wage several wars to defend reconquered Armenia against the Parthians.

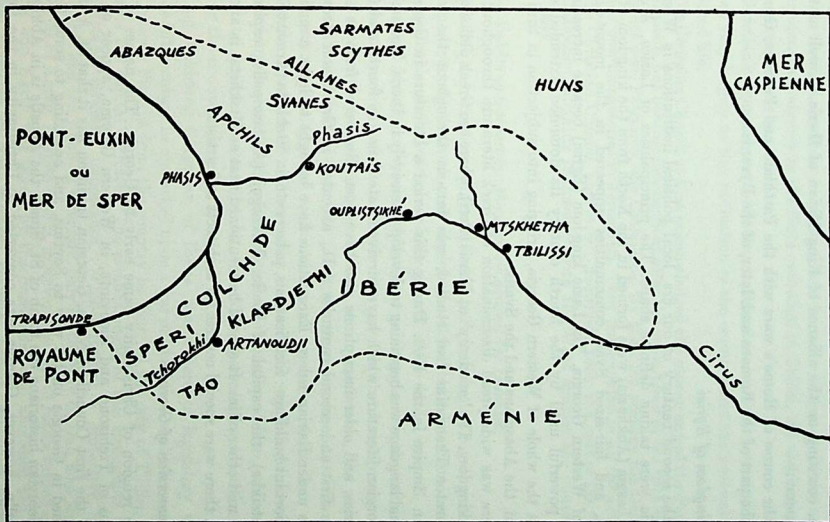
Pharsman was succeeded by his son Mithridates as King of Iberia. During his reign the ties of friendship between Rome and Georgia were strengthened, and in token of their friendship the Romans built a wall at Mtskheta in Mithridates' honour, with the inscription (discovered in 1867) :

“The Emperor Vespasian Augustus, Caesar Titus Augustus and Caesar Domitian Augustus have consecrated this monument to King Mithridates of Iberia, son of King Pharsman and Iamassaspoi, a friend of Caesar, loved by the Romans; and to his people.”

The Emperor Trajan also maintained friendly relations with Iberia and Albania and showed many favours to their sovereigns. The Emperor Hadrian (117-138) formed an ever closer friendship with King Pharsman II of Iberia. None of his allies received a present so magnificent as that of an elephant and five hundred warriors, to which Pharsman responded with handsome gifts. When Pharsman went to Rome with his family and retinue as the Emperor's guest, he was given a royal reception and had the honour of being permitted to make offerings in the Capitol; further, the Emperor enlarged his realm. Pharsman had good relations also with the Emperor Antoninus Pius whom he visited in Rome, and who was so impressed by the Georgian king's feats of horsemanship that he had an equestrian statue of Pharsman erected on the military parade-ground.

Rome later became engaged in desperate strife with Iran, under the rule of the Arsacids, for possession of the Transcaucasian countries and in particular Armenia. While the Romans were firmly established in Colchis, Iberia soon became independent in fact, and took advantage of the warfare between Rome and Parthia to win to her side the tribes of North Caucasia, gradually increasing her power until she could lay claim to hegemony over Transcaucasia.

In the year 224 A.D. the enfeebled kingdom of the Arsacid Parthians gave place to the formidable Iran of the Sassanids. Iberia maintained her position for a time, but the vigorous expansion of Sassanid power compelled her, like her neighbour Armenia, to turn to the Eastern Roman Empire of Byzantium. The Sassanids invaded Eastern Georgia and attempted to make themselves masters of the land of Caucasia and its mountain passes. The Emperor Diocletian gained a victory over King Narses (293-302) and after the peace treaty of Nisibis in 298 Iberia came once more under the



The Kingdoms of Iberia and Colchis
from the 3rd century B. C. to the 6th century A. D.

dominion of Rome. In 381 the Romans renewed their offensive against Persia, counting on the alliance of King Mirian of Iberia as well as that of Armenia.

In the course of Rome's wars with the Parthians and Persians, Georgia took the part of the Romans and, later, of the Byzantines.

The kingdom of Egrisi

In the second century of our era, local political institutions in Western Georgia were taking definite shape. The principalities of Lazica, Apsilia and Abasgia (Abkhazia) were formed in the North from the kingdom of the Chans, and fair-sized Svan communities appeared in the mountainous part of Western Georgia. The Lazic kingdom (Egrisi) became increasingly more powerful until by the fourth century its dominion extended over almost the whole of Western Georgia, bringing into subjection in turn the Apsilai, the Abasgians and the Svans.

There was widespread dissemination of Greek literature throughout the Lazic kingdom. The "academy" at Phasis (Poti), where the Greek philosopher and orator Themistius had studied, was famous throughout the whole Roman Empire in the East. During this period a literature in Georgia's national language was beginning to develop intensively in Iberia. Monuments of Georgian literature which have survived date from the fourth and fifth centuries, and older inscriptions also have been discovered from as early as the first and second centuries A.D., executed in Greek and Aramaic scripts under Iberian rulers. Excavations have brought to light a number of important buildings: fortifications, palaces etc. in Mtskheta (Armaztsikhe, Zadentsikhe), the capital of Iberia, Tsikhegoji (Archeapolis), capital of Egrisi and other cities. It should be mentioned that at Mtskheta, in ancient times, there were special centres for architects and artists.

The conversion of Georgia

The religion of Christianity came early to Georgia. The names of the bishops of Trebizond and Bichvinta, in Western Georgia, appear on the list of the first Council of Nicea. Georgian tradition has it that St. Andrew preached in Georgia on his way to Scythia, and according to some Greek and Georgian historians the tomb of St. Simon the Apostle is in Abkhazia, Officially, however, Georgia was converted to Christianity in the fourth century. Her conversion was achieved by a slave woman, Nino — her place of birth unknown, but probably in Cappadocia — in 332-4 during the reign of the Georgian King Mirian, through a mission from the Emperor

Constantine the Great some years before his death. The cross that St. Nino gave to Georgia, cut from a vinestock and bound with her own hair, now lies after many an odyssey in the Sioni cathedral in Tbilisi, the residence of the Georgian Patriarchs.

Christianity gave a great stimulus to literature and the arts, and contributed very largely to the unification of the country and the renewal of her cultural life.

The Georgian Church at first acknowledged the supremacy of the Patriarch of Antioch, but became independent after the second half of the fifth century with her own Patriarch, the Catholicos. By the fifth century the Georgians owned two monasteries in Jerusalem. They participated in all the activities of the Christian Church, and in 607 decisively took the part of the Council of Chalcedon, aligning themselves with the West against the churches of the East.

King Vakhtang Gorgaslan : the struggle against the Iranians

Cultural and economic progress had a part in bringing together the two Georgian states of Kartli and Egrisi, the bond between them becoming stronger in the sixth century with the advent of the feudal system.

Principal features of the age of feudalism in Georgia were the stabilization of land ownership and the stimulus this gave to the development of the rural economy, the grouping of artisans into corporations, the expansion of internal and foreign trade. At that time, however, from the fifth to the sixth century, Georgia had to contend with aggression from Iran and to suffer the consequences of the wars between the empires of Persia and Byzantium. Eastern Georgia fell under the domination of Iran, who endeavoured to replace Christianity by Mazdaism, persecuting Christians and laying the country waste.

King Vakhtang Gorgaslan of Iberia was a hero of legendary valour. In the fifth century he embarked upon a war of liberation, and after expelling the Iranian Pitakhs from the country he founded the city of Tbilisi, which became the capital of Kartli. The establishment of this stronghold was of considerable strategic importance : Tbilisi formed a protective bastion for Kartli and the whole of Caucasia, barring the way to Iran who was ever covetous of Kartli. In spite of this, however, the tide of battle turned against Iberia and Kartli was taken by the Sassanids, who abolished the power of the sovereign in 523. Western Georgia, Lazica, remained under the influence of Byzantium.

The courage and unity of the Georgian people, the military genius and political wisdom of King Vakhtang Gorgaslan and King Gubaz in the fifth

and sixth centuries preserved the country from ultimate enslavement by her invaders. The principal aim of the Georgian statesmen of that period was to safeguard their country's independence. "It is my desire that the State of the Colchians should recover her ancient power, that she should stand on her own feet, and never have need in war or peace to turn to a foreign state for aid," said the great Egrisian orator Aëtes.

The fall of Iran was brought about by the growth of Arab power, and in 572 there was an uprising which finally freed the country from the enemy's yoke. The seventh and eighth centuries saw great political and economic advances in Georgia. The State of Kartli was founded, later to become the basis of a united Georgian feudal monarchy. Principalities (*samtavarni*) were created in Kakheti, Hereti and Tao-Klarjeti, and the kingdom of Abkhazia was established in Georgia.

The Arab invasion

Soon however new conquerors appeared on Georgia's frontiers. The Arabs occupied the eastern part of the country — an enemy who proved more formidable than the Iranians, with their determination to convert the enslaved population to Islam by putting them to fire and sword. Nevertheless, they did not succeed in imposing the same fate on Western Georgia as on the eastern kingdom. The struggle against the Arabs took on the aspect of a national movement for liberation and unification, in which the Armenians and Albanians played an active part. Insurrection broke out everywhere, in one place after another, and helped to restrict the area of Arab occupation, which was confined principally to Tbilisi and its surroundings.

The great strategic bastion of Tbilisi was chosen by the Arabs as the capital of their emirate, and it was on that city that the weight of their oppression fell most heavily. In Kakheti in Eastern Georgia the situation was altogether different and the people were far less afflicted by the Arab occupation than those of Kartli. The governor of the country, who had his residence there — with the title of *khorepiskoposi* (from the Greek *chorepiscopus*, a district overseer) — enjoyed greater political freedom than the *eristavni* or provincial governors of Kartli.

In the West of Georgia, the suzerainty of the Byzantine Emperor was to some extent nominal and external. In the struggle against the thrust of Arab power, Western Georgia — lying between the mountains and the sea — had the advantage of natural defences against foreign attack. Her territory was the place of refuge for all Georgians in retreat and seeking refuge from

the Arabs — a favourable situation which she turned to advantage in working to unify the nation.

Unification of the kingdom

The move towards unity started from two main centres, Abkhazia in the North-West and Tao in the South-West of Georgia. When Leon II succeeded his uncle as Eristav of Abkhazia he proclaimed his allegiance to the Byzantine Emperor and brought into subjection the whole of Western Georgia up to the frontier of Iberia. In 746 he took the title of King Leon I of Abkhazia and extended the frontiers of his kingdom as far as Kartli.

The second centre of unification was the territory of Chorokhi, ruled by the princes of the Bagratid house, the Bagrationi. Formerly the *eristavni* of this family had reigned in the southern provinces of Georgia (Tao-Klarjeti and others), from which they had moved into Kartli. The last to represent them there was Ashot; threatened by the Arabs, he had fallen back on Tao-Klarjeti, at that time under the suzerainty of the Byzantine emperor, who had conferred on him the title of *Kuropolates*. Ashot gradually increased his territory until his rule extended over most of south-western Georgia (780-826).

Origin of the Bagratid dynasty

The origin of this illustrious house has unfortunately been the subject, in other countries, of some erroneous assumptions. From a thorough and objective examination of all the documents, old and new, it is perfectly clear that the line of the Bagrationi is of pure Georgian stock — Chan or Laz — originally from the ancient Georgian province of Speri. Their principal estates were the provinces of Meskheta, Klarjeti and Javakheti until they became *eristavs*, and later kings, of Kartli (Iberia). The division of the Bagrationi family into two branches — Georgian and Armenian — occurred in their domain of Speri, the seat of their first main residence, at the time when Georgia lost part of Speri to Armenia. The administration of that region, now Armenian, remained however in the hands of the Bagrationi who resided there. Their influence gradually increased and they formed closer ties with the Armenian people, until in 886 they became kings of Armenia.

In the *Georgian Chronicle*, (*Histoire de la Géorgie*), the work of three academicians of repute — I. Javakhishvili, S. Djanashia and N. Berdzenishvili — we read :

“The famous race of the Bagrationi originally came from the province of Speri (now Ispir, in Turkey), the oldest township in Georgia. Through the wisdom and foresight of their actions the Bagrationi acquired great influence from the sixth to the eighth centuries. One branch of the family became established in Armenia, the other in Georgia, and both attained to royal rank; the Georgian branch retained their sovereign power until the beginning of the nineteenth century.”

There is strong evidence in Armenian sources of the Georgian origin of the Bagratid house and also, by the same token, of the Armenian branch of the family; among these sources is the Introduction to the Annals by the seventh-century historian Sebeos, containing addenda which include the genealogy of the Bagrationi dating from the time of the Georgian king Pharnavaz. Later in the same work the scions of the Armenian branch of the Bagrationi are referred to as “Pharnavaziani”, an ancient Georgian dynasty. It should be noted that the accession to sovereignty of both the Armenian and the Georgian branches of the Bagratid dynasty occurred at the same time — contrary to the assertion of certain Armenian scholars who maintain that the Bagratids came to Georgia after they had reigned for long in Armenia.

The first king to bear the title of *King of the Georgians*, Adarnase II (888-923), came to the throne in 888. He was the son of David I Kuropalates (†881) and great-grandson of Ashot the Great, the Bagratid who founded the kingdom of Tao-Klarjeti in 809. Armenia’s first king, Ashot — who in 862 bore the title of Ishkhanaz-ishkhani — came to the throne in 886, two years before the Georgian king. He was a descendant of the grandson of Ashot the Blind, Ashot Msakeri, Prince of Armenia (806-826), and son of Bagrat Ishkhanaz-ishkhani (826-851).

Tao-Klarjeti

Tao-Klarjeti was not only the political centre of the unification of Georgia but also became the seat of the nation’s cultural activity. Georgian monks, with incredible perseverance, settled and built their monasteries in the lands laid waste by invaders. They gained the sympathy and help of the princes of the region, and with their support made these monasteries into centres of civilization and economic activity. Many parts of the country which had been devastated were thus redeveloped and restored to cultural life. The most notable pioneers in this work were St. Gregory of Khandzta, St. Serapion of Zarzma, St. Saba of Ishkhani and many others whose achievements were immense, particularly in the south-western and southern provinces. From those regions too came Arsen the Great, Hilarion of Jerusalem, John Zosime

of Sinai, Mikhail Parekheli, Giorgi Merchule, and many illustrious figures of the Church, hymnography, literature and art. The high level of culture attained in Tao-Klarjeti may be judged by its material remains — irrigation system, canals, communications etc., astonishing even in the world of today — and most of all by its splendid architectural monuments : Bana, Opiza, Oshki, Hahuli, Ishkhani, Egeqi, Kalmahi, Taos-Kari and many others. The most ancient works of Georgian literature were preserved by these monasteries.

The expansion of the Georgian nation begun under the Bagratids was in full flower in the reign of David Kuropalates (†1001) and continued until the time of Queen Tamar (1184-1213). That was the epoch of greatness, the “Golden Age” in Georgia and Caucasia. Until that time the country’s political destiny had been dependent on a system of government imposed on her from without, and always subject to the necessity of maintaining her freedom and resisting the pressure of hostile forces. During this period of expansion the country gained in strength enough to set up an autonomous political regime, to surmount her destiny and win a place for herself in the forefront of the major historical events of the day. Georgia’s place in world history at that period was marked by her investiture as a European mission to the East — a place which until then had been filled by Byzantium in decline. It was that epoch that saw the uprising of the European world against the Asiatic invasion of the Seljuk Turks.

Unification of the country. David Kuropalates

At the beginning of this period of Georgia’s greatness the Eristav of Kartli, John Marushidze, who was preparing the way for a united kingdom, became convinced that national unity could be decisively achieved only by the sovereign of Tao-Klarjeti, David Kuropalates. He submitted his scheme to David, who accepted it and undertook to put it into effect. Since David of Tao had no children he adopted Bagrat, heir to Abkhazia through his mother and to Kartli through his father. As Bagrat would also inherit Tao-Klarjeti on David’s death, he would then become King of Abkhazia, Kartli and Tao, in this way uniting the whole of Georgia with the exception of Kakheti under the sceptre of the Bagratids. It was therefore thanks to David Kuropalates and John Marushidze that Bagrat was crowned King Bagrat III in 975, and Kartli and Abkhazia were brought into the Georgian kingdom.

David III Kuropalates also planned to take the Armenian part of Caucasia from the Moslems. He seized their town of Manazkert, drove the Moslems

out and installed Armenians and Georgians in their place. David — as his contemporaries said — “had overcome the peoples in the vicinity, so that all the sovereigns offered him their submission”. In 979 he gave aid to the Emperor Basil II of Byzantium in putting down the insurrection of Captain Varda Skleros, sending an army of twelve thousand men under the military commanders Tornik Eristavi and Jorjiki : the Byzantine Court bestowed a large number of towns and strongholds on David III in recompense. On David’s death in 1001, Bagrat III added Kakheti to his domains (1010).

Thus Georgia became a united State, with only the emirate of Tbilisi and certain lands in the South-West still in foreign hands. It remained for Bagrat to seize those regions of Eastern Georgia under Arab rule. He compelled the Emir Phadlon of Ganja, who represented a permanent threat to Kakheti, to recognize his supremacy.

Now almost all the Georgian provinces were reunited under the royal sceptre, and the King had assumed the title of “King of Kings”; nevertheless, there had still been no decisive encounter with the Arabs. In Kartli, the very heartland of the country, the emirate of Tbilisi still existed. The emirate of Ganja was becoming a threat to Eastern Georgia, and the Arabs maintained their positions in Armenian Caucasia from which they could at any moment launch an attack on the interior of Georgia.

The question of Georgia’s safety was complicated, therefore, by that of the vital interests of Albania and Armenian Caucasia, and by that of the deliverance of the whole of the Caucasus from Arab domination. This last problem arose during the reign of King Bagrat IV (1027-1072). The struggle against the Arabs was aggravated by combat with the Seljuks, who breathed new vigour into the Arabs’ spent forces.

Invasion of the Seljuk Turks

In the eleventh century, nomad Turkish tribes poured out of Central Asia in a wave of devastation that broke on the civilized countries of the Near East. It was the beginning of the great migration of the Turkish nomads. In the first half of the century the Turks under the leadership of the Seljuk dynasty invaded Iran and conquered it step by step. By the middle of the century they were at the gates of the Christian world of Byzantium.

The Seljuks invaded Georgia during the seventh decade of the eleventh century. Sultan Alp-Arslan at their head engaged in a number of campaigns against the Georgian kingdom. For a long time the Georgians stood firm

against the enemy and prevented him from gaining a foothold on their country's soil; but after the victory of Sultan Alp-Arslan over the Byzantine army of Romanus IV Diogenes at Manazkert in 1071 and the devastation of Armenia, Georgia's situation became very serious. The new enemy encircled her from East to West. It seemed that her hour of doom had struck. More than ever was it necessary for her to have a policy capable of rallying the people's forces to carry on the fight against the aggressors. Since King Giorgi did not possess the qualities necessary for this task, the progressive circles of Georgian feudal society staged a palace revolution, and at their insistence Giorgi abdicated in 1089 in favour of his son David.

David IV the Builder (1089-1125)

While the Seljuk invasion violently disrupted life in Georgia, it did not succeed in altering her destiny. The political unification of the country had been achieved, and the people had come to accept the idea of a united Georgia ruled by a king. The concept of Caucasian unity was clearly expressed in the title of Giorgi II : "King of the Abkhazians, Kartlians, Radians, Kakhetians and Armenians, Shirvan-Shah and Shah-in-Shah, sole sovereign of West and East." Both the idea and the reality of Georgian unity persisted in spite of the Seljuk invasion, but the great work of political unification initiated by John Marushidze and David Kuropalates had been impaired. The resumption and completion of this work were entrusted by history to David IV, the Builder.

There were two stages in the task which David undertook. The first objective — the reconquest of the lost Georgian provinces — he achieved between 1097 and 1118. The second stage — to ensure the stability and safety of the State of Georgia — he envisaged as embracing the whole of Caucasia. This undertaking involved war against the enemy outside the frontiers, the Seljuks — a war that David carried on from 1120 until his death in 1125. The territory at his disposal was limited to Western Georgia; in the East it did not extend beyond the mountains of Likhi.

David decided that the time had come to go to war with the Seljuks in 1097 when the Crusaders' armies took Jerusalem and Antioch. In that year he refused to pay the Seljuks the tribute they had levied on his father Giorgi II. In the course of several battles he inflicted such heavy losses on them that they seldom ventured into Georgia afterwards on marauding expeditions.

Kakheti and Hereti were recovered in 1104 and 1105 at the cost of much bloodshed in warfare with the Seljuks. In 1110 after a new series of fierce battles the fortress of Samshvilde and the greater part of Somkhети were

also reconquered. The Seljuks, driven out of south-eastern Georgia, concentrated an offensive on Tao-Klarjeti in 1116, convinced that the harshness of winter would prevent King David from crossing the mountains of the Lesser Caucasus to meet them in battle. David foiled the Seljuks' plans and took them unawares, falling on their forces in Tao and recovering the spoils they had plundered. In 1118 he seized the fortresses of Lori in Somkhети and Agarani in south-east Georgia.

In this way David reconquered all the Georgian provinces one by one. If their future safety was to be ensured, however, it was necessary to expel the Seljuks from the whole of Caucasia, and from then onwards the king devoted himself to preparations for this task. To begin with, he raised a powerful standing army of war-hardened soldiers recruited in North Caucasia. The Georgian army had been until then a feudal militia called up by the king whenever the need arose; there was no regular army. David formed an army of 40,000 Kipchak horsemen, on whom he imposed the strictest discipline. He himself assumed the command and administration of his troops, and all his life submitted to military regime. He was successful, by this means, in creating the military instrument he needed in the battle to establish a great Caucasian state.

If all the resources of the country were to be mobilised, it was necessary to institute some major reforms in the State. David IV dealt first with the most influential organization, the Georgian Church. The administration of the Church had long been concentrated in the hands of representatives of the great feudal families, who were opposed to any strengthening of the power of the throne. In 1109 David convened a council of the Church, known as the Council of Ruis-Urbnisi. By one of the Council's decrees, members of the high nobility who were judged unfit to hold high positions were expelled from the Church, and men appointed in their place without regard to family or rank who would give the King their support in the work of uniting the country.

Another remarkable measure taken by David IV was designed to consolidate this major political victory: since the king did not have the right to intervene directly in the affairs of the Church, David created the post of Archbishop-Chancellor (*chkondidel-mtsignobartukhusesi*). The holder of this office combined in himself the functions of a senior court official and an influential dignitary of the Church. From that time onwards the King was enabled, through the agency of his Archbishop-Chancellor, to participate actively in the Church's affairs. There was no aspect of the public life of Georgia which was not affected by the policy of King David IV — a policy called forth by the nation's vigorous struggle against the Seljuk aggressors.

During the period of preparation (1110-1120) the King applied himself to establishing conditions in North Caucasia which would hold firm through the battles to come. He restored peace between the Ossetes and the Khazars, occupied the Daryal and other passes in the Caucasus and compelled the peoples of North Caucasia to acknowledge his sovereignty. The ties of kinship which he had formed both in Caucasia and abroad played some part in the political preparation for the task before him. As a result of the marriage of his elder daughter Tamar to the prince of Shirvan, a region had come into his hands the possession of which was essential to the safety of the whole of Caucasia. Relations with Byzantium had been strained in the time of David's predecessors, and with the object of improving them he married his youngest daughter Katai to a Byzantine prince in 1116. With these preparations, the King started to carry out his plan for the unification of Caucasia by making war on the Seljuks.

After a long period of defence, a century of offensive warfare was opening for Georgia. David adopted the tactics he had used before, leading the enemy on to enter the country and then making a surprise attack and cutting him to pieces. In 1120 the King moved into Western Georgia. The Seljuks, seeing him in retreat, poured in to invade the country. The King then reappeared, took them by surprise and destroyed them without mercy. Immediately after this he led his army to attack the enemy in Shirvan, seized Kabala and set the people free. The ruler of Shirvan made his submission to the King of Georgia as his vassal.

The Battle of Didgori (1121)

The Seljuk sultan reigning in Persia realized the danger and parried this offensive of King David by a mass levy of all his regular troops, from Damascus and Aleppo to the Caucasus. Persians, Arabs and Seljuk Turks were gathered together in a huge army (600,000 men according to the Chancellor Gautier, 400,000 according to Arab historians and the Georgian Chronicle) under the command of Alep Nadim-Eddin-Elghas, the illustrious governor of Aleppo. This army marched into Georgia, occupied the region of Tiflis and concentrated on the heights of Didgori.

David was ready for the enemy. He had chosen and formed his army carefully with the coming battle in view. As well as 40,000 Georgians, 15,000 Kipchaks and 5,000 Ossetes, a detachment of 1,000 Crusaders from Western Europe (according to Galterius, 200) took part in the battle. David led out his troops to meet the enemy, whom he compelled to fight on ground favourable to the Georgians, in the neighbourhood of Didgori, near Tbilisi

(Tiflis). The King opened with a feint attack, setting some of his columns onto the enemy's flanks. When the latter sprang upon them like a beast unchained, the attackers had already dispersed. The King carried out an increasing number of similar attacks on every side, each time escaping unharmed. These manœuvres disturbed and disrupted the enemy so much that they gradually made him lose control. At last the decisive day arrived — August 14th. The King once more went into action, with each of his army corps behaving as if everything depended on it. With a cavalry of picked men at his command he seemed to be present everywhere on the battlefield, and succeeded by a sheer act of will in keeping the army constantly together in a single body impossible to breach. David waited for a favourable moment to engage in a decisive combat. The moment came — suddenly in the midst of the fighting the strength of the enemy troops deserted them and they fell to pieces. Personal genius had outweighed numerical strength. The battle was won, the great army of the Asiatic invaders put to flight. They turned round and fled in disorder, pursued by their victors who cut them down. Nadim Eddin Elghas retreated with them, defeated and wounded in the head.

The event is reported in the Georgian Chronicle by the Armenian historian Matthew of Edessa, Abul Paraj (Bar Hebraeus), Ibn Alatir, Kemal Eddin, Ibn-al-Jauzi and ibn Kaldun.¹ The best account of the famous battle of Didgori, however, we owe to Gautier, Chancellor of the Principality of Antioch².

The news of the Georgians' victory spread through all the contemporary world. A third force had entered the political arena of the Near East, and from that time onwards the Seljuk Turks had to reckon with a new enemy, a great Christian ally taking her stand beside Byzantium and the West.

Immediately after his great victory David turned his attention to the emirate of Tbilisi. In 1122 he seized the city, which became once again the capital of the Georgian State. The integration of Tbilisi completed the long task of bringing together and reuniting the Georgian lands. The expan-

¹ *Kartlis Tskhovreba*, vol. I, pp. 318-364.

Matthew of Edessa, *Recueil des Historiens des Croisades, Documents arméniens*, I, 1869, p. 128. — *Histoire de Matthieu d'Édesse*, pp. 347-9, 447-8, 450-2, Jerusalem, 1869.

Recueil des Historiens des Croisades, Historiens Orientaux, Paris, 1872, pp., 330-2. — Defréméry, *Journal Asiatique*, 1848, vol. XIII.

Defréméry, *Fragments de géographes et d'historiens arabes et persans inédits relatifs aux anciens peuples du Caucase et de la Russie méridionale*, Paris, 1851. — Defréméry, *Fragments*, p. 486. — M. F. Brosset, *Extraits de divers auteurs relatifs au règne du roi David IV*, Additions et éclaircissement, 1851, Add. XIII, no. 4, p. 229

² See *Bedi Kartlisa*, vol. XXVII, p. 83.

sion of the territory of the feudal monarchy did not stop there, however, since at the same time David carried the fight beyond the frontiers of his kingdom to rid Transcaucasia of the Turks and drive them out of Shirvan, Rani and Armenia. In 1124, with the aid of the Armenian population, the ancient Armenian capital of Ani was liberated by Georgian troops. Thus in the first quarter of the twelfth century Armenia and Shirvan, with their Christian and Moslem populations, were incorporated in the political system of Georgia.

The Georgian Court, by taking into account the international situation in the Near East where the civilization of Islam prevailed, was successful in adopting a political orientation remarkable for its flexibility and foresight. Although Georgia was a Christian country, Moslems were by no means subject to persecution. King David spared their clergy, protected their merchants and formed ties of friendship with Moslem poets and philosophers. He concerned himself with the instruction and education of the people. In 1106 he founded the monastery of Ghelati, near Kutaisi — an outstanding example of Georgian architecture which may still be admired today undamaged by time. There he established an academy to which he invited the greatest scholars from home and abroad, entertaining them at the expense of the State and creating in Ghelati “a second Athens”. He founded similar academies in other parts of the country, with generous endowments. He built highways for military and commercial traffic, bridges, shelters for travellers, hospitals, caravanserais for merchants, etc.

David IV died on January 24th, 1125, at the age of fifty-one, after a reign of thirty-six years. He was buried at the monastery of Ghelati which he had founded, where his statue of that period can still be seen today. He has gone down in history as “David the Builder.”

David IV and the Priest-King John

King David had not only saved his country by the victory at Didgori, but also lent considerable support to the Crusaders. They recognized him as an ally and his name became a legend ³.

³ It is not surprising that the great epic of the kingdom of Georgia has left its mark in the spirit of the peoples of Western Europe, as the following passages show.

A message was addressed by a Crusader to the Archbishop of Besançon, Amadeus. The document is undated; but since Amadeus' ministry dated from 1195 to 1220, the message must have been written during that time. The Crusader knight wrote :

“The Christians of Iberia, who are called Georgians, brought the full weight of their military power to bear against the heathen, with innumerable horsemen and foot-soldiers; with God's

The historical personality of David IV is being gradually transformed : a legendary hero, with innumerable exploits which inspired the dreams of the Crusaders, is taking the place of the real person. All throughout the twelfth and thirteenth centuries the Crusaders were to hope that this legendary king would sustain them in their combat against the enemies of Christ. There are many versions of the legend, and it is interesting to note that a century after the death of David IV he was identified in certain chronicles and accounts of the period with John the Presbyter. In an English

help, when they had already taken three hundred strongholds and nine large towns they occupied the most important of these and reduced the rest to ruins ... These Georgians came to deliver the Holy Land of Jerusalem and subjugate all the the heathen territories. Their king is a young prince of sixteen years, whose might and strength of character are equal to that of Alexander the Great. ... This young man has with him the bones of his mother, the great Queen Tamar, who took a vow before her death to make the pilgrimage to Jerusalem and asked her son, if she should die before it was accomplished, to carry her bones there and lay them on the tomb of Our Lord."

The original of this letter is in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris. There is a description and commentary on it in the *Histoire littéraire de la France. Ouvrage commencé par des religieux bénédictins et continué par des membres de l'Institut* (Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres), vol. XXI, Paris, 1847.

On July 30th, 1109, the cross on which the Saviour was crucified was brought to Paris by Ansellus, Precentor of the Holy Place of Jerusalem. It was deposited with great ceremony in a chapel of the Basilica, on the site of which there was raised later the celebrated cathedral of Notre Dame. The cross was named the Ansellus Cross, and remained in the shadow of the sanctuary for nearly seven hundred years. When the cathedral of Notre Dame was profaned and pillaged in 1793 in the French Revolution, the cross was saved.

In a letter to Gallon, Archbishop of Paris, and in another to the Archdeacon Stephan, Ansellus wrote that he had received the cross from the widow of the Georgian King David. Although this lady's existence is not substantiated by the evidence, it does not alter the fact that the Precentor — according to his own version of the course of events — did find the cross in the country of David the Builder.

Furthermore, King David of Georgia — Ansellus wrote — actually had the cross in his possession all his life and held it in deep veneration, happy in being thus privileged. He was the king who, like his predecessors, had dominion over the Caspian port where Gog and Magog were arrested and where his son still keeps surveillance today, (a king) whose kingdom and whose rule form a sort of advance defence for us against the Medes and Persians.

References to the cross of Ansellus :

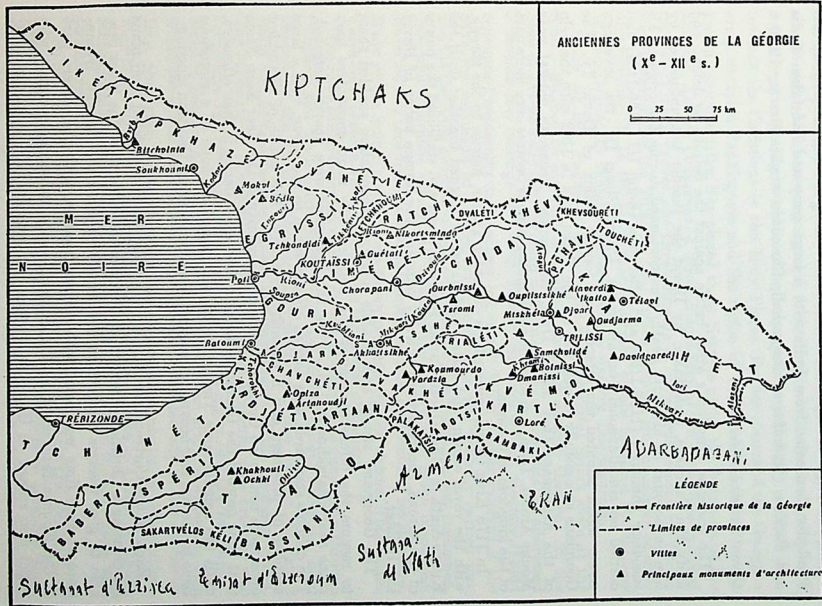
MIGNÉ, *Patrol. lat.*, vol. 162, pp. 729-31.

Musée des Archives nationales, *Documents originaux de l'histoire de France exposés dans l'Hôtel Soubise*, in-fol., Paris, 1872.

Histoire de la ville et de tout le diocèse de Paris par l'Abbé Lebeuf.

Histoire littéraire de la France ... par des Religieux Bénédictins de la Congrégation de St. Maur, vol. X, Paris, 1756, pp. 400-3.

GOSSÉLIN, *Actes concernant les trois croix formées de l'ancienne croix d'Anseau*, 1793.



chronicle of 1228, for example, it is related that in 1221 a rumour had circulated through the Christian world that "King David, called John the Presbyter, had come from India with a large army and had taken Media and Persia». (Radulfus of Coggeshall, *Chronicon anglicanum* (c. 1228) ⁴.

Queen Tamar (1184-1213)

The Georgian kingdom's great battle against the Seljuks to defend and unify the Caucasus, undertaken by David the Builder but unfinished by him on account of his early death, was continued during the reign of his successor Dimitri I (1125-1156) and after him Giorgi III (1156-1184) and carried on simultaneously on all fronts. Under Giorgi III, the sovereign power again adopted the internal and foreign policy of David IV. The Georgians successfully waged war on the Turks, and in 1162 with the help of the Armenians they seized Dvin, the ancient Armenian capital near Mount Ararat. Dvin, Ani and the surrounding regions became once more part of the kingdom of Georgia.

In 1178 King Giorgi invested his daughter Tamar, heiress to the throne, with the royal crown, and father and daughter reigned together until the King's death in 1184. Queen Tamar first reinforced and stabilized the power of the throne, thenceforward actively pursuing the foreign policy of David the Builder.

The Georgians' strong and flexible military organization enabled them to resume the offensive against the Seljuks. The main encounters took place near Shamkhor in 1195, when the aggressors were heavily defeated. The caliph's standards were carried off and taken to the queen, with a large number of prisoners and a quantity of booty. The battle of Shamkhor once more confirmed Georgia's military superiority in the Near East. From that time onward the Georgians became even more daring in their offensive, until the neighbouring Turkish rulers abandoned all hope of a victorious issue to the war and became vassals and feudatories of the Georgian kingdom.

Early in the thirteenth century the Georgian Court completed their plans for creating a Christian kingdom on the southern littoral of the Black Sea, able to give Georgia support in her struggle against the Seljuks. Byzantium at that time was beset with serious troubles, with the eastern part of the Empire threatened by the Seljuks — a redoubtable enemy who might also appear on Georgia's western frontiers. In 1204 when the Crus-

⁴ *Testimonia minora de quinto bello sacro e chronicis occidentalibus excerpta et ... edidit Reinhold Röhrich, Genevae, 1882, p. 334.*

aders occupied Constantinople, pillaged it and divided up Byzantium, Georgia played an active part in Byzantine affairs. Queen Tamar's objective was to restore the necessary strength to the Empire in its decline, and to keep watch on the Moslem world in order to prevent any hostility on their part towards the Christians in the Holy Places. By her command the Georgian army occupied Paphlagonia and the region of Trebizond inhabited by the Laz, a Georgian tribe. She placed these districts under the dominion of her kinsman Alexius Comnenus, a direct descendant of the Byzantine Imperial family (1204). However, the Greek Empire of Trebizond created by Tamar was destroyed by the Turks in 1461, when Georgia was no longer capable of sustaining it. In the same year, Georgian troops captured the fortress of Kari (Kars), the Seljuk invaders' base in western Transcaucasia.

Rukn' ad Din, Sultan of Rum — the most powerful Seljuk state at the time — decided to organize a Turkish coalition against Georgia. At the head of a large army (400,000 men according to some accounts) he addressed a threatening message to Queen Tamar, demanding that Georgia should renounce Christianity and become his vassal. When Tamar received it she gave the command to muster her troops. This was speedily carried out, and the Georgian army advanced on Basiani where the Sultan was encamped, delivered a surprise attack and defeated the enemy with much bloodshed. Rukn' ad Din took to flight and the Georgians took possession of his standard. Many of the Sultan's allies were taken prisoner by the victors. This battle, which took place in 1205, is known as the Battle of Basiani.

The news of the Georgian victory spread like a train of gunpowder through Christian and Moslem countries. The Crusaders in distant Palestine, hard pressed by the Turks, looked to Georgia for aid. One by one the Seljuk emirs and sultans became vassals and feudatories of the Georgian crown. The sultanate of Erzincan and the emirate of Erzerum were brought into subjection. In 1208-9 the town of Archesh in the region of Lake Van surrendered to Georgia, and in 1208 Queen Tamar sent an army to Ardebil in Iran where the sultan had suddenly invaded the Armenian city of Ani on Easter Day, plundered it and drowned the Christian population in blood (there were 12,000 victims in the churches alone) before retiring to Ardebil. Zakharia Mkhargrdzeli in command of the Georgian army visited the aggressors with terrible reprisals.

To put an end to the continual invasions of the Seljuks and destroy their power once and for all, Queen Tamar then determined to launch a large-scale offensive against Persia. The Georgian army crossed the Araxes and occupied successively Marand, Tabriz, Miana, Sangan and Kazvin, then advancing on Khorassan. The conquered towns had to pay a new tribute,

and Zakharia returned to Georgia in 1210. After that campaign the whole of Caucasia enjoyed long years of peace, both at home and abroad.

As a result of Queen Tamar's foreign policy the Georgian State at the end of the twelfth and the beginning of the thirteenth centuries comprised an empire stretching from the Euxine (Black) Sea to the Sea of Hyrcanum (Caspian Sea), from Speri to Derbent, as well as all the territory of Caucasia, and, beyond it, the lands of the Khazars and the Scythians. The battle of Shamkhor (1195), the campaigns of 1204 on the southern shores of the Black Sea and the foundation of the Empire of Trebizond, the battle of Basiani (1205) and finally the Persian campaigns (1210) confirmed the annexation by the Georgian State or the feudatory status of all Caucasia, Iranian Azerbaijan, all Armenia and the southern coast of the Black Sea. The political influence of the Georgian feudal monarchy extended from sea to sea. The Georgian kingdom had been transformed into a multinational state. At the beginning of the thirteenth century, therefore, Georgia was one of the most powerful states in the Near East, playing an important dual role in the world political arena — liberator of the eastern countries and protector of western culture. The Georgian monarchy proclaimed its resolve to continue the work of Alexander the Great and Augustus. This explains the inscription of the names of Gurgaslan and David followed by those of Alexander and Augustus on the royal standards.

The first historian of Queen Tamar enumerates the peoples and countries who gave "presents" to the Queen's father, Giorgi III, and "fraternised" with him : kings of Greece, alamans of Jerusalem, Romans, Indians and Chinese; the sultans of Khorassan, Babylon, Shaman, Egypt and Iconium became his subjects and later the Scythians, Khazars, Alans, Khvarazmians with Khvarazm-Shah, Beyrutians, Abyssinians, Arabs, Medes, Elamites and inhabitants of Mesopotamia, with "every people and every race" from East to West. The above gives a fairly accurate picture of Georgia's extremely wide international relations in that period.

In the second half of the twelfth and the first half of the thirteenth centuries, Georgia continued to maintain relations with the countries of both Eastern and Western Europe, in particular with Rome. Documents dating from the first half of the thirteenth century concerning the relations between Queen Tamar's heirs, Lasha-Giorgi and Rusudan, and the Pope give evidence of this. Early in the century the Pope still placed some hope in the State of Georgia, the most powerful Christian state in the East, and urged it to give support to the Crusaders.

Georgia's political power was based on the stable organization of the State. At the head of the country was a sovereign endowed with great political

genius, assisted by a council of "vizirs" (ministers) and able to take no decision without first informing the President of the Council (Chancellor), the Bishop of Chkondidi. In serious situations, as in case of war, the intervention of another administrative body — the *darbazi* or Council of State — was required. This Council was composed of ministers, high officials and representatives of the clergy, high nobility and commerce. It was the zenith of national prosperity for Georgia, its degree and general character expressed in the Annals by the saying that the peasant had become *aznaouri* (gentleman) and the *aznaouri* a dignitary. A tenth of the annual revenue of the State was devoted to aid for widows and orphans, the poor and the infirm, and it was the Grand Vizir or Chancellor who supervised this charitable work.

The cult of Queen Tamar

Queen Tamar's victorious campaigns and wise administration raised Georgia to a pinnacle of glory in the field of politics and culture. The Queen's contemporaries regarded with joy and love this woman who wore the royal crown, and rendered homage to her as they sang her praise. Even during her lifetime she was the subject of a cult which has come down to us living through the centuries in the memory of the Georgian people. There were many legends about her in the Caucasus, in Georgia and beyond the frontiers. Her fame, with its aura of poetry, rang out through the Middle Ages to echo in countries as remote as Norway and Iceland. She is portrayed in the chronicles as the wisest of all her country's wise rulers : in the course of the thirty-one years of her reign no one was beaten and no order for execution was signed by her. Humanism, freedom of thought and the highest degree of religious tolerance characterized the epoch of Tamar, and in general the Georgian historian gives no instance of religious or racial persecution. Moreover, no Christian people were treated by the Moslems with as much respect as the Georgians, who alone among all Christians had the right not to pay tribute and to enter Jerusalem with their national flag unfurled.

The queen cared for the poor and the victims of misfortune. "I am the mother of orphans and the defender of widows," she declared. The people consider all the ancient buildings of Georgia — fortresses, towers, churches, monasteries etc. — to have been the work of Queen Tamar, even if they were not erected by her nor during her reign.

The Golden Age

The epoch of Queen Tamar, termed the "Golden Age" of Georgia's history, when the country was at the height of her political power, was one of efflorescence in the field of culture. A process of continuous advance throughout the nation's history had prepared the way for the development of art, literature, philosophic and historical thought. Georgian centres of culture played a large part in this, both internally and abroad, especially the monasteries of Tao-Klarjeti, Iviron on Mount Athos, the Black Mountain, the Holy Cross at Jerusalem, Petritzoni in Bulgaria, etc. ... It was in these monasteries that Euthymius, Giorgi the Athonite, Arsen of Iqalto (in the tenth and eleventh centuries), Ephrem Mtsire, Ioane Petritzi (eleventh and twelfth centuries) and many others did their work. The centres were strengthened and increased in number. The monastery of Ghelati became a second Jerusalem for the whole of the East, a source of all that was good, a school of the sciences. The monastery of Shio-Mghwime became a famous centre of culture in Kartli, and at the same period the academy of Iqalto, in Eastern Georgia, was founded on the same pattern as Ghelati.

In the eleventh and twelfth centuries the creative genius of the Georgian people was expressed also in other domains of art and culture, as is shown by the great architectural creations of the period. The churches of Bagrat at Kutaisi, Svetitskhoveli, Alaverdi, Samtavro, Samtavisi, Ghelati, the Gheguti palace and the famous rupestral complex at Vardzia — these were all superb examples of medieval Georgian art. The chased metal work of the goldsmiths Beka and Bechken Opizari and the enamels of the same period have been described as marvels of medieval craftsmanship, and are evidence of the Georgian people's important contribution to the treasure of world culture.

Georgian culture of the twelfth century reached its culmination in the appearance of Shota Rustaveli's "The Knight in the Tigerskin". The avant-garde trends of this period, penetrating the literature, art, thought and social development of the Middle Ages and later to characterise the Renaissance, were already reflected in Rustaveli's poem.

Georgia and the Crusades

It was natural for the Georgians to give the closest attention to all events connected with the Crusades. It is well known that David the Builder was in communication with Baldwin, the King of Jerusalem. After the city was taken by Sultan Saladin, Queen Tamar offered him 200,000 gold pieces to buy back the Holy Cross. The Georgian envoys charged with this mission

ÉTAT DE LA GÉORGIE AU DÉBUT DU XIII SIECLE



- Frontières:
- - - - - d'États
 - - - - - des pays vassaux et tributaires
 - des provinces historico-géographiques
 - Capitales
 - Grandes villes
 - Petites villes et bourgs
 - Châteaux forts
 - ◆ Evêques
 - + Eglises et monastères

Les provinces historico-géographiques marquées sur la carte par des chiffres

- | | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|----------------|
| 1 Thavéri | 5 Pchavi | 9 Tchrdli |
| 2 Khévi | 6 Kvémô Karthli | 10 Khorthvâni |
| 3 Khvêssouréthi | 7 Thorl | 11 Zarichthani |
| 4 Thouchéthi | 8 Arisani | 12 Achautzi |

were instructed also to clarify the situation of the Georgian monasteries in and round about Jerusalem. Naturally the Georgians knew of Saladin's "Caucasian" origins (Sala-ed-Din). Although their attempt to buy back the Holy Cross was unsuccessful — as also was that of the Emperor Frederick I Barbarossa at about that time — Saladin restored the monastery of the Holy Cross in Jerusalem to the Georgians.

Later, King Giorgi Lasha (1213-1222) sent ambassadors to the Crusaders who had landed at Damietta in Egypt under the command of Louis IX, King of France. Giorgi's sister Queen Rusudan and her *amir-spasalar*, Atabeg Ivane, kept up a correspondence with Pope Innocent III on the possibility of concerted action by the Crusaders and the Georgians.

The Mongol invasion of Georgia

Feudal Georgia felt herself to be invincible. At the Court of Queen Tamar's son, Giorgi Lasha, an expedition to distant Palestine was planned to deliver Jerusalem from the yoke of Islam. Persistent rumours of preparations for a great Georgian Crusade in Palestine were current at that time among the Christians of Palestine and Jerusalem, and it was then that King Giorgi Lasha received a message from Pope Honorius inviting him to take part in the Crusade that was being prepared by the sovereigns of Western Europe. Giorgi gave his agreement and began great military preparations; but the whole enterprise was suddenly abandoned. Serious disturbances arose near Georgia's eastern frontiers, in Iran and Central Asia, which completely diverted the attention of the Georgian throne from Palestine and Jerusalem.

The Tatar and Mongol hordes from Central Asia were on the march.

Temu, who in 1206 had been proclaimed supreme and uncontested chief of all the Mongols under the name of Genghis Khan ("the heaven-sent hero"), started on his victorious progress through Asia, sending out his hordes across China and the high plateaux of Asia, India, Khvarazmia, Kievian Rus and Caucasia. The Mongol invasion in Georgia succeeded the bloodthirsty one of Jelal-ed-Din, Sultan of Khvarazmia, whom the Mongols drove out of his lands. He had descended on Georgia in 1229 with an army of 140,000 men, set fire to towns and villages and massacred the inhabitants, and seized the city of Tbilisi. It was his aim to uproot Christianity wherever he went. In a single year — 1226 — he martyred and beheaded more than 50,000 Georgian women loyal to their faith. Jelal-ed-Din's domination lasted no more than five years, but in that short time the strength of the country was deeply impaired, with the consequence that Georgia could offer no

effective resistance to the Mongols when they appeared on the frontiers in 1235. They were skilful in taking advantage of the Georgian leaders' confusion and the lack of concerted action, and captured towns and strongholds one after another.

When the Mongols entered Eastern Georgia in 1236 that part of the country was under the rule of Queen Rusudan (1222-1245) who had succeeded to the throne on the death of her brother Giorgi IV. The Mongols were checked in their advance by the Surami mountain massif, Iberia's western boundary, and Western Georgia thus escaped the Mongol occupation. Queen Rusudan fled from the invaders and took up residence in Kutaïsi in the West. From there in 1239 she sent an embassy to Pope Gregory IX to ask for the aid of European knighthood against the Mongols. From the reserved reply that she received from the Pope it appeared that Europe, threatened by the Moslem infidels, could furnish no help to the Queen. By way of aid to Georgia the Pope sent a Dominican mission in 1240 to work in Tbilisi. The Dominicans founded a Roman Catholic community there, which never succeeded however in attaining any real importance to compare with that of the national Georgian Orthodox Church.

The situation during the time of the Mongols

The brutal invasion and century-long domination of the Mongols were a check to Georgia's cultural and economic development. The country was in a state of devastation from the destructive fury of the invaders, and this with the systematic pillage and heavy tribute demanded had ruined the economy. Civilization was in retrogression, the nation's lustre dimmed and her cultural activity in decline. The finest of her churches and palaces had been burnt down and numerous monasteries with their manuscripts and priceless works of art sacked and plundered. The Mongols unleashed their fury upon Tbilisi.

The Mongol Khan exercised his authority in the conquered provinces of the kingdom through his representatives the "No'ins", known also as "men of law". Indeed, the Mongols appear to have been very careful about legality. Four No'ins were appointed in Eastern Georgia, which included Shirvan and Armenia. The chief No'in resided in Tbilisi⁵. Tbilisi was also

⁵ The political structure of Georgia at the beginning of the Mongol conquest was as follows : Georgia with the inclusion of the State of Trebizond — a bastion of the kingdom — constituted an autonomous political unit as before, with the exception that the sovereignty of Queen Rusudan over the eastern provinces of the State was limited by vassalage to the Mongols, who supervised these provinces through their No'ins' and kept them in subjection. It is not known

the seat of the administrative services of the kingdom of Georgia, which in fact had been left undisturbed. These services were dependent on Queen Rusudan, who had taken refuge in Kutaïsi. The Mongols demanded the return of the sovereign to Tbilisi, which she refused. In these circumstances her son David — called Narin, “the Bright-witted” — was proclaimed king by her consent in 1249 in Tbilisi, although after his investiture he was obliged to go to Mongolia to present himself to the Khan Batu. The obligations of the sovereigns of Georgia towards the Mongol Khan included, besides the formality of investiture, the payment of an annual tribute and levy of troops (90,000 men placed at the disposal of the Mongols).

David Narin stayed so long with Khan Batu that he was thought to be dead (in fact, he was welcomed by the Khan with all the honours due to his rank). Accordingly David Ulu (1249), son of Giorgi IV Lasha was called to the throne and also had to go to Karakoram to receive the Khan’s investiture. The two monarchs returned to their own country in 1246, and two years after Queen Rusudan’s death in 1247 there began the joint reign of these two princes who ruled the kingdom from Kutaïsi in close collaboration.

David Ulu was succeeded in 1270 by his son Dmitri II (1270-1288), who turned to his own advantage the dissension which was beginning to appear among the Mongol hordes, and their internecine wars. The Mongols suspected the Georgian king of working against them and threatened him with bloody retaliation on the country. To spare Georgia further ravages Dmitri gave himself up to the Mongols, who put him to death in 1288. History has given him the name of *tavdadebuli* — “the Martyr” — for his selfsacrifice saved Georgia from yet another wave of devastation.

After the short regency of David Narin’s son Vakhtang II (1289-1292) Dmitri was succeeded by his son David VII (1293-1311) and then by his second son Vakhtang III (1302-1308).

The general weakening of the country as a result of her subjugation to the Mongols was nevertheless advantageous to the great lords who were feudatories of the Georgian crown; although the feudal State had been rendered so strong and stable by the sovereigns David the Builder and Queen Tamar that its internal disintegration only gradually became apparent. At all events, the State had gained such vitality under those two monarchs

precisely to what extent the Georgian sovereign was able at the time to exercise the royal prerogative in countries such as Armenia, Shirvan and North Caucasia. Clearly, by giving up her residence in the capital the Queen had retained her power to exercise unlimited authority over the unoccupied portion of her kingdom.



that the Mongols never succeeded in annihilating the kingdom of Georgia as they had that of Kiev.

Georgia's recovery after the first Mongol period. — The reign of Giorgi V, the Brilliant (1314-1346)

The accession of Giorgi V, youngest of Dmitri's sons, who succeeded Vakhtang III, marked the restoration of the power of Georgia's national sovereignty, his forceful personality re-affirming the authority of the throne and subduing the feudal princes. The external political situation was favourable to him : the great Khan Abu Saïd died in 1336 and his empire started to disintegrate. Giorgi V took advantage of this to expel the Mongol soldiers and officials from his kingdom. He began by instituting a strong system of administration and an army in which strict discipline was enforced. He then reconquered one by one the territories which had broken their allegiance to the throne at the time when the sovereign's power was weakened, and had become more or less independent. He reoccupied Aran and Shirvan in the East as far as Derbent, and compelled the Lezghians to pay tribute. On the death of his uncle he brought Samtskhe under the dominion of the Crown, and after occupying Kutaisi — capital of Western Georgia — made himself master of Erivan and imposed his rule on North Caucasia, where he re-established order and introduced his own laws. The chronicle relates that he "consolidated his power in Rani, Movakani and Armenia, who paid him tribute. No Tatars were left in his kingdom. The whole of Georgia was subject to his laws. The Caucasians were his subjects". The king called together the great nobles of the country and enjoined upon them fidelity and obedience. He repressed apostasy, and installed his most devoted followers in official posts all over the country.

Georgia now was able to re-establish her international position. She carried on active trade with the towns and states of northern Italy and formed diplomatic ties with Rome, Byzantium, Egypt and other great powers. Giorgi V crowned the achievements of his rule by putting into practice those abstract principles that are the basis of sound government and had become neglected with the weakening of the power of the throne during the Mongol occupation. His legislation gave rise to a revival and expansion of cultural activity in Georgia and all Caucasia. Ancient Georgian academic institutions — even those in other countries — underwent a period of renaissance and the arts and sciences flowered afresh with translations and original works. The age of David the Builder and Tamar seemed to have dawned again in Georgia.

Giorgi died in 1346. Posterity named him "the Brilliant". He was succeeded by David VII (1346-1360) and Bagrat V (1360-1393), who carried on and developed his achievements.

The second Mongol invasion : Tamerlane (Timur Leng). King Giorgi VII.

The last two decades of the fourteenth century were darkened by a new and shattering Mongol invasion of Europe and Asia. This second wave of Mongols, driven by religious fanaticism, subjected its victims to fearful ordeals and heavy bloodshed.

Timur Leng ("the Iron Cripple"), heir of Genghis Khan, known as Tamerlane, entered the Caucasus in 1380 from northern Iran. King Bagrat V, after holding out under siege in Tbilisi for six months, was compelled to surrender to the Tatars to save the country from being devastated by the Mongols. Tamerlane however resolved to "break the Georgians' resistance once and for all". He attacked the country in accordance with a project long matured, and the eastern provinces of Georgia were subjected to the most appalling ravages. The Annals relate that "the population abandoned their dwelling-places and took refuge in the mountains and the western provinces". The country was invaded eight times in succession. The Mongols tore up trees and vineyards, spreading devastation everywhere. In Western Georgia seven hundred towns and villages were destroyed in a single raid.

King Bagrat died in 1393 and was succeeded by his son Giorgi VII (1393-1407), a king in whom Timur was faced with an inflexible adversary. Giorgi profited by Timur's difficulties and his departure for Baghdad to reconquer Tbilisi and establish his residence there once more, in 1400. When Tamerlane (Timur) ordered him to evacuate the conquered territory or otherwise submit to his sovereignty, the king replied : "Our highness is not inferior to yours. We shall remain on the throne of Georgia, and recognize no sovereignty but that of Christ." Georgia then suffered the violence of her conquerors even more terribly than before. After the attack in 1393, the years 1401 and 1402 were the most atrocious the country had ever known — years of massacres committed by the Mongol hordes. Even so, Tamerlane could not break the Georgians' resistance, and when he was dying in 1405 he said with bitterness : "I have exhausted all my strength in the conquest of Georgia, and have not been able to attain my end — to bend her to my yoke."

After his death the Mongol invasions of Georgia came to an end and the work of restoration begun under Giorgi V could be taken up again and

completed; but the ravages of Tamerlane's hordes in those years of 1393, 1401 and 1402 alone were so great that it was the work of many decades for Georgia to recover from the blow that Destiny had dealt her.

Alexander I (1412-1443)

The reigns of King Constantine II and Alexander I, the Great, were a period of recovery for Georgia. The Annals comment on the beginning of that period: "The courageous Georgian people set out to make a clean sweep and rebuild the life of their country, with hearts infused with hope." It was King Constantine II (1407-1412) who bore the burden of restoring peace to the interior of the country, ridding it of the last remaining traces of the Mongols and reorganizing the administration. That was only the prelude to the reconstruction proper to which King Alexander I devoted himself, in an endeavour to unify the Caucasus and restore power to the throne. All the provinces were obliged to make submission to the crown. In 1414 Alexander marched on Kutaïsi and occupied the whole of Western Georgia. The following year it was the turn of Samtskhe, and in 1415-16 that of the Daryal Pass. After this he moved eastward, took Ganja and Shirvan as far as Derbent and levied tribute on those countries. In the task of reconstruction at home, in his policy and in the rebuilding of his army, Alexander took Giorgi V as his model. The measures he imposed gave the kingdom a recrudescence of life and strength: order and tranquillity were restored and commercial activity flourished. Furthermore, the King embarked on a policy of colonisation and enforced a rigorous application of the laws relating to land ownership, soil cultivation and similar matters. He interested himself especially in cultural questions, and had at heart the restoration of the relics of antiquity and the repatriation of the monuments of Georgian civilization in foreign hands.

The attempt at invasion in 1440 by the Sultan Shah Jehan of Tabriz was repulsed, and in 1442 Alexander bestowed the kingdom — now again united — on his son Vakhtang IV (1443-6) and took monastic orders. Georgian history has named him Alexander I, "the Great". This great king's successors, Vakhtang IV and Giorgi VIII (1446-1466), successfully carried on his work.

The fall of Constantinople to the Turks in 1453 and the project of a Crusade.

When the Ottoman Turks took Constantinople in 1453, Georgia was deprived of all means of contact with Western Europe. She stood alone, in complete isolation, to defend her freedom and independence, as well as

Christian civilization, against the unleashed forces of Islam. The Georgian princes, aware of the threat to their country, responded unanimously to the Pope's appeal in the cause of organizing a common campaign against the Turks. They even succeeded in re-establishing the unity which had been seriously compromised after the Mongol invasion, so that Giorgi VIII was able to write to Pope Pius II and the Duke of Burgundy that all the Georgians were ready to fight the Turks, assured as they were of the support of the King of Trebizond, the Prince of Armenia and the Saatabago in Samtskhe, amounting to a force of 140,000 men and thirty ships. The Georgian ambassadors Nicholas Tbileli and Khardan Karchikan, accompanied by envoys from Armenia, Persia and Trebizond, left for Europe under the leadership of Ludovic of Bologne, Papal Envoy of Pius II. They started by going to Germany where their first visit was to the Emperor Frederick III (1440-1493), and thence to Venice where the Senate received them with many honours. On their return to Rome they were received as the representatives of great sovereigns. In 1460 the embassy had an audience of the Pope at which they declared their desire to fight the Ottomans. The Pope professed himself well pleased at this, and informed them that he had summoned the princes of Europe to Mantua in order to prepare for a Crusade, for which however they showed little enthusiasm. Pius II expressed the hope that the decision of the Georgian and Caucasian princes to attack Turkey would lead the European powers to follow suit. In 1461 the envoys went on to visit Philip the Good, Duke of Burgundy, Charles VII King of France, and after his death his son Louis XI. However, Europe had no desire to make war on the Turks and neither the Pope nor the embassy from Georgia was able to persuade the western powers to undertake a Crusade. The Georgian envoys left France in disappointment, prophesying that "through failing to act when the time was ripe, Europe would see the Turks at the gates of Vienna".

The breaking up of the kingdom

The plan for a Crusade having failed, the struggle between the central power and the feudal lords was resumed. The unity of the feudal State of Georgia was certainly as much endangered by economic weakness as by the policy practised by the Mongols, aimed at strengthening the feudatories under the direct suzerainty of the khan or a member of his family, and at the same time weakening and dividing the central national power, when two Georgian kings (David Ulu and David Narin) were simultaneously enthroned. The country was thus in fact split into two states, although remaining

nominally a united kingdom until the fifteenth century when the great feudal lords had considerable success in their contest with the central power. They gained then immunity for their domains and the feudal principalities called *satavadni* were formed, their owners — the *tavadni* — becoming semi-independent princes. The appearance on the scene of the *satavado* system was an additional factor in the decline of the united Georgian kingdom — a process which reached its culmination about the seventh decade of the fifteenth century, when Georgia disintegrated into three kingdoms (Kartli, Kakheti and Imereti) and one principality, Samtskhe-Saatabago in southern Georgia.

In the kingdom of Imereti certain semi-independent eristavs tended to become entirely detached from the central power. In the sixteenth century two principalities were formed there, Guria and Mingrelia — the latter comprising Odishi and Abkhazia.

The fall of the central power in the kingdom of Georgia which we have seen taking place in the fifteenth century was among the causes of the reverses suffered by the whole of Caucasia in the wars against Turkey and Persia.

Luarsabi I of Kartli (1534-1558)

The first treaty assigning Eastern Georgia to Persia and Western Georgia to Turkey was concluded in 1553 during the reigns of King Luarsabi I of Kartli, Shah Tahmasp and Sultan Sulaiman II. Neither the Georgians nor the other interested parties accepted its terms, and the treaty gave rise to a series of battles which continued, with varying fortunes, for a decade between the Georgians, Persians and Turks. Luarsabi I and his successor Simon I proved themselves warriors of great distinction in these campaigns. King Luarsabi spent the whole of his reign in warfare against the Turks and Persians, and was killed in 1558 in an ill-starred expedition against the latter.

It must be observed that it was at the cost of tremendous efforts and sacrifices that the Georgian nation, politically divided and economically weakened, succeeded in maintaining her independence. Throughout all that time, the idea of unifying the kingdom was the constant preoccupation of the heads of state.

During the reign of Simon I of Kartli an important new treaty was signed at Constantinople on March 21st, 1590, between Turkey and Persia, according to which Persia ceded the whole of the Caucasus to Turkey.

King Simon I (1558-1601) and King Luarsabi II (1606-1615).

The indefatigable moving spirits of Georgian resistance, in addition to those already named, were Luarsabi II of Kartli and Teimuraz I of Kakheti (1605-1648). During their reigns and for the best part of a century — from 1553 to 1648 — there was scarcely any respite in the struggle against Turks and Persians. In 1578 a large Turkish army defeated the Iranians and marched into Georgia to seize the eastern part. King Simon I, taken prisoner by treachery, was freed by the Shah on condition that he organized the resistance against the Turks. For forty-two years Simon directed the heroic struggle of his people against first the Persians and then the Turks, preventing them from establishing their rule in Kartli in the heart of Georgia. Although Iran finally had to recognize Turkey's rights over all Transcaucasia, and a repeated attempt by the Georgians to form a grand coalition of the states of Western Europe against the Ottomans had failed, still King Simon would not lay down his arms but fought on until the Turks took him prisoner in 1601 and sent him to Istanbul, where he died in captivity.

In the South-West the situation was different. The rulers of Samtskhe, unable to cope with adversaries as powerful as Turkey and Iran, still did not wish to ally themselves with the Georgian kings for fear that these would profit by an alliance to seize the power from them. They preferred to come to terms with the foreign aggressors, which did not prevent the Turks and Persians in turn from ravaging their land on various pretexts. By the end of the sixteenth century there were three hundred completely abandoned villages in Samtskhe.

The Georgian people fought for over two centuries to preserve the principality of Samtskhe. It was not until the later part of the seventeenth century that the Turks finally brought into subjection this region which was the seat of Georgian culture.

King Luarsabi II of Kartli was tricked by the Shah into coming to Persia, where he was tortured and put to death by the Shah's orders. Ketevan, mother of King Teimuraz, who refused to renounce the Christian faith, was killed after prolonged tortures in 1624 at Shiraz. The Catholic missionaries who were present at her death brought her remains to Georgia, where she was canonized by the Church.

Shah Abbas I (1587-1628) and his invasions. Giorgi Saakadze

At the very beginning of the seventeenth century the Turks were compelled to yield Eastern Georgia to the Shah of Iran, Abbas I, who outdid even the sultans in cruelty. He had set himself to achieve the complete extermination

of the Georgian nation. With that objective, he engaged in two campaigns. The expedition of 1616 reduced the population of Kakheti by two thirds. Abbas deported 100,000 Georgians to Phereidan in the interior of Iran (their descendants have preserved the language and customs of their native country to this day). The lands of Kartli and Kakheti were reduced to desert, the towns razed, the villages depopulated.

In 1625 Abbas sent another expeditionary force into Eastern Georgia, a huge army under the command of Korcha Khan and the famous Georgian captain and statesman Giorgi Saakadze. Saakadze had incurred the animosity of the feudal lords by his struggle to prevent the parcelling out of the land, and had been compelled to seek refuge at the court of the Shah. Abbas was convinced that Saakadze, out of rancour, would be merciless to his compatriots and would deport the remainder of the population of Kartli and Kakheti to Iran, where the Shah intended to settle the Turkoman tribes. But the Iranian potentate was mistaken. Giorgi Saakadze made peace with his former enemies and placed himself at the head of a general insurrection. On March 25th, 1625, the Georgians defeated and destroyed the massed Iranian troops in the valley of *Martkopi* ⁶.

The Shah sent the pick of his army into Georgia to put down the revolt. At the beginning of July 1625 a bloody battle took place near the village of *Marabda*. The Shah paid dearly for his victory : the Georgians, even in defeat, decimated the Iranian army and left it without the strength to subdue the insurgents and bring the country into subjection. Shah Abbas still did not abandon his designs. Attacks on Kakheti continued, and by his orders nomad hordes occupied Bakhtrioni, Alaverdi and other regions of the province. The fertile soil of the country was reduced to pasture and the advanced feudal economy fell into decline. In 1659 revolt broke out on a national scale. The bulk of the enemy forces who had taken refuge in the fortress of *Bakhtrioni* were annihilated, and the remaining nomad hordes were then expelled from the other regions of Kakheti. The battles of Marabda, Martkopi and Bakhtrioni were of especial historical importance in that they averted the threat of complete extermination of the Georgian people.

King Teimuraz of Kakheti

On the death of Shah Abbas, King Teimuraz of Kakheti succeeded in

⁶ Shah Abbas avenged himself by ordering the execution of Saakadze's son Paata, a hostage at the Persian court, and sending his head to his father. When Saakadze saw it, he spoke these words : "Paata could not have begotten Georgia — but much in Georgia will be born from Paata."

driving out the Persians altogether, uniting Kartli and Kakheti and recapturing Ganja. All his life he had fought against the Persians and Turks, losing his throne several times and regaining it by conquest. In the course of his long campaigns Teimuraz came to realize that Georgia could never gain a decisive victory over her enemies without foreign aid. Accordingly, he sent Nicholas Erbakhi on a mission to Europe with the aim of forming an alliance with the European powers. Erbakhi made contact in the King's name with Pope Urban VIII, the Emperor of Germany, the King of Spain, the Magnate of Florence and the King of Poland. Teimuraz wrote to the Pope stating that he wished him to use his influence with the King of Spain to persuade him to form a military alliance with Georgia. The mission of the Georgian king's ambassador came to an end, however, without achieving any results.

Teimuraz was a king of great courage and the very incarnation of pure patriotism. He died in exile in 1663 at Arsabad, refusing to embrace the faith of Islam.

Moslem Georgian kings : Rostom (1632-1658); Vakhtang V (Shah Navaz) (1658-1675)

While the Turks and the Persians were fighting each other to exhaustion in a war a century long (from 1548 to 1648) there was continuous strife between the Persians and Georgians over almost the same period (1553-1648). Georgia's weariness and exhaustion showed themselves in her attitude to Persia : princes of Eastern Georgia converted to the Mohammedan religion exercised their power under the protection of the Persians. Thus it was that Rostom the Bagratid, converted to Islam and crowned King of Kartli, brought Kartli and Kakheti together in unity under his sceptre and initiated a policy of *entente* with Persia which continued until the beginning of the eighteenth century. From the outset of Rostom's reign the population began to feel the benefit of a markedly improved situation. The ancient code of laws was scrupulously observed. Vakhtang V, Rostom's successor, extended the scope of his political and cultural activities to Imereti, maintaining a vigorous administration, resettling depopulated regions and restoring the cathedral of Mtsketa. Order and tranquillity reigned throughout the country.

Georgia in the eighteenth century : Vakhtang VI (1703-1724) and Teimuraz II (1744-1762)

The eighteenth century was a period when Georgia gained a new unity

and a new strength, a period of search for new conditions of political existence in Caucasia. The three kings who reigned in Eastern Georgia at that time were all men of strong personality : Vakhtang VI of Kartli, Teimuraz II of Kartli and Erekle II of Kakheti, from 1762, and in Kartli from 1744 to 1798. Western Georgia had, at the same time, a remarkable sovereign in the person of Solomon I.

Vakhtang VI of Kartli made a new attempt to free Georgia from Persian domination, with aid from Europe. He sent the celebrated writer, Sulkhani-Saba Orbeliani to the Court of France, where he was twice received in audience by King Louis XIV. Orbeliani promised among other things in his sovereign's name to guarantee a safe passage through Georgia to French merchants travelling to the East. In return he asked for the release of King Vakhtang, who was held in captivity in Persia, and for protection for his kingdom. Orbeliani returned in 1716, however, without having had any success. Three years later Vakhtang returned to Georgia from Persia and was confirmed by the Shah in his royal status. He then entered into an alliance with the Tzar Peter I, who was at war with Persia at the time. Under the terms of a treaty concluded in 1722 Vakhtang had 30,000 men under arms ready to join the Tzar's forces in a campaign against Persia. Peter went no further than Baku, however, and from there suddenly set out for Astrakhan, abandoning Vakhtang to his fate. The Turks thereupon invaded the country and occupied Eastern Georgia. Vakhtang, deserted by Peter I and beset with dangers, turned to the German Emperor and Pope Innocent XIII for aid, but in vain. In accordance with the treaty of 1724 Peter the Great recognized the Turks as being in possession of the Georgian territory they had reconquered. When, shortly afterwards, Vakhtang felt himself threatened by the Persians he set out to go to Russia, but died on the journey in 1737 at Astrakhan.

During Vakhtang's reign there was a renaissance in Georgian culture. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries Persian influence had been predominant; now, Vakhtang's contemporaries applied themselves to collecting the works of their national culture which had survived the Mongol invasions and ensuing devastation. Vakhtang himself founded a learned society which published the collected historical documents of Georgia. A printing works was set up in Tbilisi, and in 1712 an edition of Rustaveli's poem "The Knight in Tiger's Skin" appeared with Vakhtang's own commentary. Vakhtang then made a compendium of all the Georgian laws and endowed the country with his celebrated legal code ⁷.

⁷ A manuscript copy of this collection of laws exists in the Oriental Department of the Bibliothèque nationale in Paris (Georgian MSS. no. 24). Joseph Karst had translated it into

In 1724 Teimuraz, Crown Prince of Kakheti, and his son Erekle marched against the Turks who had invaded Eastern Georgia, and defeated them. In the meantime Persia had recovered her strength under the new Shah Nadir, who gave his support to Teimuraz and Erekle to drive the Turks completely out of Eastern Georgia. Nadir however wished to keep Georgia for himself and to set up a Moslem state there with immigrant Persian columns. Teimuraz and his son were forced to take up arms against Persia. They fought successfully and Nadir, who at the time was meeting difficulties both at home and abroad, changed his tactics : he kept the state of affairs in Georgia unchanged, deciding to employ the two princes' forces and capacities for his own ends, and with their help carried off brilliant victories in Afghanistan and against the Indians in 1737. Finally he placed Teimuraz II on the throne of Kartli and his son Erekle on that of Kakheti (1744).

Nadir Shah, who had set Persia on her feet, died a violent death in 1747. His successor Adil Shah was related to King Teimuraz, and at his request Teimuraz and Erekle gave the Iranians their support to defeat the Afghans and drive them out of Persia. They gave aid also to the Khans of Ganja, Erivan, Karabagh and Shirvan : Georgia once more played a decisive political part in the destinies of Caucasia.

Giorgi XI

At the turn of the seventeenth century and throughout the eighteenth, the kings of Georgia played a leading part in the affairs of Iran. King Giorgi XI of Kartli (1676-1688 and 1703-9) took into his hands the direction of operations in Afghanistan and the adjacent territories. He gained considerable influence, as appears from the titles conferred on him as a statesman and dignitary of Persia : King of Kartli, Spasalar — that is, Commander-in-Chief of all the armies of the whole of Persia — Beglarbeg of Kandahar and Kirman, etc. He is designated in the Persian Annals as Shah Navaz II. He died tragically in Afghanistan in 1709.

In the eighteenth century the Georgians were still fighting in India in the Persian service, under the command of Erekle.

Erekle II (1744-1798)

Teimuraz of Kartli died in 1762, when his son Erekle II of Kakheti became ruler of all Eastern Georgia. Erekle, determined to recover Samtskhe,

French with explanatory notes in the collection "Corpus juris ibero-caucasicum" with the title : "Code géorgien du roi Vakhtang VI", vol. I, Strasbourg, 1934 (347 pages).

concentrated his forces on the Turks and in 1768 called for aid from the Russians, who at that time were at war with them. A small force which was sent to him under the command of General Todtleben was recalled prematurely, so that Erekle gave battle with none but his own troops, and was victorious. Even after this victory however he did not succeed in ridding southern Georgia of the Turks. At the same time as he was campaigning against them he continued to concern himself with raising the economic, military and cultural standards of his country, and introduced reforms inspired by European examples into the army and the administration, the judiciary, education, finance and other domains.

Erekle was a military leader of outstanding quality. He was victorious in thirty out of the forty battles that he fought. It was his aim to turn the Caucasus into a single state, since he regarded that as a condition essential to Georgia's prosperity. He was near to attaining this objective when he extended his sovereignty to the eastern and southern regions of Caucasia, Ganja and Erivan. He wished to rid his country of all Asiatic influences from Turkey and Persia. Like all his predecessors he strove to gain the support of the European powers, and sent ambassadors to Frederick the Great to ask his protection and alliance.

During Erekle's long reign Georgia gained in strength abroad and prosperity at home. The king reinvigorated the country's cultural life, giving a definite impulsion to education, science and art. Institutions of higher education — one at Tbilisi and one at Telavi — were created in order to produce a university elite from which state officials, clergy and promoters of scientific research could be recruited. It is interesting to note that Erekle II, a contemporary of Frederick the Great, was a well-known personality in the "age of enlightenment". Lessing puts these words into the mouth of the old Sergeant Werner: "Friend, I believe you read the papers no more than you read the Bible. You have never heard of Prince Heraclius. There was a great man! He kicked out the Persians one day and overthrew the Ottoman Empire the next." (Minna von Barnhelm, Act I, Scene 12.) The Georgian national theatre also flowered and prospered in Erekle's reign, and as well as national works Georgian translations of Corneille, Racine and Voltaire were performed.

In the reign of Erekle II the ruler of Western Georgia was King Solomon, an eminent statesman and outstanding military commander — the Army named him Solomon the Great. He hated the Turks and fought them with ferocity and determination. He imposed the death penalty on dealers in the slave trade which the Turks had brought into the country, with a central

market at Poti. The Turks made this a pretext for invading Western Georgia in 1757, when they were defeated and repulsed. After many a costly battle, Solomon took advantage of a truce to re-establish order in his kingdom and attacked the seditious vassals of his State, in particular the reigning princes of Abkhazia, Mingrelia and Guria. He was successful in reducing them to submission and restoring the authority of the central power and the political unity of Western Georgia.

It was at that time that the idea of uniting all Georgian territories was revived again. King Solomon II, the successor of Solomon I, and the princes of Mingrelia, Abkhazia and Guria held an assembly in Tbilisi at which all the rulers of Eastern Georgia took part to consider this scheme, large in conception and essential for Georgia's future; but their deliberations came to nothing.

The 1783 Treaty of Alliance between King Erekle II and Catherine of Russia

By the later half of the eighteenth century Georgia was advancing towards a renewal of her political, economic and cultural life. It needed a long period of peace to stabilize this progress and heal her wounds. With all hope lost of obtaining the support from the West which Georgia had sought persistently and vainly since the fall of Byzantium, no prospect remained for King Erekle but that of a closer tie with Russia. In spite of his predecessors' sorry experience in that quarter, he decided to turn to the empire of his co-religionists whose frontiers now adjoined the boundaries of Caucasia.

Russia needed a base in the Caucasus for her wars with Persia and Turkey, while Georgia for her part thought that this powerful ally would help her to withstand the invasions of her secular enemies, and act as an intermediary in Georgia's overtures to Europe. King Erekle had also a third objective in entering into an alliance — the liberation of Saatabago Samtskhe in southern Georgia from the Turkish yoke, and its restoration to the Georgian kingdom.

In 1783 a treaty of "alliance and protection" was signed between Erekle II and Catherine II of Russia at Giorgievsk in North Caucasia, by the terms of which Kartli and Kakheti retained their sovereignty and internal political autonomy. In external affairs, the signatories were pledged to give each other mutual aid in the event of war. Furthermore, the Emperor of Russia was to be informed in advance of a Georgian king's accession to the throne. Among other provisions of the treaty, the Georgian Church retained its independence.

Russia entirely disregarded her obligations under this treaty. The small

expeditionary force she had sent to Erekle was immediately recalled. In spite of this, the Treaty of Giorgievsk aroused great indignation in Iran and Turkey, and in 1795 Agha Mohammed Khan, Shah of Iran, entered Georgia at the head of a strong army. Erekle II went to meet him with 5,000 cavalry and gave battle in the plain of Krtsanisi, near Tbilisi, on September 10th 1795. He was gaining the victory and Mohammed Khan had already given the order to retreat, when an envoy arrived from Tbilisi with the news that Erekle would receive no reinforcements. When the battle was resumed next day Erekle engaged in a desperate struggle with a handful of horsemen and suffered defeat. The enemy entered Tbilisi, Agha Mohammed set the city on fire and the population was massacred with indescribable ferocity. Russia made no move to come to the aid of her ally, leaving her to extricate herself as best she could from the situation in which the treaty of alliance with Catherine II had placed her.

This defeat of the Georgians was in accordance with Russia's plans. She allowed the strength of the country to be undermined in preparation for annexing it with less difficulty later. The tragedy of Krtsanisi was the final blow to the Georgian people, who had scarcely begun to see the dawn of their renaissance break. Erekle II died soon afterwards, on January 11th 1798, at Telavi at the age of eighty. He was succeeded by his son Giorgi XII.

In spite of a strong anti-Russian feeling already in evidence in the time of Erekle, Giorgi again parleyed with the Empire of the Tzars in an attempt to ensure that the provisions of the protectorate treaty of 1783 should be put into force. Instead of applying the terms of the treaty, however, the Russian Government in fact simply took possession of the country. They sent Russian troops to Tbilisi on the pretext of supplying reinforcements, and took the necessary steps to prevent Giorgi's son David from acceding to the throne when Giorgi XII died on December 28th, 1800. The Russian general Lazarev then informed the rulers of the country of an Imperial manifesto of December 22nd announcing the annexation of Georgia, which he read in public in the Sioni Cathedral in Tbilisi on February 16th, 1801. This decision aroused strong indignation, and in spite of the ukase the Crown Prince David was proclaimed king. But the Russian army of occupation had already arrived and Georgia had ceased, in actuality, to exist as a state.

After the conquerors had completed the occupation of the whole of Georgia, they began deliberately to Russify the country. The national administrative system was abolished, civil as well as military authority being placed in the hands of the military governor. The districts were administered by



officers of the Tzar; Russian was used in acts of administration, justice and teaching, although the language was unintelligible to the natives of the country. Georgian was banished from the public services and cultural life and forbidden in the schools, where Georgian masters were replaced by Russian pedagogues.

The occupying power intended that Transcaucasia, and Georgia in particular, should serve as the point of departure for Russian expansion in the East. The Tzarist Government were not content with employing military force for their purpose, but set out to turn Georgia into an effective barrier through the process of denationalizing and Russifying her. The Russian Government had no consideration for the Georgian Church, which had been independent since the fifth century and had been able to maintain that independence even throughout the Moslem invasions. The head of the Church, the Catholicos, was deported to Russia and a Russian bishop nominated in his place, subordinate to the Synod, with the title of Exarch. When the bishop and clergy of Western Georgia made a protest against this decision, the Government arrested two of their Metropolitans, one of whom, Dositheus of Kutaïsi, was murdered and the other, Ekhvtime of Ghelati, deported to Siberia. This savagery provoked an uprising in Imereti. The Georgians reacted to the violation of their rights by thirty years of armed insurrection : revolt broke out in 1804, 1809, 1812 and 1819-20. The conspiracy which flared up in 1832 was betrayed and came to nothing. All these revolts, in which the whole population took part — nobles, clergy, peasants, bourgeois and workers — had a strongly marked national character and were aimed at the restoration of independence. All of them were repressed, drowned in blood and followed by savage reprisals.

At the same time as a Russian administration was instituted in Georgia, settlements were formed of immigrants who were adherents of the Tzarist Government, which contributed to the Russification of the Georgian people. This was also intensified by the confiscation of native landlords' estates. In 1829-30 about 35,000 Armenians and Greeks from Turkey were transported to the districts of Akhaltsikhe, Akhalkalaki and Tsalka. After 1837 the number of Russian immigrants steadily increased and military colonies were established. Russian villages grew up in the environs of Tbilisi, where members of sects under persecution by the official church of the Russian Empire — Dukhobors, Molokans and others — were deported.

This intensified persecution however gave a new and vigorous impetus to the movement for liberation. At the beginning of the 'eighties, almost all the social forces in Georgia — led by I. Chavchavadze and A. Tsereteli — united under the banner of the movement and carried on their struggle

under the most difficult conditions against the Tzarist policy of colonisation and Russification, desperately striving to safeguard the rights of the Georgian people and conserve their language and culture. The militants in the movement gave proof of their spirit of self-sacrifice and persistence chiefly by working to preserve the use of the mother tongue in Georgian schools. Waging a relentless battle against the agents of Tzarist autocracy, they also published militant articles in defence of the national interests of the Georgian people in the Georgian and Russian press, in defiance of the censorship.

A landmark in the campaign against the Tzarist officials' policy of Russification was the intervention of the eminent leader of the liberal movement, Dimitri Kipiani ⁸.

The leaders of the national liberation movement did not confine themselves to political ideology in newspaper columns; they strove to create institutions and societies for the development of the national culture and economy, capable of ensuring the defence and eventual expansion of Georgian culture and the improvement of the people's well-being. Young people of intelligence played their part, broadcasting European liberal ideas and proclaiming the national ideal far and wide with magnificent enthusiasm. Political parties sprang up dedicated to striving for the national and social liberation of the people.

In 1905 the Georgians took an active part in the Russian Revolution. A number of Georgians outside their own country were leading figures in the intense and vigorous struggle to defend the rights of the people, publish-

⁸ At that time (in the early 'eighties) D. Kipiani raised his voice in defence of the Georgian language and wrote in strong terms to Ivanovski, in charge of education, to protest against the proscription of Georgian in schools: "Neither Genghis Khan nor Tamerlane, Shah Abbas nor Nadir Shah was able to destroy the character of the Georgian people. Is that what you expect to achieve?" In 1885 Kipiani was elected Marshal of Nobility in the province of Kutaïsi, and in the same year fell foul of Dondukov-Korsakov, Commander-in-Chief of Caucasia. The Government did not take a favourable view of the Marshal's zeal in defending his mother tongue, and he received an official reprimand by order of the Tsar. Dimitri Kipiani did not give up the struggle, however, and when the ultra-reactionary Exarch Paul launched his malediction against the Georgian people in 1886, Kipiani addressed an imperative demand to the Emperor for his recall.

The Tzarist Government then decided to punish Kipiani, by that time an old man, with severity. He was dismissed from his office and deported to Stavropol, where he was murdered a year later by agents of the Tzar.

A large crowd attended the obsequies of this eminent statesman in Tbilisi, and made them the occasion for a powerful demonstration of protest against the Russian occupation.

ing articles and memoranda, appearing at international conferences, maintaining contact with clandestine political groups in Georgia. Among them were : M. Tsereteli, G. Dekanozi, V. Cherkeshishvili, the brothers L. and G. Keresslidze, G. Gvazava, G. Machabeli, N. Nikoladze, S. Kedia, A. Jorjadze, N. Magalashvili, P. Surguladze, M. Kartsivadze, Sh. Vardidze, and others.

On the outbreak of the Great War in 1914 the Georgian political parties considered it their duty to act in concert. The committee they founded increased in authority, particularly from the start of the 1917 Revolution, in which the Tzarist regime was abolished and Georgia was enabled to throw off the yoke she had borne for a hundred and seventeen years.

Georgia in 1917

In the early days of the Revolution the peoples of the Caucasus liquidated the administration of the Viceroy and the regime of the Russian bureaucracy throughout the whole of their territory. Transcaucasian Revolutionary Councils were formed and their headquarters set up in Tbilisi. In place of the Viceroy's administration the provisional government in Petrograd appointed a "special committee for Transcaucasia" consisting of five members invested with prerogatives of government. This had no more than an ephemeral existence, since the central and provincial Revolutionary Councils retained all effective power.

In the following October the Bolsheviki seized power; but the Revolutionary Councils of the Caucasus refused to acknowledge or submit to the Bolsheviki's authority.

The country was threatened by waves of civil war and Russian anarchy. 500,000 Russian soldiers on the Turkish frontier, freed from order and discipline, were ready to break through into Transcaucasia and return to Russia. The Turkish high command surveyed the progressive disorganization of their adversary's armies with satisfaction, and watched for the opportune moment to occupy Transcaucasia.

In these circumstances it was essential for the country to become politically organized as soon as possible in order to take action and defend herself. On November 11th, 1917, at the instance of the Transcaucasian Revolutionary Councils, the "special committee" appointed from Petrograd was dissolved and replaced by a new administrative organ, the Transcaucasian Commissariat (president E. Gheghetchkori), composed of Georgians, Armenians, Azerbaijanis and Russians resident in Transcaucasia. In addition to this central command the Georgians, Armenians and Azer-

baijanis each formed a National Council of their own to provide for the respective needs of the different nations.

The National Council of Georgia was appointed at the National Congress of November 22nd, 1917, by agreement of the political parties, municipalities, cultural institutions, Workers' and Peasants' Councils and Trade Unions. It started by creating a national armed force. The Russian armies were either deserting from the Caucasian front and returning to their homes in disorder, or — in the case of the units stationed in Tbilisi — holding themselves in readiness to lay siege to the city and occupy it by force. Since Tbilisi had no defence force of her own, the Executive Committee of the Revolutionary Council of the capital demanded arms and ammunition to guard against the danger of attack. The Russian soldiers in charge of the arsenal refused categorically, however, to meet their demands. The arsenal was then occupied by order of the Committee on December 12th 1917, and the country was thus enabled to arm and defend herself.

At that time Russia was devastated by civil war. The Constituent Assembly lasted no longer than one day, after which it was dissolved by the Bolsheviks. After its dissolution the deputies from Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan who had joined it, with others chosen from the candidates on the different lists of parties according to the number of votes they obtained at elections, formed an assembly which assumed legislative functions; and the Transcaucasian Diet came into being. The Diet ratified, among others, the decree promulgated by the Commissariat abolishing the privileges of the nobility, and ordered the State domains to be confiscated. Even before the Diet was formed, however, the Georgian nobles at the instigation of K. Abkhasi had agreed unanimously to donate to the nation all their corporate and personal property and estates.

The second event of importance was the return to their own country of the Georgian scholars scattered over the immense territory of Russia or exiled in other foreign lands. The February Revolution made it possible for them to return to their homeland, and through their initiative and that of Professor V. Javakhishvili the University of Tbilisi came into being in 1918, with five faculties and three thousand students at its inauguration. It should be recalled here that Georgia had possessed academic institutions since the twelfth century; and that Tzarist Russia — in spite of repeated demands from the Georgians — had refused to sanction the founding of the University.

In January 1918 Soviet Russia began negotiations at Brest-Litovsk the outcome of which was to be the conclusion of a separate peace with Germany, who at that time was gaining the victory. Transcaucasia was

invited to take part in the talks, but refused. When Russia — in accordance with the terms of the treaty of February 19th, 1918 resulting from these parleys — ceded to Turkey the provinces of Batumi, Kars and Ardahan with the fortresses similarly named, the Transcaucasian Government protested strongly against this flagrant violation of its rights and made an approach to the interested party to negotiate a peace. The first peace conference between Transcaucasia and Turkey took place on March 12th, 1918 at Trebizond. At the very time when these talks were in progress, the workers and garrison stationed at Baku seized the capital of Azerbaijan and the Soviet Commissariat of Baku headed by Shaumian announced their submission to the orders of Moscow. Moreover, in spite of the opening of the conference the Turks did not abandon their military operations, and by the end of March they were already at the gates of Batumi and Kars and in occupation of Ardahan. In the face of these events the conference lost its *raison d'être* and the Diet of Transcaucasia recalled their delegation.

After the proclamation of the full independence of Transcaucasia (April 22nd, 1918) the Diet took the decision to resume peace negotiations with Turkey. The new Government informed the foreign powers of the foundation of the new Transcaucasian State. This was soon recognized by the Turkish Government — a fact which helped to establish a provisional regime of peace between the two countries.

The situation of Transcaucasia at that time was a tragic one. Baku, capital of Azerbaijan, was under the domination of Soviet Russia while Ganja, the second largest town of Azerbaijan, was occupied by Enver Pasha's brother Nuri Pasha. Alexandropol in Armenia and Akhaltsikhe in Georgia were invaded by the Turks, who thereby threatened Erivan and Tbilisi. The situation was complicated by the fact that relations between the states of Transcaucasia were far from harmonious. The Azerbaijani delegates to the Diet declared that since their capital, Baku, was under the occupation of Soviet Russia they saw no necessity to defend Transcaucasia against their Turkish brethren. The Armenians, much of whose country was under Turkish domination, refused to fight the Bolsheviks in order to liberate Baku. Thus the political unity of Transcaucasia was broken up and all the nations composing it compelled to fall back on their own resources and organize their own defence. In consequence the Diet was declared dissolved, by a unanimous resolution, on May 26th, 1918⁹.

⁹ "In view of the fact that serious differences on the question of war and peace have become apparent between the peoples who created the Independent Transcaucasian Republic, and that no power now exists with authority or capacity to speak in the name of Transcaucasia, the Diet declares Transcaucasia to be dissolved and resigns its functions."

Proclamation of the independence of Georgia

On the day of the Diet's dissolution a meeting of the National Council of Georgia took place at which the Act of Independence of Georgia read out by the President, N. Zhordania, was unanimously adopted. Azerbaijan and Armenia were not slow to follow Georgia's example and two days later, on May 28th, these two countries in their turn proclaimed their independence.

The Act of May 26th gave formal sanction to the Democratic Georgian Republic, which guaranteed civil and political rights to every citizen living within its territory without distinction of sex, nationality, religion or social rank. Until the convocation of the Constituent Assembly, power resided in Parliament (a National Council which included representatives of the national minorities) and in the provisional Government, which was responsible to it.

On the day of the proclamation of Georgian independence the Turkish delegation delivered an ultimatum to the Transcaucasians stating that war would be declared if the new peace conditions were not accepted within three days. A state of war in fact already existed, as the Turks were still advancing, occupying one new position after another. As the Transcaucasian Republic had been dissolved the Turkish ultimatum was addressed to the three independent States set up in its place. Although Georgia possessed a small newly-formed army, she was not in a position to oppose the enemy successfully on all fronts simultaneously. She was obliged therefore to accept the Turkish terms; but the treaty embodying them was never ratified by her Government.

The proclamation of independence was to enable Georgia to find a means of arresting the Turkish aggression. It was Germany who responded to her appeal for aid. Germany had an interest in preventing the Turkish armies from overrunning Georgia, since action there would divert them from the operation they were about to mount against the English in Mesopotamia. During a peace conference at Batumi the German delegate had stated to the Georgians that the Reich was prepared to guarantee Georgia against Turkish aggression on condition that she allowed German troops to enter her territory. Turkey at the time was demanding the unrestricted use of the railways of the Republic for the transport of troops and war materials, intending in this way to gain control over the country.

On May 26th at Poti the Georgian representatives signed a convention, intended to provoke conflict between Germany and her ally Turkey, by the terms of which the Germans were awarded supervision of the national



railways, without the power however to intervene in Georgia's internal affairs. The agreement was put into effect by German and Georgian soldiers taking possession of the railways in certain parts of the Republic in order to resist the advance of the Turks. The latter, unable to stand against the Germans, halted their operations against Georgia. The German army remained about six months in Georgia, from June to December 1918.

The World War continued for five months after the proclamation of Georgian independence. By the armistice of Mudros (November 1918) the victorious Allies compelled Turkey to withdraw from Transcaucasia to the frontiers of 1914. At the same time English troops entered the Caucasus and provisionally occupied Batumi, evacuated by the Turks. In Georgia's relations with the English she pursued the line she had taken with the Germans, never abandoning her position of neutrality or failing to defend her independence. The Georgian Government, in accordance with the secular tradition of chivalry of the Georgian people, refused the demands of the English to apply repressive measures to the German soldiers, who were soon allowed to return home. The Government also rejected categorically the proposal that they should take part in the intervention of the Allied Command in Russia, and co-operate with the White Russian generals Alexeyev and Denikin, implacable enemies of Georgian independence. With the exception of Batumi, which was occupied until the summer of 1920, Georgian territory was evacuated by the English in September 1919.

The Constituent Assembly was elected by universal suffrage in February, 1919. It met on March 12th and ratified the Act of Independence passed by Parliament. The President — who was also the supreme representative of the Republic — was elected by Parliament for an indefinite period. In the Act of Independence passed by Parliament it is stated that "the Democratic Georgian Republic wishes to maintain friendly relations with all the members of the international community, and especially with neighbouring states and peoples". The Georgian Government accordingly proposed to Armenia and Azerbaijan that they should appoint representatives to Tbilisi in order to reach an agreement on the frontier question and enter into a common undertaking to conclude no convention with any other state which would be unfavourable to the peoples represented at the Conference.

The Conference was unable to sit before May 1919, at the very moment when Denikin's counter-revolutionary forces were at the gateway of Transcaucasia, after invading the North Caucasian Republic and marching on Georgia and Azerbaijan. Confronted with this situation the Conference

immediately considered common measures of defence against the aggressor, but was thwarted by the attitude of the Armenians who estimated that the danger represented by Denikin was much less serious than that from the Turks at the same period. This divergence of views led to the failure of the Conference, as a result of which a military alliance between Georgia and Azerbaijan was concluded on June 16th, 1919.

The mountain Republic of North Caucasia carried on a vigorous struggle in the country's defence. Independent Georgia, for her part, was well aware of the importance to her of the existence of an independent republic of mountain people beyond the Caucasus ranges, and accordingly lost no opportunity of making strong protests against the excesses of the White Russian armies in the North Caucasian Republic. Furthermore a number of Georgian volunteers went to join the Northerners and defend their liberty. Relations between Georgia and Turkey, her neighbour in the South, improved at that time and diplomatic relations between the countries were resumed.

Georgia also took the initiative in proposing to Soviet Russia a move towards normal friendly relations, and discussions on all questions in which they had a common interest. This proposal was accepted, and on May 7th 1920 the two States signed a peace treaty, the first article of which stipulated : "On the basis of the right to free self-determination of all peoples, proclaimed by the Federation of Soviet Socialist Republics of Russia, up to and including the right to total separation from the state of which they are a part, Russia recognizes unreservedly the independence and sovereignty of the Georgian State."

The second article was conceived in these terms : "On the principle proclaimed in the preceding article of the present Treaty, Russia undertakes to refrain from all intervention in the internal affairs of Georgia."

On January 27th, 1921, the independence of Georgia was recognized *de jure* by the Supreme Council of the Entente (England, France, Italy, Japan and Belgium); Germany, Turkey and Argentina had already accorded it recognition. The *de facto* recognition of the Georgian State dated from January 1920. The example of the Supreme Council was followed by Poland, Rumania, Austria, Mexico and others, and diplomatic missions from those states were accredited to the Georgian Government, which in turn possessed legations in Paris, London, Rome, Berlin, Warsaw, Moscow and Ankara, and diplomatic agents in Berne, Vienna, Stockholm, Bucharest, Helsinki and Tokyo. ...

In February 1921 Georgia was sovietized by the Red Army, and is today one of the fifteen Republics of the Soviet Union.



The history of Soviet Georgia is material for a separate study. However, the attention of those interested in research is drawn to the important progress which has been made in the domain of research directly concerned with Georgian and Caucasian studies abroad. This research is carried out at the State University of Tbilisi, which has fifteen faculties, and by the Georgian Academy of Sciences with forty institutes directed by scholars of world-wide reputation.

Important work is being done in scientific institutions, with results of world-wide interest in mathematics, physics, biology, geology, geophysics and other subjects; but it is the research in the field of Georgia's national heritage which is of especial interest to foreign scholars in Georgian and Caucasian studies. The University of Tbilisi and the institutes of the Academy of Sciences have produced many highly qualified specialists in this field, and there are excellent works today on Georgian history, linguistics, ancient and modern literature, art and other historico-philological studies.

K. SALIA.

Translated from the French by
Katharine Vivian.

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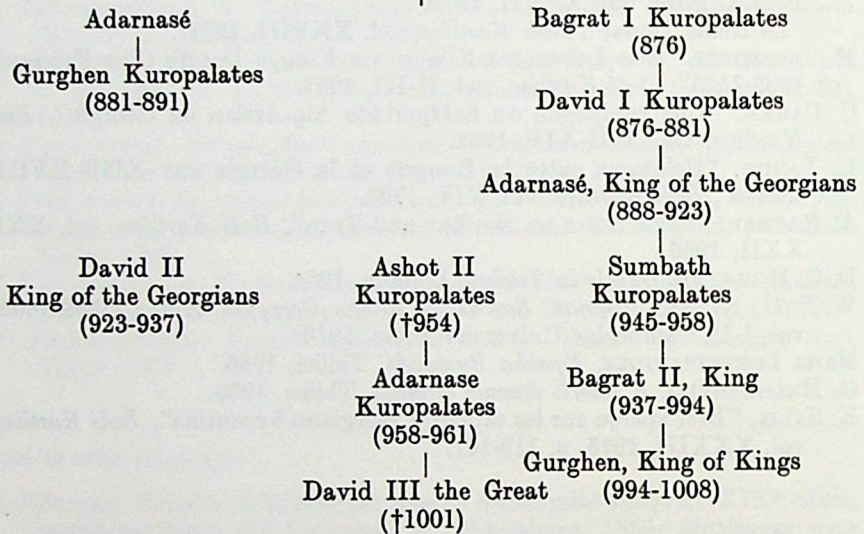


GENEALOGY OF THE BAGRATID DYNASTY OF GEORGIA
(BAGRATIONI)

(From the *History of Georgia* by I. JAVAKHISHVILI,
N. BERDZENISHVILI and S. JANASHIA)

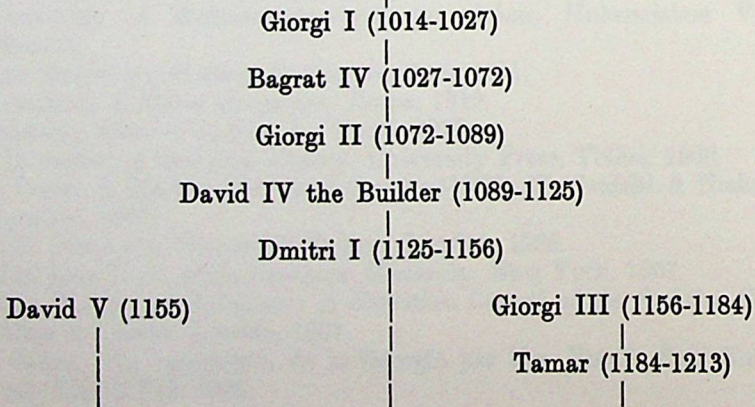
PRINCES OF TAO-KLARJETI

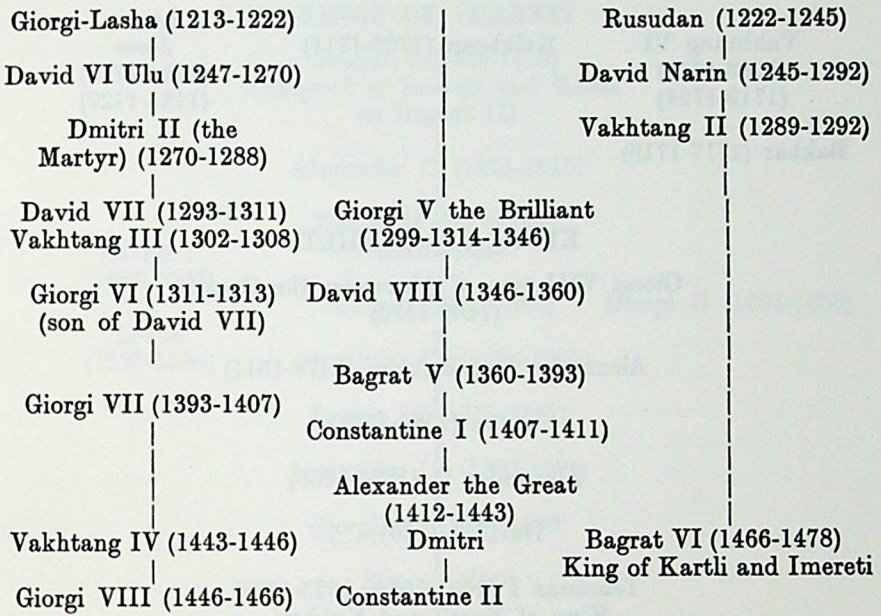
Ashot I Kuropalates, King of Tao-Klarjeti
(786-826)



KINGS OF UNITED GEORGIA

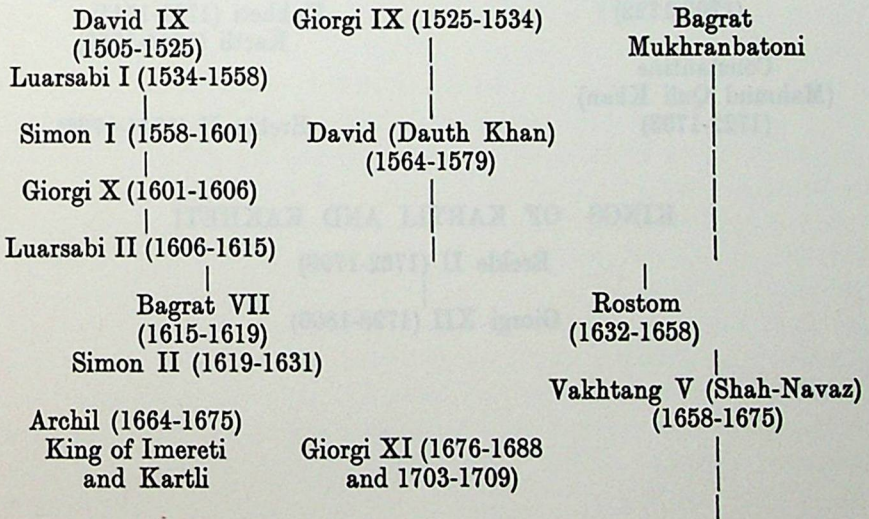
Bagrat III (975-1014), son of Gurghen





KINGS OF KARTLI

Constantine II (1479-1505)





Vakhtang VI (1703-1716) (1719-1724) Bakhar (1717-1719)	Kaikhosro (1709-1711)	Levan Jesse (1714-1716) (1724-1727)
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KINGS OF KAKHETI

Giorgi VIII (son of Alexander the Great)
 (1466-1476)
 |
Alexander I of Kakheti (1476-1511)
 |
Levan (1520-1574)
 |
Alexander II (1574-1605)
 |
David I (1601. ...)
 |
Teimuraz I (1601-1616, 1623-1632)
King of Kartli and Kakheti,
 1634-1648
 |
David
 |
Erekle I (Nazar Ali Khan) (1688-1703)
 |

David II (Imam Quli Khan) (1703-1722) Constantine (Mahmud Quli Khan) (1722-1733)	Teimuraz II (1709), King of Kakheti (1731-1744) Kartli (1744-1762) Erekle II (1744-1762)
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KINGS OF KARTLI AND KAKHETI

Erekle II (1762-1798)
 |
Giorgi XII (1798-1800)



KINGS OF IMERETI

Bagrat I (1466-1478)
(Reigned in Imereti and Kartli
as Bagrat II)

Alexander II (1484-1510)

Bagrat II (1510-1565)
Constantine

Giorgi I
(1565-1585)

Rostom (1590-1604) Giorgi II (1604-1639)

Levan
(1585-1590)

Alexander III (1639-1660)

Bagrat III (1660-1681)

Alexander IV (1683-1695)

Giorgi III (1690-1699)

Simon (1699)

Giorgi IV (1703-1720)

Alexander V (1720-1751)

Solomon I (1751-1784)

Archil

Solomon II
(1784-1815)

GEORGIAN ART

ARCHITECTURE

The most ancient traces of human activity found on the territory of Georgia belong to the Palaeolithic Age, while the earliest architectural remains belong to the late neolithic period (a site near the village of Shulaveri, Eastern Georgia, 5th millennium B.C., with groups of houses with a circular groundplan surmounted by a conical roof) and to the aeneolithic period (Urbnisi, a site on what is known as the Khizanaantgora hill, Eastern Georgia); a monument of the Early Bronze Epoch — Kvatskhelebi, 10 km. off Gori (beginning of the first half of the 2nd millennium B.C.). A typical feature characterizing early structures is the hearth; the walls are made of adobe or of wattle and daub. At Kvatskhelebi we find a flat roof with an aperture in the centre. Sites belonging to the Late Bronze and the Early Iron Age (Natsargora, Eastern Georgia, 2nd-1st millennia B.C.) have also been studied. Sites were usually selected either on promontories with steep slopes or on the tops of hills commanding the surrounding plains. The barrows of Trialeti and Samgori and the dolmens of Abkhazia also belong to the Bronze Age. From the times of the early slave-owning states quite a few architectural complexes have survived : the Armazistsikhé Acropolis (Bagineti) near Mtskheta — the ancient capital of Georgia (middle of the 1st millennium B.C. up to the first centuries A.D.) with thick fortress walls and ruins of palaces within; a sepulchre in Mtskheta (1st c. A.D.); the ancient town at Vani, Western Georgia (1st millennium B.C.). Even in those early times Georgia already had well-developed architectural traditions in the skills necessary for the cutting and utilizing of stone as building material to be used in walling and erecting vaults, and a sufficient proficiency in rock-hewing (the earliest chambers of the rock-hewn town of Uplistsikhé in Eastern Georgia date back to the end of the 1st millennium B.C.). Literary sources mention the existence of various types of dwellings in Georgia at the beginning of our era, particularly houses of the “darbazi” type with a rectangular groundplan and a wooden roof formed by horizontal beams overlapping each other and protruding inward, thus forming a ledged dome with an aperture in the centre (this type of roofing is known in Georgian as “gvirgvini”).

Beginning from the first half of the 4th c. A.D. when Georgia adopted Christianity as the state religion, ecclesiastical architecture came to the fore. The great number of extant churches, monasteries and fortifications enables us to follow the development of Georgian mediaeval architecture from the 4th c. up to the 18th c. (palaces and other monuments of urban architecture being not so well preserved).

Mediaeval Georgian architecture, original and national in style, presents considerable interest for elucidating the history of mediaeval "Christian" architecture owing to the great artistic merits of the buildings, the diversity of architectural themes and subjects and the early emergence of particular types and skills. Even the first structures of the early feudal period reveal dexterity in architectural devices and constructions. All monumental edifices are built of stone and mortar. Both the exterior and the interior faces of church walls are made of well-squared and smooth stone slabs laid in regular courses. The interstitial space is filled with mortar. Building devices and procedures that appeared in Western Europe only in the Romanesque period had been widely employed in Georgia from a very early date. All churches without exception have vaults; corbel and cross vaults, as well as domes were widely used (see below). Arches, too, were quite popular. Stone piers serve as individual supports, while monolithic columns are more rare. For palaces, flat wooden roofs were used as well as vaults.

Ujarma and Tbilisi, built on mountain slopes, are typical feudal fortified towns of the first centuries A.D. The citadel with the king's or ruler's palace, a church and subsidiary buildings occupied the crest of a mountain. The town itself lay on the slopes and was enclosed by walls with towers.

Several principal stages can be distinguished in the development of mediaeval Georgian architecture :

The architecture of the 4th-7th cc. The Christian Orthodox church required architects to design ecclesiastical edifices for large numbers of worshippers. The first small church buildings point to a struggle between two conflicting traditions : the local tradition which favoured central compositions originating from the "darbazi", and the borrowed basilica tradition previously unknown in Georgia, but already established in the first centres of Christianity in the Near East. The most ancient churches that have survived (Nekresi, Shuamta, 4th-5th cc.) resemble true basilicas only outwardly, as they lack a well-pronounced longitudinal axis and true naves. The first and the most important true basilica — the Bolnisi Sioni (478-493) — and a number of others of the 6th-7th cc. (at Urbnisi, the Anchiskhati basilica in Tbilisi, another at Tskarostavi, etc.), differ from the Graeco-Roman basilicas and constitute a distinct group.

From the second half of the 6th c. churches with a central dome become predominant in Georgian ecclesiastical architecture. Different variants of the *croix libre* and *croix inscrite* types of churches, as well as a number of others well-known throughout the early Christian world, were built in Georgia at an early date. Georgia occupies a prominent place in the process of evolving some of these. A feature typical of all Georgian domed churches (with a few exceptions) is that the centre of the structure is a square surmounted by a closed vault or a true hemispherical dome. The use of a domed square (and not a rotunda or a polyhedron) shows the affinities between Georgian ecclesiastical architecture and Sassanian palaces, but it also goes back to the ancient Georgian peasant dwelling — the above-mentioned “*darbazi*”. In the 6th-8th-9th cc. the dome was fixed on the square by means of squinches, unlike the contemporary Byzantine buildings where only pendentives were utilized (the latter came to be used in Georgia only from the 9th-10th cc.).

Among numerous varieties of domed structures, tetraconchal edifices were developed, a perfect example of which is Jvari Church at Mtskheta (586/87-604 A.D.) and some other churches in similar style (the Martvili cathedral, the churches at Ateni and Shuamta — all built in the 7th c.). This type of tetraconch with corner chambers had originally developed in Georgia from the preceding stages of architecture (Dzveli Gavazi has a simple quatrefoil groundplan, while the Ninotsminda cathedral is more complicated in this respect; both of the 6th c.). Parallels to these, but with local peculiarities, can only be found in Armenia. Jvari Church at Mtskheta is an outstanding monument owing to the exquisite harmony of its architectural proportions, the perfect integration of the ensemble and all its parts, its strict, laconic forms and its way of merging intimately with the surrounding terrain. The end of the 6th and beginning of the 7th century was a period of the first florescence of Georgian feudal architecture, when architects attained a full measure of artistic perfection with their creations. It was a period when Georgian architecture confronted and successfully resolved the problem of organic consonance of a building's interior with its exterior form, by developing a type of façade which was to become one of the most characteristic features of Georgian architecture in subsequent centuries. The second type of central-domed edifices is represented by Tsromi Church (of the 730's A.D.) where the dome rests on four free-standing columns. The third group of domed structures have a tetraconch with a circular ambulatory (Bana, Ishkhani; Southern Georgia, 7th c.). The most ancient specimens of the so-called “three-church basilicas” (an architectural type developed in Georgia) where the naves are separated from the aisles not by

columns, but by walls, — date back to the 6th-7th cc. The 4th-7th cc. are represented by a period of strictly “classic” style : the decoration of edifices is sober and subordinated to the style of the whole of the building, the composition of the façade is restrained, well-balanced and static; the proportions are ample without accentuating the soaring height of the edifice.

The second half of the 7th c. to the middle of the 10th c. is known as a period of transition. In the early years of Arab domination architectural activity is less intense, but at the end of the 8th and beginning of the 9th centuries and later on in the the 9th-10th cc. it gains momentum and scope in the independent Georgian principalities and kingdoms : Tao-Klarjeti, Abkhazia, Kakheti and in certain parts of Kartli. A characteristic feature of this period is the decline of the preceding sober style and the emergence of elements of *picturesqueness* and ornamentation, diversity and variegation of architectural themes and forms (the cathedral at Samshvildé, churches at Tsirkoli and Armazi in Kartli, churches at Gurjaani and Vachnadziani in Kakheti of the 8th-9th cc., a number of monasteries with churches, refectories, libraries and scriptoria in Southern Georgia and elsewhere, and also feudal palaces in Kakheti.

Architecture from the middle of the 10th to the end of the 13th and beginning of the 14th centuries. This period saw a powerful upsurge in mediaeval Georgian culture, marked by extensive building activity : new towns spring up, while old ones flourish; big fortresses are erected all over the territory of Georgia according to a definite plan. This was the time when the biggest and most famous cathedrals were built, as well as roads, bridges, caravanserais and various public buildings (e.g. hospitals) monastic complexes. In ecclesiastical architecture the cross-plan type becomes prevalent; the longitudinal axis is now elongated, the high dome rests on columns. The proportions emphasize the upward movement, façades are segmented by decorative arches, windows and doors have carved frames with elaborate designs which are from then on an essential element of the general aspect of church buildings. Interiors, walls and vaults are covered with mural painting. The general *picturesqueness* does not, however, detract from the tectonic precision and clarity of the architectural composition. 12th and 13th-century churches are smaller and give an impression of greater intimacy than the cathedrals of the 10th-11th cc., but the ornamentation is richer. The principal monuments remarkable for the consummate technical skill of execution, artistic excellence, are : the 10th-century cathedrals at Oshki, Kumurdo (built by the architect Sakotsari) and Khakhuli in Southern Georgia; the 11th-century buildings such as the cathedral of King Bagrat at Kutaisi (1003 A.D),

the cathedral of the Patriarchal See at Mtskheta — Svetitskhoveli, 1010-1029, A.D., (architect Arsukidze), Samtavisi church (1030 A.D.), which was later regarded as a standard to be followed in many respects; Nikortsminda church, with its exceedingly elaborate carved decoration (1010-1014 A.D.); the Gelati monastic complex (founded in 1106 A.D. by King David the Builder); a group of churches built towards the end of the 12th and in the early 13th century : Ikorta (1172 A.D.), — Betania, Kvatakhevi, Pitareti, Tsugrugasheni, Akhtala; the monuments of the late 13th and early 14th cc. displaying a certain artistic decline : Metekhi in Tbilisi (1278-1289 A.D.), the monastic churches at Safara and Zarzma. This period saw the continuation of work on rock-cut complexes, such as the David Garedja monastery in Kakheti and the great monastery of Vardzia. The most noteworthy examples of civic architecture are the royal palace at Geguti (mainly 12th c.); the Academy buildings at Iqalto (11th-12th cc.) and at Gelati (12th c.); various buildings on the sites of mediaeval towns (Gudarekhi, Samshvildé) and some monasteries in Southern Georgia.

The 14th-18th cc. were a period when Georgia disintegrated into separate small kingdoms and principalities and waged a difficult struggle for national independence. The architecture of the time is represented by edifices for diverse purposes. Time has preserved for us the sites of entire towns (Gremi, 16th c. in Kakheti) and feudal castles (Ananuri, 17th c.), separate churches, monasteries (Akhali Shuamta, 16th c. Kakheti; Mchadisjvari, 1668 A.D.; Barakoni, 1753 A.D. and others), belfries (Ninotsminda, 16th c.; Anchiskhati in Tbilisi, 1675 A.D., etc.), a great number of feudal palaces, fortresses, towers, caravanserais, bath-houses and rows of small shops. The ground plans and general composition of these buildings retain national characteristics; the same holds true for the decorating of stone building though this now displays a certain eclecticism and decline in artistic skill; in Eastern Georgia brick comes to be widely used.

The incorporation of Georgia into the Russian Empire in 1801 marks the beginning of classicism (for government and office buildings). The latter style penetrates the architecture of private houses, where it harmoniously combines with basic national traditions. This materializes in the emergence of a particular type of city house (in old Tbilisi, Kutaisi, Telavi, Signakhi and elsewhere). The architecture of a peasant's home is individual and varied : the "darbazi" in Kartli and Meskheta, the Imeretian houses and the house-cum-tower dwellings in mountain regions. From the second half of the 19th c. urban buildings lose their national features under the pressure of eclecticism characteristic of capitalist cities; however, at the beginning of the 20th c. there were several attempts to revive national architectural



forms and motifs (Kvashveti church, 1904-1910; and the State Public Library, which originally housed a bank, built circa 1910, in Tbilisi).

PLASTIC ARTS

The most ancient examples of Georgian art, made of metal and ceramic with modelled ornamentation, date back to the aeneolithic age. The gold, silver and bronze objects decorated with semi-precious stones, granulation and chase-work showing animals and people, as well as black-burnished and painted ware — all from Trialeti — belong to the middle of the 2nd millennium B.C. Numerous bronze axe-heads, plaques, belts, etc. unearthed in East and West Georgia decorated with engraved stylized representations of animals (the so-called "Kobano-Colchian circle") belong to the end of the 2nd — beginning of the 1st millennium B.C. The art of the *slave-owning states* — Iberia and Colchis — is especially richly represented by finds unearthed at Akhlagori (the Akhlagori treasure), Vani, Mtskheta and elsewhere. These are gold and silver vessels, plaques, ornaments executed with consummate skill and exquisite in form (casting, chase-work, engraving, filigree, granulation, carving, colour inserts); the same holds true as regards glyptics, pottery and objects made of glass. Along with imported objects and those under the influence of antique art (silver cups from Armaziskhevi at Mtskheta, sculptured figurines from Vani), there are many articles executed in conformity with local artistic traditions, ornamental and decorative motifs and polychromy being predominant. Early Georgian art testifies to cultural relations with the ancient peoples of the Near East — Sumerians, Hittites, Urartians and later with Achaemenid and Sassanid Persia, with Greeks and the Romano-Hellenistic world.

The Middle Ages mark the period of florescence of Georgian art, when its truly original features became particularly pronounced. Mediaeval Georgian art is represented by ornamental stone carving, metal chase-work, frescoes (monumental painting) and mosaic, illumination of manuscripts, different applied arts (glyptics, pottery, embroidery, etc.). Monumental sculpture in the round and easel painting were not developed in Georgia until the 19th century.

In the early Middle Ages (4th-9th cc.), after conversion to Christianity, Georgia adopted the new forms and new content of the fine arts from other cultural centres of the Christian East. These forms and content, however, were adapted to the age-old national traditions, thus creating an original artistic school.

Sculpture of that period is represented by *reliefs* showing figures and ornamental carving (with geometric and vegetable motifs) on the façades of churches, altar screens, memorial stellae, stone crosses, etc. The representations of animals and plants on the capitals of the Bolnisi Sioni (478-493) are a blending of imported artistic forms and local traditions. One can follow the evolution from reliefs, preserving a certain plasticity of form inherited from Hellenistic art (the reliefs of Jvari at Mtskheta, 586/7-604 A.D. portraying the founders of the church and the scene of "The Elevation of the cross") to bas-reliefs — where the deliberately distorted proportions accentuating a particular element of a figure, the linearity and the ornamentality of treatment serve to emphasize the expressiveness and the decorative character of the image (the reliefs on the Ateni Sioni — first half of the 7th c., on Opiza church — 9th c., the stella from Usaneti — 8th-9th cc., etc). Analogous development is also observable in chasing (the "Transfiguration" icon from Zazma, 886 A.D., executed in a flat ornamental manner).

The earliest examples of pictorial art in Georgia surviving to the present day are the mosaic floors in the churches at Bichvinta and Lanchkhuti; as regards content and style, they have affinities with early Christian monuments of the Near East. The grand mosaic composition "Christ in Glory" in the conch of the altar apse of the church at Tsromi shows a deviation from the principles of Hellenistic illusionism. The 9th and 10th-century mural paintings decorating only the altar apse of churches are executed in a still more pronounced linear manner, with figures stiff and angular (for example, the "Christ in Glory" in the rock-cut Dodo monastery in the David Garedja complex, and elsewhere). Analogous development of style can be seen in the miniatures of the most ancient Georgian illuminated Gospels — the Adishi Gospels (897 A.D.). The artist Tevdoré, who illuminated the Jruchi Gospels (940 A.D.), also employed a linear style with a delicate use of colour.

The period of advanced feudalism (10th-13th cc.) was a period of flowering in Georgian pictorial art. Big Georgian monasteries on the territory of Georgia and beyond her boundaries (in Syria, Palestine and Greece) became centres of national culture and also served as links connecting Georgia with the cultural and artistic achievements of the Christian East, especially of Byzantium.

The second half of the 10th c. marks the beginning of an original quest for new plastic forms in sculpture, unlike the tendency to imitation characteristic of the beginning of mediaeval times; this quest yielded remarkable results in the 11th century. At the beginning figures possess tangible plastic volume, though not differentiated, and the treatment of the body

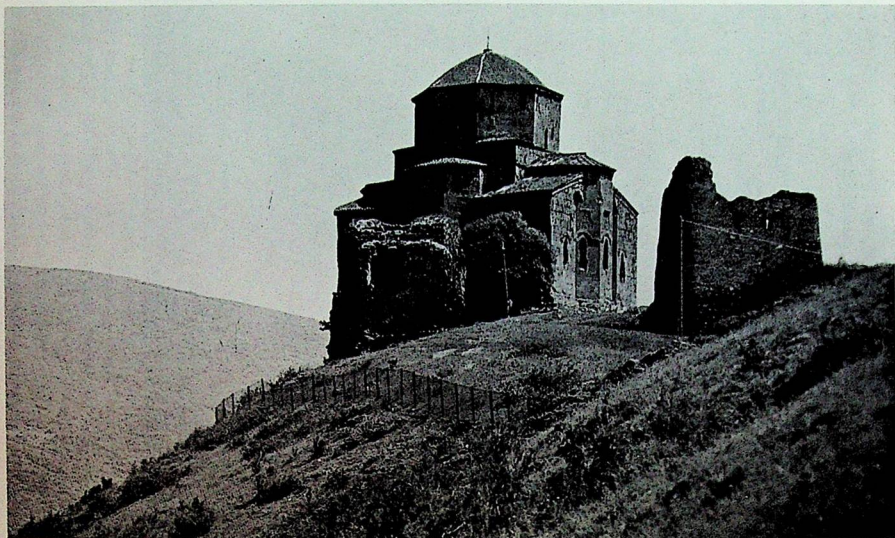
and the face still accentuates expression (the Ishkhani Cross, 973 A.D.); later, plastic modelling, correct proportioning of the human body and correct representation of motion gain predominance and become characteristic features of the sculpture of the period. The evolution can be traced in a number of examples (the processional cross from Brili (by the sculptor Assat) and from Breti; plaques from Sagolasheni and Motsameta showing festive scenes; the gold cup from Bedia; the icon supposedly belonging to the Laklakidze family with a number of scenes from the Gospels on its margins; the Gelati tondo with an image of St. Mamai; the processional cross from Martvili, etc). At the beginning of the 13th c. the decorative aspect becomes predominant in chased metalwork. The role of enamelled plaques, niello and other pictorial means of decorative accentuation increases (the magnificent Khakhuli triptych, with a complexity and richness which make a striking impression, decorated as it is with numerous enamel medallions, the works of Beshken and Beka Opizari).

Analogous evolution is also traceable in stone relief carving : from flat reliefs (Tbeti and Kumurdo, 10th c.) to more plastic sculptured ornamentation on the façades of Oshki (10th c.) and Svetitskhoveli (1010-1029 A.D.) cathedrals and especially in the Nikortsminda church (1010-1014 A.D.) A plastic style of modelling attains its peak in the fine reliefs on altar screens in Khovlé, Safara and Shio-Mgvimé (11th c.). The equally fine examples of wood carving (church doors from Svaneti) also date back to the 11th c.

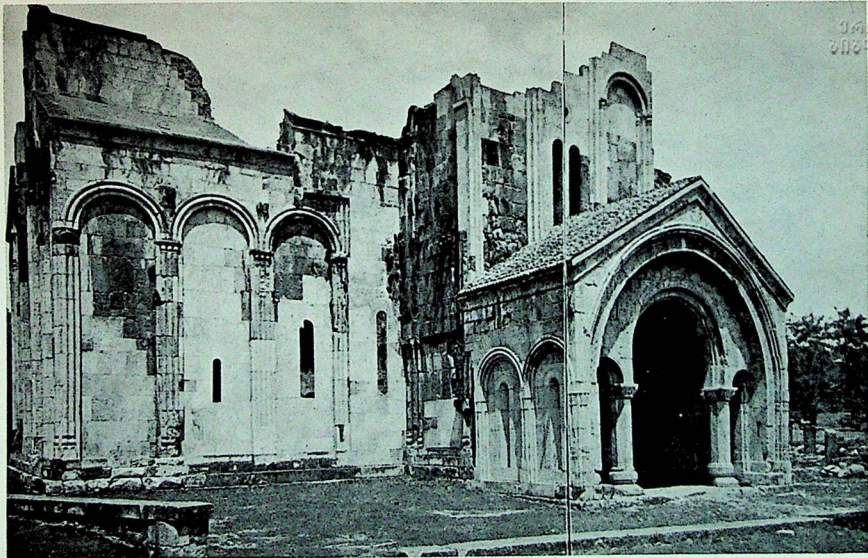
Fresco painting was at its height in the 10th-13th cc. when it was used to decorate entire interiors of churches (occasionally the façades) as well. Original scenes from the life of local saints and portraits of donors appear. The iconographic models borrowed from abroad (mainly from Byzantium) receive further creative development. Characteristic features of Georgian painting are stylistically connected with those of Byzantium — the restrained harmonious colouring and linearity of manner. The style, as a whole, develops from strict monumentality (11th c.) to relative dynamism and decorativeness (in painting at the beginning of the 13th c.). Various schools of painting take shape in different monastic centres. Leading schools are remarkable for a greater austerity of composition and drawing and the liberal use of the expensive lapis lazuli (Ateni, 11th c.; Kintsvisi, beginning of the 13th c., exquisite both in design and colour). Emphasis on decoration, linearity and sobriety of colouring are characteristic of the provinces of Ratcha (murals in Zemo-Krikhi, 11th c.) and Svaneti (painters Tevdoré and Maglakeli, who worked from the end of the 11th to the first half of the 12th c.). A separate school of painting was formed at the David Garedja monastic complex. The main church of Gelati monastery (the frescoes in



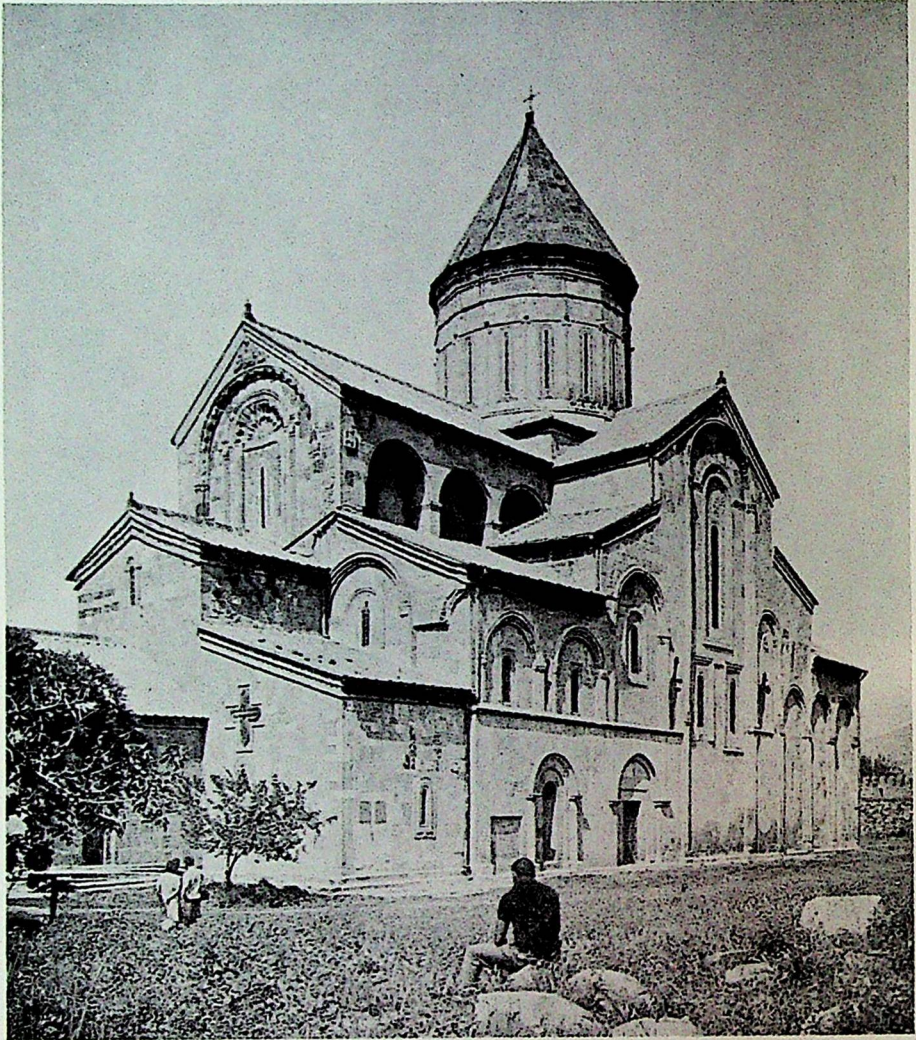
Basilica of Bolnisi, 478-493.



Cathedral of Jvari, Mtskheta, 586/7-604.



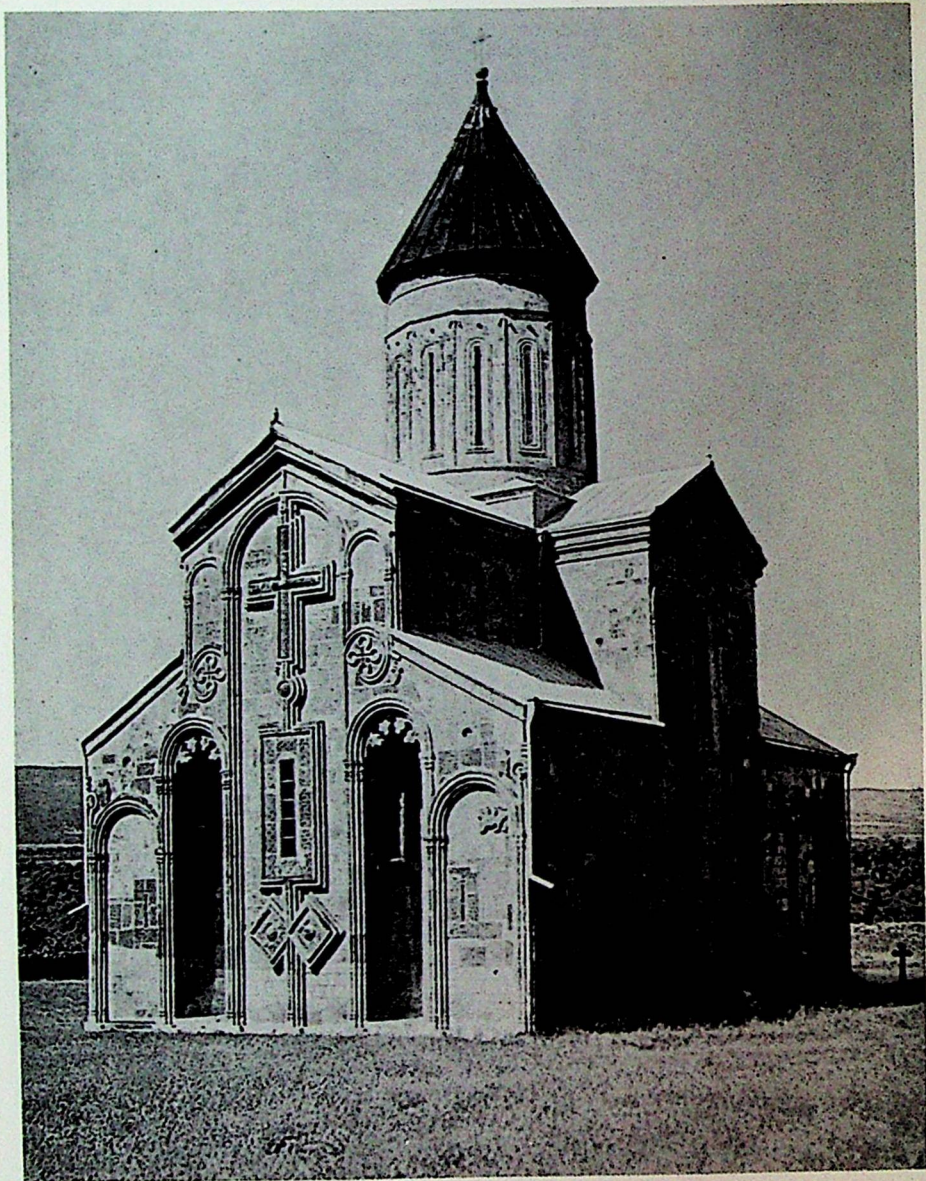
Cathedral of King Bagrat at Kutaisi, 1003, undergoing restoration.



Cathedral of Svetitskhoveli, Mtskheta, 1010-1029.



Alaverdi Cathedral (first quarter of 11th century).



Samtavissi Cathedral, 1030.

the narthex, the mosaic in the altar apse, 12th c.) is an important monument of Georgian mediaeval painting. The art of miniature also at a high level, shows two tendencies in its development : one connected with local artistic traditions, linear in style, with the drawing filled in with colour (the Mtskheta Psalter, 10th c., and the Yanash Gospels, beginning of the 13th c.), and the other following the traditions of Byzantine manuscript illumination, employing the technique in which many layers of paint were applied and gold was used (the Mestia Gospels, 1033; the second Gospel from Jruchi and the Gelati Gospel, 12th c. - both with a large number of miniatures). The only illustrated secular manuscript that has come down to us from that epoch is a treatise on astronomy of 1188 with the signs of the Zodiac.

The art of cloisonné attained a high level of development in the 6th to 14th cc. (small icons, medallions, crosses, icon frames, etc.). Examples of painted pottery and ceramics date back to the 8th-9th cc. In the 11th-13th cc. there were large pottery work-shops in Tbilisi, Dmanisi and Rustavi manufacturing various types of vessels, facing tiles, etc. from faience and ceramic clay with red and white engobe. All kinds of household wares were made of metal and decorated with chasing, engraving, inlay, as well as of wood (caskets, vessels, trays) with carved geometric or, less frequently, vegetable designs.

In the monumental painting of the 13th-14th cc., along with some frescoes in Eastern Georgia which show use of old techniques with less skill than of old, a new type of mural painting appears, mainly in Western and Southern Georgia, executed in the new, "Paleologue" style borrowed from Byzantium (the frescoes in Khobi, also in the south chapel of the main Cathedral at Gelati; in Safara, Zarzma, Lykhne, Nabakhtevi, Urbnisi, Tsalenjikha), which also influenced both iconography and miniature painting (illuminations of the Mokvi Gospels, 1300 A.D.). Frescoes of the 14th-17th cc. are characterized by a lack of integrity in composition and laxity in drawing and colouring. Numerous portraits of donors (from the frescoes at Gremi, Akhali Shuamta, Chala, 16th c.; Svetitskhoveli, Martvili, Nikortsminda, 17th c.) are of considerable interest. Many illustrated secular manuscripts have come down to us from the 17th-18th cc. Seventeenth-century manuscript copies of Rustaveli's poem "The Knight in the Tiger's Skin" are most noteworthy. A number of secular miniature paintings display the influence of the style of Persian miniature painting.

The beginning of the 16th c. marks a new rise in the art of chasing (mainly in Kakheti); new techniques emerge of carving and engraving the background with fine vegetable designs and with an inlay of precious and semi-



precious stones. As regards 17th and 18th cc. chasing, old techniques and motifs are revived, although on a much lower artistic level (items produced in the workshop belonging to Levan II Dadiani, Prince of Odishi; first half of the 17th c.). Elsewhere some European motifs were adopted.

The 17th century witnesses a revival of the tradition of decorating façades with reliefs in stone. In some cases affinity with folk art is evident in both motifs and execution, (e.g. Ananuri, 17th c., and elsewhere).

In the 18th century the art of calligraphy fully retains its high artistic level (several dynasties of calligraphers are known); new forms of art appear, such as woodcuts (King Vakhtang VI's incunabula) in which Russian and West European influence is obvious, as well as easel painting — portraits of royalty and nobility painted by visiting West European and Russian artists.

The applied arts are represented by embroidery on silk and velvet with drawn gold, as well as with gold and silver thread (sacred shrouds with complicated thematic compositions). We also find banners and carved seals. Majolica appears in the 15th c. Folk art manifests itself in metalwork (all kinds of utensils, jewellery, etc.); embroidery in gold thread, stone-carving on tombstones and wood-carving (furniture, etc.).

In the 19th century, with Russia as intermediary, Georgian art re-established its ties with European art, ties which had been severed in the late feudal period. Easel painting is further developed, while graphic art and sculpture come to the fore. By the mid-19th century the Tbilisi school of portrait painting takes shape, combining the traditions of mediaeval painting with features of realism. The new realistic Georgian art of portrait painting was created by G. I. Maisuradze who had graduated from K. P. Brüllow's studio at the St. Petersburg Academy of Arts (1844).

The upsurge of national art in the latter half of the 19th century was conditioned by the advanced ideas of Georgian progressives connected as they were with the Russian democratic movement of the 1860's. In the 1880's there appeared a group of democratically-minded realist painters who reflected national themes in their works, such as R. N. Gvelesiani, A. L. Beridze, and G. I. Gabashvili, the most gifted of them all, an outstanding master, author of portraits, landscapes, genre paintings and an entire gallery of human types, representative of various walks of life. The first Georgian engraver and xylographer G. N. Tatishvili also worked in this period. A. R. Mrevlishvili who denounced the social inequality of Georgian peasantry and M. I. Toidze who depicted subjects from popular life, appear on the artistic scene at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries; they were influenced by the works of the "Pered-



vizhniki" — democratically-minded Russian artists of the period. The revolutionary events of 1905-1907 found reflection in drawings by A. I. Gogiasvili and in cartoons by O. I. Schmerling. In the early 1910's J. I. Nikoladze, the founder of the realist Georgian school of sculpture, created psychologically profound portraits of the writers Tsereteli, Ninoshvili and others, as well as designing the tomb of I. Chavchavadze. The gifted self-taught painter Niko Pirozmanishvili also worked in the same period. In his pictures he reflected the life and various types of Tbilisi burghers, as well as life in the Georgian countryside. A new galaxy of painters appeared before World War I, their talent finding full expression especially after the 1917 Revolution.

ARCHITECTURE AND PICTORIAL ARTS IN THE SOVIET PERIOD

The October Revolution ushered in a new era in the development of Georgian art. The founding of the Academy of Fine Arts in Tbilisi (1922), a national school for advanced studies in art, created conditions for educating national painters, sculptors, architects and specialists in applied arts. In 1933-34 the hitherto separate groups of artists and architects were amalgamated respectively in the Artists' Union of Georgia and the Architects' Union of Georgia. A picture gallery was opened in the 1920's and in 1934 the State Museum of Georgian Art was inaugurated. The State took charge of collecting objects of art and protecting historical monuments. Art exhibitions are now regularly arranged. Georgian painters take an active part in All-Union exhibitions and in those organized abroad. Architecture, easel painting, book-illustrating and easel graphics, various branches of sculpture and theatrical scenery painting are making steady progress; since the 1950's artistic pottery and metal-chasing have been on the upsurge.

In the field of architecture great attention is being paid to the reconstruction, amenities and planning of the rapidly growing old cities, as well as urban planning for the new towns that are growing round industrial centres.

After the Revolution Georgian architects tended to revive certain national features, which was quite natural after centuries of foreign oppression and the predominance of eclecticism in architecture. Initially this tendency did not in most cases go beyond a certain stylization, the reproduction of individual architectonic forms (arches, vaults) and ornamental motifs of old Georgian architecture. Georgian architecture, as well as Soviet architecture generally speaking, could not but go through a period of eclectic

reproduction of classic form. Since the 1950's modern rational forms and industrial building methods have been definitively adopted by architecture, which does not, however, prevent Georgian architecture from seeking means of lending to their edifices an individuality that is purely national not through stylization but in a more organic manner, taking into account all functional problems. For the most part, Georgian art follows the path of realism. Examples of abstract art and other leftist trends form an exception (in the 1920's). All the principal genres of painting are developed : landscapes, portraiture, still-life, compositions on historical (often revolutionary) and contemporary topics (often depicting the modernization of the country). In the sphere of graphic arts book-illustration comes to the fore, in particular the illustration of works of Georgian and foreign classics (Rustaveli, Saba-Sulkhan Orbeliani, Chavchavadze, Vazha Pshavela, Pushkin, Shakespeare, Mark Twain, Kipling and others). The evolution of theatrical scenery painting is linked with the two national drama theatres, the Rustaveli and the Marjanishvili theatres, as well as the Tbilisi Opera House.

In the field of sculpture, besides the portrait genre, reliefs and monumental sculpture gain in popularity ; the latter is represented by monuments and obelisks adorned with carving in high and low relief, as well as other commemorative monuments. In the interiors of buildings and on their façades a great number of panneaux of ceramics, mosaic and chased metal representing national ornamental and folk-lore motifs can be seen as well as reliefs. Since the 1950's a broader view has been taken of realism than was the case heretofore, which has made for a greater diversity in art and allowed for the uninhibited expression of artistic personalities. Several generations of artists have contributed to Soviet Georgian art. The eldest of these started their career in pre-revolutionary times or during the Revolution. The most talented of these are : M. Toidze and the landscape painter A. Tsimakuridze who had received their education in Russia ; the remarkable landscape painter David Kakabadze ; the versatile Lado Gudriashvili who has created an entire fairyland of legends and characters ; the landscape painter Helen Akhvlediani ; and the portrait painter K. Magalashvili (all of them received their training in France except for Toidze and Tsimakuridze). Members of the younger generation who are graduates of the Tbilisi Academy of Fine Arts are represented by : U. Japaridze, S. Kobuladze, L. Grigolia, K. Sanadze, D. Gabashvili, K. Makharadze, Z. Nizharadze ; theatrical artists I. Gamrekeli, P. Otskheli, S. Virsaladze. The initiators of new Georgian sculpture were J. Nikoladze who studied under Rodin, and N. Kandelaki. Outstanding names in this field are : N. Tsereteli,



T. Abakelia, V. Topuridze, Sh. Mikatadze, K. Merabishvili, E. Amashukeli, M. Berdzenishvili, G. Ochiauri, V. Oniani and others. I. Ochiauri, K. Guruli, G. Gabashvili and others have made their name as masters in craft chased metalwork.

Besides the Academy of Fine Arts in Tbilisi, with its departments of painting, graphic art, sculpture, architecture, ceramics, art history and the applied arts, Georgia has secondary art schools and a department of architecture at the Polytechnic Institute. Research in the sphere of art is carried out by the personnel of the Institute of the History of Georgian Art, under the auspices of the Academy of Sciences of Georgia. A special department of the Ministry of Culture of Georgia and the Georgian Society for the Preservation of Historical Monuments is responsible for the upkeep and protection of monuments of national culture.

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GEORGIAN LITERATURE FROM ITS BEGINNINGS TO THE PRESENT DAY

Georgian literature covers fifteen centuries of history and is among the richest and most ancient of the Eastern Christian World. Comprising a vast number of works in all branches of literature, it is of great value in research and makes an important contribution to the study of many problems related to the literature of early Christianity and the Middle Ages, as well as to the history of relations between the peoples of Byzantium and the Near East. Many valuable Greek and Syriac texts of which the originals are believed to be lost have survived in a Georgian version, without which it would be impossible to restore them.

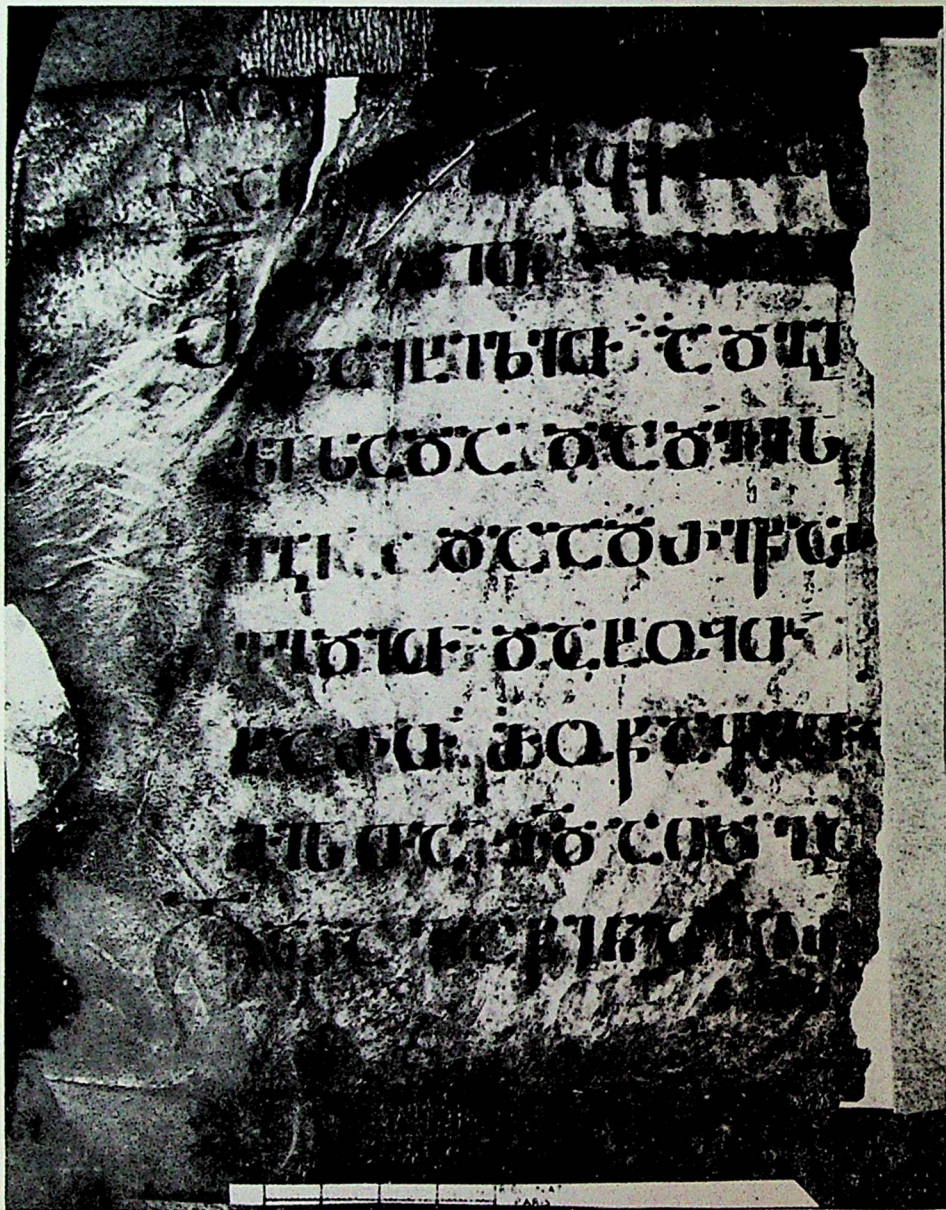
The Georgian language (kartuli) belongs to the family of Caucasian languages of the South known as Kartvelian (Georgian, Mingrelo-Chan and Svan) and according to some scholars is related to Sumerian (M. Tsereteli) or Basque (R. Lafon). A number of linguistic scholars (H. Vogt, G. Deeters, G. Machavariani, T. Gamkrelidze) think it very probable that in prehistoric times Georgian was influenced by Indo-European languages. Similarities between Indo-European and Kartvelian languages are evidence of the close contacts which existed between those peoples, confirming the theory of the infiltration of Indo-European tribes into Asia Minor through the Caucasus.

*The Georgian alphabet*¹, which was influenced by the Greek script,

¹ The legend according to which the Georgian alphabet was invented by Mesrop-Mashtotz in the fifth century has no credence today among scholars worthy of the name. It was a later addition, made by interpolators with an obvious motive. Many impartial Armenian scholars question the validity of the Mesrop legend, among them Professor A. Perikhanian, who writes: "... It is another question as to whether Mashtotz can be considered as the inventor of the Georgian and Albanian scripts — one to which one might *a priori* reply in the negative. The creation of a new system of writing for a given language could not have been confined to the invention of letters: it is a vast and complex process, involving primarily the isolation of the phonemes of the language and demanding a close acquaintance with its phonetics as well as its grammar. Mashtotz was familiar with neither Georgian nor Albanian; consequently the communication from Koriun, that Mashtotz had collected information in the field on the phonetic structure of those languages, cannot be taken very seriously, as data acquired in this way cannot be regarded as adequate for the purpose." *La question de l'origine de l'écriture arménienne. Recueil d'Asie antérieure*, II, M., 1966, pp. 126-7.



Inscription from the Bolnisi basilica, 493-4



Hanmeti text, early 7th century.



probably represents an independent branch of the Phoenician; it has two forms, the *ecclesiastical* (capitals and minuscules) and the *military* or *secular*, dating from the eleventh century, in use today.

The earliest incontestable evidence of the existence of a Georgian literature dates from the fifth century. This is the *Passion of St. Shushanik*, written by the Saint's confessor Jacob Tsurtaveli between 476 and 483; it gives an expressive picture of the political, social and religious manners and customs of Georgia at that time. Clearly the Georgian language must have been long in evolving to the state where a work as perfect as this, remarkable in its power of expression, could be composed.

The inscriptions of 493-4 in the basilica of Bolnisi and those at Bethlehem (of 430 according to G. Tsereteli), discovered by Virgilio Corbo in 1953, give evidence of a maturity of language and style that could place the origins of Georgian script at a time considerably earlier than the fifth century.

GEORGIAN RELIGIOUS LITERATURE

The Bible. — Georgia is a country of distinctive cultural character. Lying at the foot of the Caucasus, she is at the confluence of two main streams of thought: the mystical and emotional current of ancient Eastern Christianity flowing from Syria and Palestine, and the current of rational and philosophical thought from the West in the form of Greco-Byzantine theology. Out of these two streams Georgia formed an entirely original thought of her own, with a unique viewpoint in culture and religion, commonly known as Georgian Christianity.

An important fact should be taken into account by those engaged in specialised research in ecclesiastical Greco-Byzantine literature: of all the Churches of the ancient East, the Georgian Church is the first and only one to have remained faithful to the Greco-Byzantine world, whose canonical and liturgical tradition she accepted and perpetuated, following it in many respects more closely than did the Greek Church.

Some examples remain to us of the literature of the earliest period — that is, from the beginning of the age of feudalism — both original works and translations. Its total volume is difficult to estimate, since in the melting-pot of effervescing ideas and conflicting faiths, and also in consequence of the numerous and devastating invasions of the Persians and Arabs, a great part of the Georgian literature of that time was completely destroyed. Even so, it may be concluded from the fragments that remain that the Georgians had then translated into their own language all works of importance in Byzantine and Oriental Christian literature.

The first Georgian translation of the Gospels, the Psalms and the Epistles of St. Paul was made in the fifth century, followed immediately by the Acts of the Apostles, which has been preserved in the text edited by G. Garitte in Abuladze's recension. The revision of the text of the Gospels goes back most probably to the period of schism between Armenia and Georgia, and is thought by M. Tarkhnishvili to be the work of the Georgian Catholicos Kyrion. The revised text was immediately adopted for liturgical use, as is seen in all known Georgian lectionaries; but it is the second revision of the Gospels, known as the Athonite, which constitutes the equivalent of the Vulgate in the Georgian Church. "There are signs at present both in Georgia and outside it of growing interest in everything concerning the origin of the ancient Georgian version of the Gospels". (M. Brière, *Journal asiatique*) N. Marr has also given prominence to the great value of the Georgian version in textual criticism of the Bible.

In the literature of the Caucasian peoples, and also in reciprocal Armenian-Georgian and Georgian-Armenian translations, are found translations from Syriac, Greek, Arabic, Persian and many other languages, not as isolated works but as a body, a systematic transmission of the principal works of one or another trend in foreign literature. Those who study the literature of any of these peoples find in the Caucasus an almost untouched treasure for their historico-literary researches (N. Marr).

Two forms in the literature of that early period are of purely literary value — the narrative and the lyric. The narrative, to some extent a "religious epic poetry", has both an apocryphal and a hagiographic aspect. Apocryphal literature, with its legendary fiction and its interest and simplicity of style, found an audience in the lower classes of feudal society and consequently attained an extraordinary popularity from the very beginning. Hagiographic literature constitutes the richest and broadest domain of ancient Georgian sacred writings. This is explained not only by the fact that works of this kind made, for the most part, intriguing and fascinating stories, but also because in some respects they satisfied the need for historical information. The situation of the country resulting from the usurpation and ravages of Persians and Arabs was reflected in literary forms, and contributed to the creation of a cult of martyrdom and suffering, expressed in particular in an original hagiography consisting chiefly of works of martyrology. The conflict with the Persians gave rise to *The Passion of St. Shushanik* and *The Passion of St. Eustace of Mtskheta*; the Arab invasion, to *The Passion of St. Abo of Tbilisi*, *Constantine Kakhi* and *Michael (Gobron)*.

The development of monastic life, the appearance of new monasteries



and the growth of national consciousness called forth a particular type of hagiographic literature at the same time as the *Passions*, known as the *Lives* and *Acts*. Among the original *Lives* written at that period must be mentioned above all the *Life of St. Nino*, who converted Georgia to Christianity in 332, and the *Lives* of heroes of national monasticism : *St. Serapion of Zarzma*, the *Thirteen Syrian Fathers*, *Gregory of Khandzta* etc. The *Life of St. Gregory of Khandzta* (759-861), a monk who colonized Klarjeti, is the most interesting of all the original works of that period and may unhesitatingly be called a valuable work of world literature. The author was George Merchuli, an ascetic of the monastery founded by Gregory. The work is distinguished by its breath of historical perspective, the dramatic treatment of its subject, the precise descriptive passages, the natural scenes painted in captivating colours, a picturesque manner of regarding Nature as a manifestation of the divine — a rare phenomenon in religious literature. Nature is not merely a backcloth : it forms an integral part of the work and is incorporated in it. What is most remarkable is that the episodes are set out like landscapes, and if one leaves them aside to consider the work as a whole it appears like a fresco of a size which reveals the most authentic genius of epic. It is permeated with the romantic element in Georgian feudal life, before this became dissipated in later forms.

Foreign centres of Georgian literature. — The development of ancient Georgian literature was assisted most of all by Georgian monastic communities in foreign lands. Among the principal of these may be mentioned the lavra of *Mar-Saba* near Jerusalem, founded in 483, where most of the Georgian Sinai manuscripts were translated or composed and where the Georgian monks took refuge when the Arabs drove them out of Mar-Saba. There are eighty-five Georgian manuscripts in the Sinai collection, whose great age gives it especial importance in the critical analysis of Biblical texts, in Greek patrology and Byzantine philosophy. The *Calendrier palestino-géorgien* of John Zosime, preserved at Sinai, translated into Latin and published at Louvain by Gérard Garitte, comprises over eleven hundred hagiographic and liturgical sayings — a document unique in age and size and the nature of its contents.

The *Ivion* monastery on Mount Athos, founded in 980, was a highly important centre of Georgian spiritual life at that time. It was in Ivion that the second and true renaissance of Georgian letters had its impetus, reaching out — in Georgia as in the Diaspora — to monastic communities who faithfully preserved their national language and character and doubtless emigrated only to keep these safer from the depredations of invaders,

thus unwittingly contributing to the lasting wealth of the store of world hagiography. Georgian literature at that time was enriched by innumerable versions of Greek texts, through the work of the talented scribes of the Athonite school and their disciples : Euthymius († 1028), Giorgi the Hagiorite († 1065), Ephrem Mtsire (1094), Arsen of Iqalto († 1130) of the Black Mountain (Arsen returned to Georgia in 1114 to found the academy of Iqalto) and the philosopher Ioane Petritsi of the school of literature of the Georgian Petritsoni monastery, founded in Bulgaria in 1083 by a nobleman at the court of Constantinople, the Georgian Prince Gregory Bakurianisdze. Petritsi came to Georgia in response to the summons of David the Builder, to direct the academy of Ghelati which the King had founded. We owe to the Athonite school of Iviron, and particularly to Euthymius, the Greek translation of one of the Georgian versions of the celebrated story of Barlaam and Joasaph which is the basis of all the later versions of this book found in Europe.

Finally let us mention the *Monastery of the Holy Cross* in Jerusalem, which perpetuated the literary tradition of Mar-Saba and Mount Athos and formed the principal foreign centre of Georgian cultural activity. A hundred and forty-seven manuscripts from the monastery are in the library of the Greek Patriarchate in Jerusalem.

Lost works of Byzantine literature preserved in Georgian versions. Georgian tradition has preserved some works of oriental writers unknown to, or not preserved in, Greek literature : those of Syrians such as Aphraate and Martyrius-Sahdona, Egyptians such as the *Letters* of St. Anthony, Arsen and Macarius, edifying stories attached to the *Pratum spirituale* ; translations of Syriac texts such as the *Lives* of Ephraim, Peter the Iberian — identified by many scholars with Dionysius the Areopagite — and Simeon Stylites the Elder; also the *Commentaries* on the *Song of Songs* and *Ecclesiastes* (edited by K. Kekelidze), *The Persians' Capture of Jerusalem in 614*, Michael Psellos' *Treatise on Philosophy*, and the *Great Georgian Homily of Sinai* of 1864, which provides valuable material for historians of ancient Christian literature; the *Jerusalem Lectionary*, the discovery and publication of which by K. Kekelidze fill a gap of several centuries in the history of liturgy, the *Lives* of *Simeon Metaphrastes* and *Ioane Xiphilin*, and other works.

Hymnography. — The *lyric* form is represented in religious literature of the early period by hymnal poetry, dating in origin from the seventh century. Many hymnographers of outstanding talent were at work in the

literary circles of Tao-Klarjeti, such as Zosime, Ioane Minchki, Ioane Mtbevari and above all Michael Modrekili with his celebrated hymnal. Georgian liturgical poetry took on a true national independence, becoming entirely dissociated from the standard Greek models, and original Georgian poems were even included in Greek hymnals.

FROM SACRED LITERATURE TO PROFANE

From the tenth century to the thirteenth Georgia was a powerful kingdom encompassing the whole of Caucasia. It was the epoch of David the Builder and Queen Tamar, the *Golden Age* of Georgia's history. The religious literature of the time displayed the characteristics of a general renaissance, and the period may be termed Greco-Byzantine. The cultural criterion of the epoch was the exact reproduction of Byzantine civilization in all its forms, and translations were made with the aim of exhausting all the riches of Byzantine literature. The desire that Georgia should be the cultural equal of Byzantium was so strong that people set out to review and revalue all the literary life of the past and to reject every trace of ties with oriental literature.

Translations were made in all branches of theological literature : the text of the New Testament by Giorgi of Mount Athos was canonized as the Vulgate; important works of exegesis were translated, works of dogma and polemics of celebrated exponents of Byzantine theology were codified in the *Dogmaticon* of Arsen of Iqalto; the foundations of Georgian legal literature were laid by the translation of the Patriarch Photius' *Great Nomocanon*; new collections of religious homilies came out and gave rise to the original sermons of Ioane Bolneli, the Georgian Chrysostom of his time.

Philosophical literature. — At the same time as the efflorescence of different branches of purely theological literature the seeds of philosophical literature — chiefly religious — were being sown. St. John of Damascus' *Source of Knowledge* was translated three times into Georgian, also the *Theological Principles of Proclus* with a commentary by Ioane Petritsi; there was bitter strife between Aristotelianism and Platonism, as well as a tendency to reconcile them and turn them into a "symphony" in the manner of neo-Platonism. Neo-Platonic philosophy, transplanted into Georgian soil by Ephrem Mtsire, became the favourite child of Georgian cultural life, through the work of Ioane Petritsi, founder of the school of literature, and his fol-

lowers. The philosophic spirit of the medieval Greek renaissance, which penetrated to Georgia from the Mangana Academy of Constantinople — principally through the Petritsoni school — was cultivated especially in the Georgian academies of Ghelati, Iqalto and Gremi.

Historical literature occupies an intermediate stage between the religious and the secular. In the national historiography one meets first the architects of the country's political power and national renaissance, the members of the reigning dynasty of the Bagratids. One of them, Sumbat Davidisdze, gives the history of this dynasty which he dates from the sixth century, and relates all the later history of the country to the Bagratid house. Another historian, Leonti Mroveli, wrote a *History of the Early Fathers and Kings*. He was followed by Juansher, who continued Mroveli's work up to the first years of the reign of Giorgi II (1072-1089). Then came Arsen the Monk, author of the *History of David the Builder*, finished about 1126. The *History of Queen Tamar* (1184-1213) — of considerably greater interest as literature — came out in two versions. The first, attributed to Rustaveli himself, is actually an ode in honour of the "great" queen "like to God", "for whose reign the whole course of world history prepared before her". With its abundance of exact comparisons in history and world literature, highly artistic descriptive passages and beautiful and distinguished style, this history carries the reader insensibly into the domain of elegant secular writing.

The earliest work of *profane literature* preserved up to our own time is the romantic poem *Vis-Ramiani*, a Georgian version of the Persian poem *Vis-o-Ramin*. It is translated into prose with such naturalness and ease, yet without any distortion of the text or the episodes in the story, and with such artistry of style, revealing the long road travelled by Georgian prose, that certain scholars at one time were prepared to consider it as an original Georgian work. It was translated by Sargis Tmogveli in the later part of the twelfth century. Another example of twelfth-century Georgian prose is the heroic romance *Amiran-Darejaniani*, telling of the knightly deeds of *Amiran*, the Georgian Prometheus.

Vepkhis-Tqaosani (*The Knight in Tiger's Skin*) by Shota Rustaveli. — The celebrated Georgian epic romance "The Knight in Tiger's Skin", dedicated to Queen Tamar, offers much of interest to philologists and historians not only as a literary monument of world value, created in Georgia on the eastern boundary of Europe, but also and above all because it is one of the masterpieces of medieval civilization — one which, with the



expansion of feudal society, gave birth to a culture that attained its highest level of expression in Georgia. Centuries before the Renaissance in Western Europe this poem reflected man's humanitarian ideas, his noblest tendencies: it is one of those works of the past which have kept their value up to the present time as a standard and model unsurpassed. The long story unfolds before our eyes of the passion and torments, the endless wanderings and heroic exploits of two royal couples — Tariel and Nestan-Darejan of India, Avtandil and Tinatin of Arabia — whose love leads them to self-sacrifice, and who cannot attain their desire without giving each other mutual aid and support. In this work we are offered an expert combination of the heroic and romantic elements. On a skilfully drawn background of the conflict between two fundamental manifestations of the human spirit — passionate love and the sense of duty, manifested in brotherly love and loyal friendship — all the episodes of this vast poem take place. Avtandil represents eternal friendship — as it is called in Georgia, "sworn brotherhood" — prepared for any sacrifice; and Tariel, love. Friendship proves the stronger and triumphs over love. When Avtandil has accomplished the tasks entrusted to him by the lady of his heart, thus acquiring the incontestable right to her hand in marriage, he postpones indefinitely the realization of his cherished dream: the sentiments of friendship linking him to Tariel demand of him, in fulfilment of his promise, that he should before all else go to the aid of his friend. This courageous decision to renounce his own happiness for his friend's sake is entirely approved by her whom Avtandil's heart has chosen.

The interest of the work is not only in the charm of the story, which one reads from beginning to end with unabated enthusiasm, but also in the fact that it is strewn with expressive imagery, profound aphorisms, edifying sentences and diverting philosophical, moral and didactic maxims which constitute an inexhaustible source of wisdom and experience of life, in which every one could find what he needed. Although the action takes place in Oriental countries, the poem like a mirror reflects with extraordinary precision every detail of Georgian life and feudal society at the time of Queen Tamar — that Christian society which by its social structure and world picture was closely related to that of Western Europe.

The variety of rhymes and metaphors used by Rustaveli, the spirited comparisons and parallelisms, the character of the rhythm — all give him an especial place in the world's literature. In this the poet is truly a sorcerer, a magician in eloquence (K. Kekelidze). Among the sparkling snow-covered peaks of the Caucasus mountains rises a granite giant, majestic and austere, bearing the name of the great Georgian poet Shota Rustaveli. Like that mountain, which people view with admiration, Rustaveli's poem *The Knight*

in Tiger's Skin stands out through the centuries above the marvellous summits of Georgian poetry. It is eight hundred years since the creator of this remarkable work was born — a work destined to survive all the tests of time without losing any of its power or profundity of thought. For eight centuries it has been the inspiration of the Georgian people. Long unknown outside its own country, today it has been translated into every language of the civilized world. Often it is time which shapes the fate of the masterpieces of human genius. Rustaveli's poem belongs henceforward to the common treasure of the civilization of every people. (It has been translated into French by S. Tsuladze, in the UNESCO Collection of Representative Works : Shota Rustaveli, *Le Chevalier à la Peau de Tigre*, Gallimard, 1964.)

Lyric Poetry. — The rulers of the reigning dynasty of the Bagratids, in particular Queen Tamar, as architects of their country's national power and political renaissance, provided abundant material for the development of lyric poetry. The victorious campaigns and wise rule of Queen Tamar raised Georgia to hitherto inaccessible heights in the fields of politics and culture, from which her contemporaries looked with joy and love on this woman who wore the crown, paid homage to her and sang her praise. The sovereign's personality was the inspiration of more than one composer of odes; unhappily only two works in this form have come down to us. The first, known as the *Tamariani*, is a collection of eleven odes in honour of Queen Tamar and her consort David Soslan. The other is *Abdul-Mesia* (servant of Christ), also extolling Tamar and David.

FROM THE MONGOL INVASION TO THE RENAISSANCE OF GEORGIAN LITERATURE (1250-1600)

This period in the history of ancient Georgian literature is marked by a decline in the literary world caused by a terrible flail which descended on Georgia : the Mongol invasion brought with it the pitiless destruction of the great works of material and spiritual culture. In the midst of her prosperity the country was put to fire and sword, the literary accumulations of the past destroyed and all possibility of cultural life stifled for a long time.

In the fifteenth century the Mongols were followed by the Turks who seized the region of Tao-Klarjeti-Samtskhe, the cradle of Georgian culture, and forced the inhabitants to embrace the Islamic faith. Georgian monasteries abroad, cut off from their homeland and deprived of new recruits and resources, gradually lost their patrimony until they finally had to be



abandoned. Obviously there could be no question of any cultural activity in those circumstances, either within Georgia or among her countrymen abroad.

The Renaissance. — With the sixteenth century began the period of the “Renaissance”, the “Silver Age”, which continued into the third decade of the nineteenth century. It is marked by a renewal of Georgian literature, apparent in all its branches: the reorganization of education, the appearance of printing, the formation of new centres of literary activity where new sources of inspiration are discovered. There are many writers at work, penetrating deeply into the spirit of contemporary life and reflecting it with great precision; even translations are infused with the national spirit.

The epic literature of this period takes the form of romantic, historical or didactic works such as *Omaniani* — to some extent a continuation of Rustaveli’s *Vepkhis-Tqaosani* — *Rusudiani*, a collection of twelve stories, *Shah-Navaziani*, a description of the first years of the reign of Vakhtang V, surnamed Shah-Navaz (1658-1675), and *Did-Mo’uraviani*, relating the tragic fate of Giorgi Saakadze, “mo’uravi” (governor) of the State.

Lyric poetry. — This was a period particularly rich in lyric poetry. The disastrous situation of the country and the vicissitudes of fortune compelled poets to reflect on the “perfidy of life”; hopes betrayed, desires disappointed and aspirations stifled drove them back into the “garden of sorrows” to shed bitter tears. Everyone expressed themselves in song — kings and queens, princes and princesses, nobles and populace, soldiers and civilians, churchmen and laity — and hence we have the inexhaustible variety of lyric themes seen in the works of the writers most characteristic of this period such as the kings *Teimuraz I* (1589-1663), *Archil II* (1647-1718), *Teimuraz II* (1700-1762) and others.

The most outstanding figures of the “Silver Age” of Georgian literature are *Saba-Sulkhan Orbeliani*, *King Vakhtang VI* and *David Guramishvili*, who shared the King’s exile in Russia.

SABA-SULKHAN ORBELIANI (1658-1725), one of the most illustrious Georgian men of letters of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, was a thinker and writer of wide erudition, the most brilliant stylist of his time. In 1713 he was sent to Europe on a diplomatic mission to King Louis XIV and Pope Clement XI.

Among his works should be mentioned the following:

— The *Georgian Lexicon*, an incomparable literary monument containing a large number of quotations from a new and unpublished version of the Bible and from unobtainable works.

The *Journey to Europe*, of first-class interest, one of the best books on travel we possess. This work is the finest example of memorialist literature.

A *Concordance*, an alphabetical catalogue of places in the Holy Land — a vast and admirable work, in no way inferior to the best of its kind.

The Testimony of the Prophets, translated from the Latin, intended for teaching Christian dogma and morality to the Georgians.

The Wisdom of Lying, a collection of about a hundred and sixty-two fables, sayings, aphorisms and anecdotes in which Saba pleads the cause of a democratic education for the crown prince.

VAKHTANG VI (1675-1737), the most outstanding figure of the later feudal period in Georgia. Enlightened sovereign, scholar, poet, critic, translator, he was at the head of all intellectual life in Georgia in the first part of the eighteenth century; he directed the collection and scientific analysis of the monuments of Georgian historiographic literature. Under his direction the laws then in force were collected and codified as the Laws of Vakhtang, infinitely more humane in character than those in force in the West at the same period. It was through his efforts that a printing-press was installed in Tbilisi — the first in all Caucasia. It was there that the first printed edition of Rustaveli's celebrated poem *The Knight in Tiger's Skin* came out in 1712, edited by Vakhtang himself and accompanied by ample commentaries revealing his prodigious erudition.

DAVID GURAMISHVILI (1705-1792), whose whole literary activity took place during his life abroad. He published a collection of his works in 1774 under the title *Davitiani*. The themes of his poetry are : the importance of knowledge and study; the contrast and incompatibility between man and life; the subject of love and family life. He treats of this last in a charming bucolic idyll entitled *Katsvia Mtsq'emsi* (Katsvia the shepherd) or *The Joyful Spring*, portraying the harmony of existence with great love and warmth of feeling.

The poem *Georgia's Afflictions* is the centrepiece of David Guramishvili's work, captivating the reader with its dramatic pathos, veracity and clarity and the interest of its material. The author describes in it the sombre epoch of Georgian history in the eighteenth century.

Guramishvili's poetry is not confined to a careful and accurate diagnosis of the political and social trends of thought of his time, but also points to ways of setting things right : the struggle against feudal separatism for the sake of political unity, dissemination of knowledge and education throughout society, strengthening of the moral foundations of life, etc. From the point of view of poetic form Guramishvili remained long unrivalled.

BESSIKI (Bessarion Gabashvili, 1750-1791) was brought up with the princes of the Georgian Court and received a good education by the standards of his time. His natural intelligence and good education, the wealth of literary tradition surrounding him both at home and at Court, and his marked poetic gifts, made him Georgia's most popular poet. The melancholy chords of his lyre echoed throughout the country, the profound sorrow in them evoked by the poet's exile when he was obliged to live in Russia as Ambassador. He was never to see his native land again before his sudden death at Jassy, in Rumania, in 1791.

Bessiki's poetry includes love poems, elegies, satires and odes. He lived at a time when stars of the first magnitude were rising on Georgia's sombre political horizon — Erekle II of Kartli and Solomon of Imereti. From Bessiki's pen came the patriotic ode *Aspindza*, or *The Battle of Aspindza*, commemorating the Georgian army's brilliant victory over the Turks at Aspindza in 1770; most of his poetry, however, is lyrical love poetry.

In 1801, after a history of 2,000 years, Georgia was annexed to the Russian Crown and became an outlying province of a bureaucratic monarchy. Then — as had happened earlier under Vakhtang VI — many members of the educated classes were deported to Russia either voluntarily or by force, taking with them everything of historical and cultural value that was movable. Russian policy was directed at creating a situation in which “the body remains Georgian, but the spirit becomes Russian”; and there began the adaptation of the “Georgian body” to the “Russian spirit”, with a pitiless reform of political, economic, social, cultural and moral secular customs and traditions (K. Kekelidze).

The literature of that period reflects with astonishing accuracy all the changes of fortune of the times. Three names in the new Georgian literature have gone down in history : Alexander Chavchavadze, Grigol Orbeliani and Niko Baratashvili. That period of transition was particularly rich in lyric poetry, which drew a lively inspiration from the march of events. The downfall of the monarchy and ensuing deportation to Russia of the members of the reigning dynasty, the loss of their country's political independence, the need to adapt themselves to a new land and new way of life tuned the poets' lyre to a key of melancholy in which a deeply pessimistic note was sometimes heard. Idealization of the past and recall of the beauties of a deeply loved country were food for a romantic movement in the literature of the early part of the nineteenth century, in which the leading writers were *A. Chavchavadze, G. Orbeliani and N. Baratashvili.*

ALEXANDER CHAVCHAVADZE (1786-1846), son of the Ambassador of King Erekle of Georgia to the Court of Russia, took an active part in all the progressive and nationalist movements of the Georgian educated class. From 1830 to 1840 his house in Tbilisi became a centre for Georgian and foreign intellectuals. Much of nineteenth-century poetry was patriotic in character, and Chavchavadze was one of the foremost poets in this genre. His political masterpiece *The Lake of Gogchai* paints a complex picture of historical development and social life. The pessimistic motifs of his poetry are most vivid in this work, which expresses the sense of the nullity of being with moving sadness.

Chavchavdze left many admirable translations of French and Russian poets, and was one of the first to make the works of Pushkin, Victor Hugo, La Fontaine, Corneille, Voltaire and Racine known to Georgian readers.

GRIGOL ORBELIANI (1800-1883) is among the most eminent of the Georgian romantic poets. Although he was at Novgorod when the famous plot of 1832 for the restoration of independence was discovered in Georgia, he did not escape the fate of his fellow-conspirators and spent three years in exile. He continued to combine military and administrative activities with literary work. Zealous in defence of the point of view of the older generation, he joined in the discussion started in the 'sixties between members of the two generations — fathers and sons — on fundamental problems of the time.

Grigol Orbeliani's literary heritage took several different forms. He left a vast private correspondence, of importance not only to his biographers but also in the study of social life in Georgia in the nineteenth century. The sentiments expressed with most profundity in his poetry are those of patriotism. His work *The Toast* (Sadgherdzelo) is an expression of one of the essential features of Georgian romanticism — idealization of the past.

NIKOLAZ BARATASHVILI (1817-1845) is an incomparable master of Georgian romantic poetry, giving it a universal quality by singing of aspirations common to all men. By his mastery of the language of poetry, his philosophic profundity of thought, the poet dispels the shadows darkening his age, striving to bring the light of progressive ideas into the restricted life of the time and to reveal vast horizons where "the heart is freed from torments and the spirit is at rest". Baratashvili throws down a challenge to Fate: he is determined to rise above the sorrows and misfortunes his country is undergoing at this time. His poem *Merani* (Pegasus), a masterpiece of romantic poetry, is an impassioned argument for a search for new ways to a better future for humanity. Baratashvili's hero is resolved to break



the fetters of destiny, advancing without heed for danger, crossing abysses to show by his own act the way to happiness for future generations. The immortal stanzas of *Merani* re-echo to this day with the majestic symphony of the strife, a hymn to the power of the human spirit, with life-giving optimism and ardent faith in victory over the forces of darkness in the world.

Baratashvili's famous poem *Georgia's Destiny (Bedi Kartlisa)*, one of the most brilliant examples of Georgian patriotic poetry, is infused with a noble sentiment of love for one's country, of the ardour of self-sacrifice for the survival and honour of one's native land. It is a poem in which romantic nostalgia is raised to the level of compassion for the sorrows of the world.

ILIA CHAVCHAVADZE and AKAKI TSERETELI — Two names above all give lustre to the last decades of the nineteenth and the early twentieth century, two undisputed masters of the new Georgian literature : *Ilia Chavchavadze* (1837-1907) and *Akaki Tsereteli* (1840-1915), who have left a profound impression on the political and cultural life of the nation. They enter on the literary scene at the time of the policy of intensive Russification adopted by the Tsars. Mouthpieces for all the nation's hopes, moving spirits of the liberation movement, they were indifferent to no problem touching the life of their country. Severely critical of Russian policy, they re-awakened in the memory of their fellow countrymen the finest passages of their country's history and praised everything that could stimulate people in their struggle for freedom. Chavchavadze's poems *Vision* and *The Lake of Basaleti*, Tsereteli's *The Dagger*, *Tornik Eristavi* and *Natela* are written in that spirit. In all their political and social activity they showed themselves courageous defenders of the liberty, honour and dignity of the Georgian people, their language and their culture. "A language is the expression of the spirit and heart of a people; without the mother tongue, school is not a means of developing the power of reason but of suppressing it, obscuring consciousness, treading it out and stamping it underfoot," declared Chavchavadze to those in occupation who had banished Georgian from the nation's schools.

A. Tsereteli's basic literary form was lyric poetry, through which he gained the reputation of a great poet. His poems *Suliko*, *La Luciola* and *My Poor Head* have been set to music and become famous as songs with a popularity even outside their own country.

I. Chavchavadze and A. Tsereteli are creators of the new literature and the modern Georgian language, which they have enriched with genuine



masterpieces. The Georgian nation calls them by their Christian names — Ilia and Akaki — in token of great affection.

VAZHA PSHAVELA (1861-1915), whose real name was Luca Razicashvili, has a special place in the history of Georgian literature. He belongs to a different species — his poetic inspiration is mythological in character. No poet of pagan survival has succeeded as he did in making himself the echo of his country's traditional myths and clothing them in living form. He creates almost like an impersonal genius, and sometimes it seems that the collective fantasy of centuries has contributed to his work.

Vazha Pshavela was a mountain dweller, living and working in a part of the country where the tribes continued to live as they had in ancient times, in timelessness or rather in a sort of absolute present where the absent have their place, yet without any effacing of the difference between the here and the hereafter — in contrast to what is seen among many thinkers and poets of modern times.

As a literary heritage he has left us poems, fine prose, historical and ethnographical sketches in which his remarkable talent is reflected. Everything he has written is animated with lofty patriotism. Vazha Pshavela draws on popular art for his material and gives it a poetic *elan*, a heightened intensity. On the base of some short, simple popular story he raises up a splendid edifice of complex structure. The heroes of these poems are ordinary men who have risen to a higher level than the people round them. They are set in opposition to the community as champions of liberty, high morality, love of humanity. They are outsiders, rebels striving for the highest ideals of humanity.

The poem *Bakhtrioni* commemorates an uprising of the Georgians against their Persian conquerors in 1659, and the liberation of the stronghold of Bakhtrioni, in one of the darkest periods of Georgia's history. Historical events, heroism, courage, the people's unanimous devotion to the cause are rendered in this poem with great artistic power.

Among the many poems constituting Vazha Pshavela's literary legacy *The Snake Eater* takes first place — a work of profound philosophical thought. The fundamental problem that is the poem's theme is the question of omniscience, wisdom — qualities incarnated in the hero Mindia. Mindia has been captured by the Kadjis, mythological beings who have compelled him to serve them, and after twelve years of slavery decides to kill himself. He knows that the Kadjis eat snakes; and one day, seeing some snake meat cooking in a pot on the fire, he decides to sample it in the hope that it will be fatal to him. He eats some of the flesh, concealing himself from the

Kadjis. And a strange transformation takes place in him : he becomes an entirely new man. What he had taken to be the flesh of snakes was actually wisdom ("He was shown wisdom in the form of a snake"). Mindia acquires the wisdom of the Kadjis and "the sky, the earth, the forests begin to speak to him". He becomes the repository of knowledge. He realises that "every living and every inanimate being has a language" and converses with all Nature, which welcomes him triumphantly. Only Mindia can understand "the cries and lamentations" of trees and flowers There are practical problems for Mindia, however, in family life — thus it is that a contradiction becomes apparent between the realms of the ideal and the social. Mindia is obliged to find a compromise, gradually to renounce his principles; but after betraying his principles — he dies.

Vazha Pshavela is an unrivalled painter of Nature. He is in truth the confidante of her secrets. The landscapes he creates are as everlasting as Nature herself. But it is not only the external beauty of Nature nor her inward charm which retain the poet's attention — he penetrates into the very soul of Nature, and strives to discover the manifestation of life in each of her innermost recesses. Nature for him is a majestic being with a hidden life of her own, thinking, speaking, feeling. In his prose works — *Story of a Young Roebuck*, *The Violet*, *The Mountain Spring*, translated into French by René Lafon (see *Bedi Kartlisa*, vol. XI-XII, 1962), *The Withered Beech*, *The Weeping Rock*, *The Roots*, *The Lofty Mountains*, *The Stag*, *Look at the Forest*, *In the Heart of Nature*, *The Forest is Weeping* — as well as in his poetry and verse, Vazha Pshavela refracts all the phenomena of nature through the prism of human sentiments and emotions.

ALEXANDER KAZBEGHI (1848-1893) was born in one of the most picturesque parts of snow-capped Kazbek. After completing his studies Kazbeghi went into the mountains and spent seven years as a shepherd, in order to understand better the life of the mountain people. Afterwards he recalled those years in the bosom of nature, among the shepherds, as the happiest time of his life, which had given direction to his literary activity. During that time he heard and committed to memory many popular legends and stories, studied the customs of the mountain people and collected a wealth of material for his work. The best of his novels and stories were published during the five years from 1880 to 1885 : *Elguja*, *The Parricide*, *The Outcast*, *Elberd*, *Tsiko*, *Khevisberi Gocha*. Patriotic fervour and hatred of his country's oppressors are expressed in a spirited fashion in all his works.

Kazbeghi is an unrivalled master of fine prose; the composition of his work is complex, the narration dynamic. In developing his subject he likes

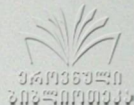
to create unexpected situations, intense in feeling, resulting from the conflict of great passions. Few writers possess to the same degree the faculty of seeing deeply into the human soul and bringing psychological arguments to the support of every gesture and action of his heroes. In his novel *Khevisberi Gocha* is an unforgettable picture of awakening spring :

“Nature has changed beyond recognition. The howling of the wind has given place to a gentle murmuring. The earth has grown warm, plants have come to life and the grass, feeling the rising of sap, stands erect and calls the sun to aid. There are cracks in the covering of snow and it is transformed into streams which hurl themselves riotously into the valley through the passes, heedless of the trails. The mountains of the Caucasus, freed from their heavy burden, have shaken the white brocade from their peaks and thrown round their shoulders a covering of green velvet. The flowers have awakened with amorous murmurs and tender movements of their heads. A ray of sunlight trembles among them, seeking to enjoy their beauty. But the flowers with a modest smile shrink away from its glance into the close-growing grass. It is only from the bee, busy and importunate, that they cannot hide : they allow him to gather the aromatic pollen with his soft velvet paws and drink the spicy sweetness from their varicoloured cups. ... The air is full of the songs and twitterings of birds calling to each other, inviting each other to life and joy.”

Students of literature have often expressed their astonishment at Kazbeghi's ability to describe Nature as participating in some dramatic action in his works. They have pointed out the close relation between the fate of the writer's heroes and the countenance of Nature, who often seems to have a presentiment of calamity about to strike, strives to aid man and alleviate his lot. One may go so far as to say that Nature is one of the heroes in Kazbeghi's work. His novels are indeed a book on the life of Nature, with picturesque landscapes painted in strong colours by the brush of a master (C. Radiani).

Alexander Kazbeghi is rightly regarded as the founder of the Georgian novel of realism. He displays notable mastery of this literary form and gains immediate popularity with the general reader.

DAVID KLDIASHVILI (1862-1931) writes in the preface to his autobiographical work “On my Way” : “These brief recollections will be without adornment. There will be only reality — that reality I have served loyally throughout my career as a writer.” Indeed, life as it is — everything the author saw and lived — was the source of his inspiration, the theme and basis of his work. His heroes are people he has personally known, his acquaintances and companions.



The most important of Kldiashvili's works and the most complex in composition is *The Misfortunes of Kamushadze*. With an artistic mastery of his own the author draws a picture of life's pitiless destruction of noble families. His literary bequest to us is not confined to stories and tales; besides these he has left three dramatic works which are rightly regarded as the best in classical Georgian dramatic art, *Irene's Happiness*, *Darispan's Misfortunes* and *Adversity*. These still have a prominent place in Georgian theatre.

Kldiashvili's shrewd, observant gaze penetrates all the secrets of the human soul. He is a master in the portrayal of character. He can arouse the reader's interest with an intensely dramatic theme, move him and lead him to share his own views. He is, besides, a creator of humour — a Georgian laughter altogether original and inimitable which runs through all his pages.

In the beginning and first half of the twentieth century a new constellation of eminent writers made their appearance in Georgian literature. These enriched the traditions of classical literature and created many novels, short stories and tales. They were : N. Lortkipanidze, L. Kiacheli, M. Javakhishvili, C. Gamsakhurdia, A. Beliashvili, S. Shanshiashvili, D. Shenghelaia, L. Gotua, P. Kakabadze, G. Natroshvili, G. Chikovani, S. Chilaia, C. G. Shatberashvili and others.

NIKO LORTKIPANIDZE (1880-1944). — Among these writers, Niko Lortkipanidze has a leading place. During the dark times of Tsarist reaction, when literature was submerged by the decadent influences then in fashion, he revived and developed the finest traditions of Georgian prose and put his pen to the service of his countrymen's interest.

The themes of fatherland and love occupy much of this author's early work, where he describes that sad and cruel epoch when "even singing is prohibited, one must suffer in silence and griefs are buried deep in the heart, when man is deprived of the right to cry out in pain". In the years of reaction under Stolypin the writer looks on reality with sorrow and disgust : —

"Sleep is sweet; sweeter still is the petrification of the spirit in times of shame and impotence. To see nothing, feel nothing — that is joy! So do not wake me. Speak more quietly. I am ashamed."

Lortkipanidze is close in spirit to the writers of the nineteenth century, a master of Georgian critical realism; his work opens up vast prospects to the prose of the new age. At the same time he is a profoundly original

writer, a great master of the short story whose work shows brevity, accuracy and restraint. He has left no large canvases, since most of his work was short stories; but he enlarged this slender prose form, filling it with rich material. An example of it is *The Woman in a Shawl*, only seven pages long, which has yet become one of the masterpieces of Georgian prose.

The story *For Hearth and Home* belongs to the cycle *Nests Destroyed*, which concerns ruined members of the nobility. Their fate is like that of the little birds described in the preface to the tales: small birds cut off from the flight of the swallows in their seasonal migration: —

“The little birds clung to the ruined nest without being able to support themselves in it. They perched on the cord stretched along the balcony and fell to the ground, trembling with cold, pressing against each other, not knowing what to do.

“I opened the window of my room to let them come in and warm themselves, but in vain. ... They cheeped plaintively, and in the sounds they made I detected groans and reproaches.”

One of this writer's essential gifts is a keen sense of humour. Some of his tales — *The Village Gallant*, *The Hunting Bishop*, *The Hero*, *The Giant* and the short story *The Vassals* are filled with it. The comic rubs shoulders with the tragic in his work. His mastery consists above all, however, in his skill in creating profoundly individual characters and striking portraits.

The Black Years and *The Terrible Master* are Niko Kortkipanidze's most outstanding historical works.

LEO KIACHELI (1884-1952), whose real name was Leo Shenghelaia, became known through his novel *Tariel Golua*, based on episodes in the 1905 Revolution. The central figure of the story is an old Mingrelian peasant, Tariel Golua. This greybeard — vigorous in spirit and robust in body, made wise by experience of life, unshakable and intrepid in the fight for freedom — is an incarnation of the people. His second big work, the novel *Gvadi-Bigva*², confirmed him in his title of master of fine prose. This typical novel of “socialist realism” gives a picture of the *kolkhoz* system in a Georgian village.

One of the most remarkable contributions to Georgian prose on the theme of the last world war is Kiacheli's novel *The Mountain Dweller*, which concerns an episode in the defence of the Caucasus in the autumn of 1942. The hero of this work underwent cruel ordeals. There were many who

² Translated into French for Editeurs Français Réunis, Paris, 1956.



perished; among them Batu-Kordua, the man of the mountains, died the death of the brave. The last chapter of the book especially, in which Batu-Kordua's death is described, creates a deep impression : —

“He lay in the midst of some huge pines torn out of the earth with all their roots, cut to pieces by shellfire, blackened and burnt; and he seemed as powerful, as fire-consumed as they.

“The sun shone directly into his eyes. Its rays fell on waving grey hair scattered with pine needles, played on the wrinkles of his face and brought out the silver threads in his small round curling beard.

“All nature round about seemed to hold its breath to watch this great powerful body in its mute struggle with death.’

“For a long time the master struggled against the god of death.”

L. Kiacheli made admirable translations into Georgian of works by Gorki, Stendhal, Anatole France and other classics of world literature.

MIKHEIL JAVAKHISHVILI (1880-1937) is one of the founders of the post-Revolutionary Georgian novel. He was persecuted by the Russian authorities and took refuge abroad. During his years of exile he followed courses at the Sorbonne and travelled in Germany, Italy and Switzerland. He obtained a false passport and returned to his own country in 1909, but was soon arrested for his patriotic views.

In 1923 he published the story *The Spirit of the Forests*, and in the following year *Kvachi-Kvachantiradze*, an adventure story, relating the criminal activities of a clever adventurer of noble birth. In this first of his major works the author reveals his mastery of narration, his power to create piquant situations, sustain intensity of interest and develop his theme, and portray characters.

In the same year his second novel, *Jago's Guests*, appeared. There is probably no work in Soviet Georgian literature which provoked so much controversy, discussion and disapproval as *Jago's Guests*. The author was accused of caricaturing the characters in the novel; yet it must be acknowledged that in this book the characteristic features of M. Javakhishvili's artistic personality are seen at their most brilliant. Especially worthy of note is the racy and expressive language, enriched by the living vein of the vernacular.

Javakhishvili's two following works — *Givi Shaduri* and *The White Collar* — are sequels to *Jago's Guests*. In the latter the author tells the

story of Elizbar, a member of the educated class lost in the complicated twists and turns of the revolutionary epoch. Gnawed by individualism and scepticism, seeking a refuge to “nurse” his poisoned spirit, he abandons his family, reaches a town and eventually takes refuge in Khevsureti. At first — far away from urban civilization in the bosom of majestic mountain scenery, in primitive living conditions where the traces of tribal life still linger — it seems to him that he has at last attained to longed-for peace and happiness. But this “happiness” soon reveals itself as ephemeral, and he is bored with everything. He finds himself once again drawn towards the town, to “white collar”, dress suit and pumps. And he flees from Khevsureti.

In his works in the ‘twenties the author wrote for the most part of people struck down by misfortune, banished from society, condemned. They are all “superfluous” people. One would look in vain in his work for architects of the new life, contemporary heroes; in most cases they are no more than hinted at. In the early ‘thirties Javakhishvili’s historical novel appeared, his real masterpiece — *Arsena of Marabda*, a monument of literature relating the struggle of the Georgian peasantry against Russian autocracy and tyranny in the years 1820-1840. The peasant Arsena Odzelashvili, of the well-known popular ballad *The Tale of Arsena*, is the leader in this struggle. Arsena is a solitary rebel who “took from the rich to give to the poor” and, in the words of the song, “never shed human blood”. The mass of historical events, large number of characters and complexity of the subject did not prevent the author from forming them all into a harmonious composition. The most successfully drawn character is Arsena. This bold defender of the peasantry in bondage has appeared more than once in both classical and modern Georgian literature; but the figure of Arsena has never taken on such a strong colouring as Javakhishvili gives him. He is shown in the novel as the acknowledged guide of the peasant revolt, a man of the highest moral qualities. From the moment when he first appears in the early episodes he captivates the reader by his astonishingly human qualities, and from then onwards the personality of Arsena rises before our eyes and evolves, his intellectual views expand, his ties with the people grow stronger, and he becomes the living incarnation of the best qualities in the character of the Georgian people.

In Javakhishvili’s last novel *A Woman’s Burden* (1934) the writer brings to life the days of the 1905 Revolution in Tbilisi; but he was unable to finish this book before his tragic death in 1937.

CONSTANTINÉ GAMSAKHURDIA (1891-1975) is the greatest writer of modern Georgian prose, whose works are well known not only in Georgia but in

other countries. After completing his studies at school in Kutaisi he went to Germany and followed courses successively in the universities of Leipzig, Munich and Berlin, where he gained his doctorate in philosophy. He returned to his own country in 1919, to engage in a wide range of social and literary activity.

In the early stages of the formation of Soviet Georgian literature he maintained the concept of "art for art's sake", adopting the aesthetic principles of German impressionism. In his works of that period — *Tabu*, *Jamu*, *Kossa Gakhu* and *Woman's Milk*, and in his novel *The Smile of Dionysus*, the author shows his sympathy for men of a bygone age, and romanticises the past. In the literary controversy of the 'twenties he was one of the leaders of the association of writers called the "Academic Writers' Union", and directed some of its reviews. Several distinguished Georgian writers were members of the Union, notably P. Ingorokva, A. Abasheli, I. Grishashvili, K. Makashvili, I. Mchedlishvili and others.

Constantiné Gamsakhurdia's first important work of "Soviet realism" was a novel in three volumes, *The Abduction of the Moon*, written in the early 'thirties. This reflects the class struggle in a village at the time of the collectivization of agriculture. After this book the author devoted several years to writing mainly historical novels. His *The Hand of a Great Master*³ and the tetralogy *David the Builder* are the principal works of the Soviet Georgian historical novel. *The Hand of a Great Master* gives a picture of life in Georgia at the turn of the eleventh century when the country had been divided up into small feudal estates and was undergoing the ruinous invasions of foreign conquerors. The basis of the novel is the struggle for the unification and independence of the State, led by King Giorgi I. One of the book's principal heroes is the young architect Arsakidze, a son of the people, builder of the celebrated cathedral *Svetitskhoveli*. The life of the period — material culture, habits and customs — is rendered with great artistic power.

The chief events in the story are determined by the relations between the leading figures : Giorgi I, Constantine Arsakidze, the beautiful Shorena and Pharsman the Persian. Shorena pleases the King, although she is the daughter of one of his enemies, the feudal lord Kolonkelidze. When the King hears that the young Prince Chiaber, son of another of his powerful enemies, also loves Shorena, he has Chiaber poisoned. After breaking down Kolonkelidze's resistance and destroying his seigneurial castle, the King makes

³ Translated into French, Editeurs Français Réunis, Paris, 1957; into English, Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1955; into German by Gertrud Pättsch, Jena, 1970.

Shorena and her mother prisoners and instals them at Mtskheta. It is there that Shorena comes to know the young architect Arsakidze, who at the time was directing the construction of the cathedral of Svetitskhoveli. They fall in love with each other; but now Pharsman the Persian makes his appearance, an adventurer with no known family connections who has travelled through many countries. He becomes jealous of Arsakidze's success in being given the commission to build the cathedral of Svetitskhoveli, which he was intriguing to obtain for himself. He denounces Arsakidze's and Shorena's love to the King. The King is enraged, shuts up Shorena in a convent and orders the young architect's right hand to be cut off. Arsakidze dies in appalling torments and Shorena on hearing of the death of the man she loves, throws herself down from a precipice.

The battle scenes with the Byzantine Emperor's troops in attacks on Georgia, the merciless strife between the King and the feudal lords who opposed the strengthening of the central authority of the throne are drawn with remarkable artistic power. The writer ends with a description of the agony of the architect Arsakidze : —

“At last it was dawn. A riot of light arose in the East. The sky scattered scarlet poppies over the mountains; violet rays flowed in streams from the top of the Pkhovian mountains.

“Shorena descended out of this scene; she was wearing a dress of Chinese silk, her golden tresses falling over her shoulders; she walked over the field strewn with poppies and tossed some ears of corn to Constantine. ... Poppies and ears of corn!

“Three times his beloved fell on her knees to beg for the soul of the great master.

“Tears streamed from Constantine's eyes, but he could not give her his spirit, which already belonged to Svetitskhoveli. ...

“Arsakidze's mother arrived from Pkhovi : when she saw her son covered all over with scorpion stings, she stood still, petrified. ...

“The legend of the petrified mother has been preserved for a thousand years. When I was a child I saw the stone at Mtskheta, the size of a woman, said to be the mother of Constantine Arsakidze.

“And indeed, the stone did resemble a woman in Pkhovian dress.

“Years passed

“I have had to work hard to translate the mysteries sealed beneath the stones into living words.”



After his novel *The Hand of a Great Master* C. Gamsakhurdia wrote a tetralogy, *David the Builder*. King David IV, the hero of this book, was an illustrious statesman and famous strategist. The people had given him the name of "the Builder". The history of Georgia's liberation in the eleventh and twelfth centuries — her foreign conquerors, unification and transformation into a great feudal monarchy — is associated with his name. In this as in his other works the author reveals a thorough knowledge of the period of which he writes, with complete mastery in the description of various details of life at the time — ceremonies, costumes and rituals. This detailed knowledge, displayed with consummate artistry, enables the reader to have a most vivid picture of the period and events in the author's works.

By the end of David the Builder's reign Georgia had become one of the most powerful states in the East. It is not only Georgian chroniclers who extol the merits of King David, but Armenian and Arab historians as well. Ancient Georgian poets, unknown popular verse writers and authors of classical Georgian literature all wreath his name in an aureole of glory. But the first literary monument to David the Builder's life and works is the novel by C. Gamsakhurdia. With great love for his hero, the author relates the events of a distant past which he has studied in depth, painting a picture of the customs of the period, sketching landscapes and battle scenes with brilliant and deeply sensitive perception.

Constantiné Gamsakhurdia is also a master of the art of translation, and has translated into Georgian Goethe's *Sorrows of the Young Werther* and Dante's *Divine Comedy* (in collaboration with the poet K. Chichinadze). He is the author of numerous articles on national and world literature, classical and contemporary. A member of the Georgian Academy of Sciences, C. Gamsakhurdia is very popular in his own country, whose people love and admire him for his great talent and patriotic sentiments.

Niko Lortkipanidze, Leo Kiacheli, Mikheil Javakhishvili and above all Constantiné Gamsakhurdia — these four novelists we have chosen from the period before the 1917 Revolution have become great names in Soviet Georgian literature, whose work had a considerable influence on its later development.

From the very many contemporary poets of great talent in the field of Georgian poetry, such as J. Grishashvili, K. Nadiradze, V. Gaprindashvili, S. Chikovani, A. Mirtskulava, G. Abashidze, K. Kaladze, A. Gomiashvili, R. Marghiani, I. Noneshvili and others, we have chosen three who are representative of the national poetic tradition : G. Tabidze, G. Leonidze and I. Abashidze.

GALAKTION TABIDZE (1892-1959), poet of the great social upheavals in Georgia at the turn of the twentieth century when the whole people threw themselves into the struggle for national and social freedom, himself said that he had been born out of the sublime dawn of the revolutionary uprising. His literary activity began in the epoch when that dawn was darkened by the pressure of the shadowy forces of Tsarist reaction, when the first Russian revolution had been defeated yet had left a profound and ineffaceable impression on the life of the Georgian people. The poet — increasingly a prey to a sense of disillusion and acutely at odds with real life — sets out to find something of joy, of light in the depths of his own heart. His moral suffering only increases, and *Night and I*, *The Desert*, *The Grave-Digger* are the titles of poems in his collection of 1914. Yet together with songs of affliction, in which Night plays the part of “companion” to the poet, he is composing songs on the sun and calling on it to dissipate the night : he is ready to throw himself into the fight against Night. There one sees the contradictions which complicated the poet’s life : at times his spirit was shrouded in mist, at others it broke free.

In those books of Tabidze’s published during the revolutionary years there are elements of a mystical conception of the world expressed in very vivid fashion, a non-rationalist view of the universe and an impressionist style. Even so, the tendencies of European “modernism” did not lead the poet to break away from the national stock, the fundamental line of development of classical Georgian poetry. He found it possible to reconcile the revival of Georgian poetry with loyalty to the great traditions, while making use of the discoveries of European poetry. The new life of Georgia, its ideas and aspirations are reflected in his work, and his poetry as a whole is an impassioned hymn to the land which conceived him and gave him birth.

G. Tabidze was able to make poetry out of the appearances of things while still remaining a poet of democratic ideas. His verses reveal a powerful intellect and the temperament of a man of public life, together with an incomparable poetic charm, an unparalleled freshness of tone. For him, poetry is the great moral force which is man’s inspiration : —

“The soul must be whiter than snow !
 Friend, I will carry with me to my grave
 The consciousness of one joy, one only :
 Poetry above all !”

Tabidze’s verses captivate his readers. His poetry contains the inexhaustible riches of the human soul. The music of his lines with their enchanting



lyrical quality gives his work its remarkable impressive force. Galaktion Tabidze incontestably has a place in the forefront of the development of contemporary Georgian poetry.

A translation of his well-known poem to the cathedral of *Nikortsminda* is published in vol. XXVIII of *Bedi Kartlisa*.

GIORGI LEONIDZE (1899-1966) belonged to the "Blue Horn", a school of Georgian symbolists whose members were poets of talent : Paolo Iashvili, Titsian Tabidze, Valerian Gaprindashvili, Kolau Nadiradze. Their spiritual leader was the Georgian philosopher and writer Grigol Robakidze, who died in Geneva in 1962. The Blue Horn, founded in 1915, played an important part in the development of Georgian poetry.

In every strophe of Leonidze's poems one is aware of his great love for his country ; one feels that his heart beats in the same cadence as the life of his native land. Whether his verses are dedicated to the shades of the past or singing of the present time, the fatherland remains the never-failing source of inspiration in all Leonidze's poetry. He wishes all his lines to sing for his country, the sonorous chords of his words to vibrate for it.

"It is you who illuminate my dreams —
You, Georgia, are the source of all inspiration !
You are the beating of my heart,
The title of my poem."

A characteristic feature of Leonidze's poetry is that it is the work of a man physically and morally sound, for whom the coming of spring is announced not by the scent of violets and lilies but by the rushing of spring waters, rivers in spate and purling streams. He is always a poet of spring, striving to make his verses blaze with the fire of youth and hope, singing of rivers in flood, fields, foliage and clouds, love and lovely women. He knows that all these merit a poet's smiles and praises, and would have the roar of a thousand cascades sound in his lines, wishing to clothe in verse all that is beautiful, all that rejoices the eye and heart of man.

Giorgi Leonidze has a strong sense of history, a clear perception of the unbroken threads relating the present to the past. It is no easy task to transpose into the present events from out of the depths of past centuries, to bring them clearly to light and thus strengthen love for one's country and respect for her past, closely linked with present and future. When Leonidze undertook that important and difficult task he allowed the pages of *Kartlis Tskhovreba* (History of Georgia) to speak. As we know, the chronicles are brought to life in the work of this writer, who sees in their popular legends and sober style the living reality, the actual life of a whole people.

Leonidze's poem *Samgori* is a striking example of such an interpretation of the historic past. As one reads it one feels curiously close to those men whose bones have so long ago crumbled into dust. They take on a new life — striving, suffering, conversing with us like close friends. *Samgori* is not an exception in Leonidze's work : he wrote a series of poems in which men of past centuries are brought to life and pass before our eyes like phantoms, leaving an ineffaceable imprint in our hearts, even though less is said of them than of the heroes of the poem.

In the Museum of Georgia is preserved the manuscript prayerbook of Queen Ketevan which she kept during her captivity. Traces of tears can be seen on the pages of the book, in one place even bloodstains. The poet speaks with emotion of this book whose pages were wet with the tears of Shah Abbas' prisoner, the reading of which helped to sustain her courage. As she read it she must have thought of her beloved Kakheti and dreamed of the skies and scenes of her native land. Doubtless such a dream was with her still when the executioner broke her ribs and branded her with red-hot iron. Leonidze's poem expresses a great suffering which goes to the heart even now.

Each of his poems on a historic theme leaves a lasting impression in the reader's memory. We have before us *The Thirteenth Century*, a poem which sketches in sober but expressive lines a picture of devastation in the country. After the Mongol horsemen come clouds of locusts, and everything that fire and sword have spared falls prey to them. Genghis Khan's invasion however was not an isolated event : time and again later the Georgian land presented the same scene of destruction and ruin. Foreign invaders repeatedly pillaged Georgian churches and palaces, destroying Svetitskhoveli and Sioni. Even so, "no one could steal that which had been melted in the crucible of the heart". The great culture of the past, the frescoes of Kintsvisi, the ornamentation in the temple of Bagrat, the chroniclers' parchments and Rustaveli's *Knight in Tiger's Skin* were preserved for future generations. Those riches will be handed down imperishable through the centuries, treasure which neither Tamerlane nor Shah Abbas could destroy.

Leonidze's poetry is truly an encyclopaedia of his fellow-countrymen's thoughts, aspirations and joys. All the elements of life are material for his work ; there are no good or bad themes for him — everything sings beneath his pen.

His best-known poems — in addition to *Samgori* and *The Thirteenth Century* — are *The Night of Ninotsminda* and *Portokala*.

IRAKLI ABASHIDZE, born in 1909, describes himself in one of his works as a "poet of the new life and of flowers". He defends the poet's right to a



variety and wealth of sentiments, interests and emotions. A poet of free inspiration and absolutely natural tone, he is a faithful follower of the classical tradition of Georgian poetry, a master of poetic dialogue, direct speech and poetic narrative. Few poets are able as he was to subordinate all the elements in a poem to the personality of the hero — a talent which gives his lyric poetry its distinctive qualities of crystalline purity and clarity of style.

The relations of Irakli Abashidze's lyric hero with Nature are very interesting and show us another side of the hero's spiritual life. The theme of Nature already had an important place in the works of the poet's youth. One of the chapters in his collection of 1941 was called *Nature*, next to chapters entitled *The Mother Country* and *Youth*. There are poems in this collection from the *Dmanisi* cycle, *The Song of the First Snowfall*, and other works.

Although Abashidze is one of the best landscape artists of Georgian poetry, he has a special claim to eminence in what might be regarded as a secondary element in it — pure "ornamentation". The poet's best verses are an example of the great artistry by which a country scene can be recreated in an objective way and still imbued with deep social significance. Historical antiquity, the ruins of ancient churches and castles form an organic and integral part of the countryside of Georgia. In the poetic cycle *Dmanisi*, however, Irakli Abashidze does not consider these remains of antiquity in their historical and patriotic aspect, but is interested most of all in the comparison of old and new, the dead past and the living present, Nature reduced to desert and depopulated, and Nature warmed by life.

In the Second World War Abashidze wrote several poems, of which the best known is *Captain Bukhaidze*. It is infused with the true spirit of popular heroism, in the best traditions of Georgian folklore. During the war years there was a need to reanimate people's spirit of patriotism by recalling the exploits of glorious forebears, to strengthen the sense of historic ties, of kinship with renowned predecessors — a need that also found its reflection in poetry. In Abashidze's poem *The Three Heroes*, as in *The Gift from Colchis*, history is no longer simply an appurtenance of museums; there beats in them the living pulse of history and one feels the new inspiration in it. Ancient fortresses half in ruins no longer resemble the *Stones of Dmanisi*, but rise up beside us who are the descendants of the heroes of old, to protect us and awake in us not only a sense of pride in the glorious past but also one of faith in the future.

The principal cycles of the poet's post-war poems are entitled *Harvest Songs*, *Guria in Flower* and *Hunter's Nights*. Irakli Abashidze's most out-

standing works however are *In Quest of Rustaveli* and *Palestine, Palestine*, composed after his journey to Jerusalem in 1960 on a mission of research to the Georgian Monastery of the Cross, during which he discovered Rustaveli's portrait together with a series of documents concerning the poet's last years.

Overcome with emotion and fired with poetic inspiration in the shadow of the great Rustaveli, Irakli Abashidze wrote a collection of poems under the title *Palestine, Palestine* with the passion, audacity and precision of a great master deeply absorbed by an unusual theme. At the foot of the walls of the Palestinian Monastery of the Cross, where according to legend Shota Rustaveli died, the poet entreats his illustrious predecessor to lend him his eyes so that he may re-live Rustaveli's life and make known everything the creator of *The Knight in Tiger's Skin* had felt and thought during his final solitude.

Then he transmits to us that Voice which seems to be calling from the depths of the centuries to us in our own time. We hear the voice of Shota Rustaveli, whose every word brings us a sincere confession, an avowal, the expression of poetic passion; and we understand then that Irakli Abashidze has fully succeeded in reproducing that all-important poetic monologue. All that the life and heart of Rustaveli contained of essential, of powerful and profound is thus revealed to us. It was spoken at the foot of the walls of the Monastery of the Cross. But the voice re-echoes also inside the monastery, in the Garden of Olives and the whitewashed cell, and later in the obscurity of the monastery walls. In the white cell it becomes an ardent cry of love, a love unbounded, all-powerful, embracing the whole being.

Yet if the memory is long haunted by that cry of love, the voice which speaks beside the mound of the Monastery of the Cross, calling to us in our native tongue, leads us into the sphere of another love that is also powerful, secret and sincere. It is love on a different scale, with a different resonance — the love of the mother tongue, without which there can be neither poet nor immortal work. It would be difficult to find a hymn to the native language as moving as that which is sung in the voice of Catamon. It has overwhelmed all Georgia and moved her to the depths of her heart.

Irakli Abashidze has been able to re-create the image of the celebrated recluse and has been marvellously successful in transposing this poetic confession of the twelfth century into our modern age. If he had written nothing else besides *In Quest of Rustaveli* and *Palestine, Palestine*, those works would have been enough to ensure him immortality.

Georgian literature at the present time includes a whole constellation of young novelists and poets of talent, who take their stand on the sound

traditions of their country and strive to preserve as a living presence in their work the spirit of Georgian literature throughout the ages.

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Translated from the French by
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GEORGIAN MUSIC

ANOTHER REALITY THE MUSIC OF ORAL TRADITION

Attentive listening and the concern to understand the music of oral tradition lead us to a recognition of its elements and, if pursued with unrelenting patience, to at least a glimpse of its order: a recognition which, through practice, develops within us our own inherent possibilities and ever corresponds to the real demands of an evolving world.

This recognition — experienced in a wide communion — subsists beyond races and frontiers, in countries far removed from each other. From time immemorial it has been known that the study of these moments experienced in common — or recognized — extends to epochs which also are « vastly distant from each other » (sometimes without any apparent link) and reveals an order of facts of which our contemporary world has preserved only traces. This study extends also to every form of art not detached from the real — imbued with a continual presence — participating in a whole wherein « from atoms to universes » every movement has a time, a rhythm, a period whose substantive relationships can be sensed right down to the « inaudible », perceptible to him who learns to be open to them « with the inner ear of the heart ».

We encountered these very precious evidences during our mission of research and study in the Georgia of Eastern Europe, after the audition and observation of the oral music of different continents had led to our envisaging the study of Georgian music in relation to the reference scales of the ancient oriental substratum.

Whatever may be the real hearth from which they have come, the influences between Georgia, Greece and the Turko-Arab countries form an epicentre, revealed by history in a summary way; but the presentiment alone of this real hearth can suffice to enlighten us. The Georgian peoples were able to discover this hearth — evolved in the full sense of the word — and to express it. In them « all the particular currents of poetry, of songs » — of Art — « are harmoniously blended ». They take it upon themselves to transmit it and still know the way to these « oases of beauty and of peace which civilizations, at rare moments in history, are able to bring to life from the desert ». There subsists in these peoples an ageless reality.

*This is why we are extremely grateful to those who made it possible for us to hear the oral music of Georgia, from East to West; enabled us to receive a living, direct impression of the society harbouring it and of its places of habitation — regions of a grandeur beyond description; enabled us to have access to a substratum wherein, during a pure transmission, all the forms of art are interrelated, and renewed, while retaining their specific roots, their profound meaning*¹.

An attentive listener can perceive in the modalities of transmission of the peoples of the « world of oral tradition » an order of which our present ways have preserved only traces, since we no longer recognize its precise meaning, no longer assimilate it and link it with a fundamental act which would endow it with an entirely different reality².

To situate our subject clearly, it should be said that the store of oral music, passed down from a high and ancient lineage and transmitted to us today by traditional singers and bards (particularly those of Georgia)³ as issuing from an original substratum, is incommensurable with the development of written Western music.

The scholarly disciplines of Anthropology, Ethnology and Comparative Religion (to mention just these) are in agreement about this, and various works refer to it. We also learn from them that Western music has influenced that of other peoples, who had a tendency to minimize their own traditional values, since the period when the West, engrossed in its procedures of musical « composition », had lost the sense of intrinsic values and when, through an inevitable deviation, « individual taste », having become the « supreme arbiter of everything to do with art », was destined to lead to the « fragmentation », nearly the pulverization, of the present artistic world⁴.

¹ Yvette GRIMAUD, *Musique de tradition orale*, in : *Bedi Kartlisa*, vol. XXV, Paris, 1968.

² Yvette GRIMAUD, *Les polysystèmes des musiques de tradition orale peuvent-ils être intégrés à la Résonance ?*, in : *La Résonance dans les échelles musicales*, Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, Paris, 1960, published in 1963.

³ Professors Chalva Aslanishvili, Grigol Chkhikvadze, and the lamented eminent musicologist Vladimir Akhobadze made possible my scientific mission in the SSR of Georgia. Professor Chkhikvadze organized and directed our expeditions in the east and west of Georgia, and to him I am indebted for having been able to collect and record on the spot a good number of original sound documents. Some of them songs little known even in Georgia itself. (Cf. Yvette GRIMAUD, *Musique de tradition orale*, in : *Bedi Kartlisa*, vol. XXV, Paris, 1968. — *Musique traditionnelle de Géorgie*, in : *Bedi Kartlisa*, vol. XXVI, Paris, 1969.)

⁴ Constantin BRAILOU, *Élargissement de la sensibilité musicale devant les musiques folkloriques et extra-occidentales*, Université Radiophonique Internationale, Paris, Mar. 13, 1954, in : *Œuvres*, vol. II, Union des Compositeurs roumains, Bucarest, 1969; TRAN-VAN-KHE, *Responsabilité des Organisations pour la Culture et l'Éducation dans la préservation des traditions musicales des pays extrême-orientaux*, in : *Artistic Values in Traditional Music*, 1965, published by

In societies which, in contrast to our own, have retained their cohesion, « questions of taste are not (and never were) discussed »; for in such societies, tastes, unlike our own, are a matter of unanimity and « over the caprices of the individual reigns the high function with which music has been invested and of which we ourselves have despoiled it... »⁵.

In these societies « the continuous elaboration of the same substances » is « as evident in the mass as in each particle of the 'social body' ». Research and discoveries « tend more and more to prove » that their music is « governed by strict prescriptions obeyed instinctively » and that the traditional singer « is capable of respecting the principles (which the Western researcher can distinguish only at the cost of great effort) of veritable musical systems, which are always rigorous, sometimes remarkably subtle ». « The trend toward systems even defines one of the most important properties » of orally transmitted music : « its basic constituent elements » must be stable enough for « such music, devoid of writing », on the one hand « to endure unaltered as to what is essential » and on the other hand, « to allow the constant intervention of arbitrary individual elements while remaining 'the music of all' ». « In every aspect it is the opposite of the music we perform in our concert halls and theatres. »⁶

To approach this study is an extremely fruitful and enriching experience, because it brings one in touch with many substantial elements. Unlike « folklore », which receives no new nourishment⁷, the oral tradition is

the International Institute for Comparative Music Studies, Berlin, 1966; Amnon SHILOAH, *Proche-Orient, Aperçu sur le rôle et les fonctions de la musique d'hier et d'aujourd'hui*, in : *La Musique dans la Vie*, t. I, Paris, 1967; Yvette GRIMAUD, *Musique de tradition orale...*

⁵ C. BRAÏLOÏU, *Élargissement de la sensibilité musicale...*; Yvette GRIMAUD, *Note relative à la fondation d'un Centre International d'Anthropologie Musicale*, Paris, 1971. This Centre has as President Professor Paul Collaer (Brussels), who called together representatives of the world of music, the arts and related science discipline, among them Professor Grigol Chkhikvadze, who accepted to participate as an Honorary Member.

⁶ C. BRAÏLOÏU, *Réflexions sur la création musicale collective*, in : *Diogenes*, n° 25, Paris, 1959. — *Œuvres*, vol. II, Bucarest, 1969. — *L'Ethnomusicologie*, II, *Étude interne*, in : *Précis de Musicologie*, P.U.F., Paris, 1958. — *Œuvres*, II, Bucarest, 1969.

⁷ The term « folklore » refers, in France today, to a reconstitution or more or less westernized adaptation, which is in any case external to the oral tradition as transmitted *in vivo*. « Folkloric groups » performing here and there have unfortunately contributed to this misunderstanding by adapting their traditional vocal and instrumental music, more or less, to standards which have distorted its meaning. Investigations in various milieux have proved that all are feeling the same dissatisfaction and the same wish to relate once more to values without which the human being cannot find true fulfilment and which have been preserved by societies of the « world of oral tradition ».



evidently « irrigated », for throughout the different languages of the « world of orality » we discover constants ⁸.

In fact, « though there are basic dissimilarities » between the music of oral tradition and « European classical music, there is on the contrary no difference in nature between the oral music of other continents and that which still survives, to a greater or lesser extent, in the contry-side of Europe : here and there we find the same close links between life and art, the same predominance of collectivity, the same mode of transmission ». « The oral 'work' exists only in the memory of the one who adopts it and becomes 'concrete' only by his consent : « its life and his own are merged ». « Since no writing establishes the score of this 'work' once and for all, it is not 'something made', but something 'that one makes' and remakes continually » ⁹.

Unlike the « composer », concerned with the « importance of the smallest stroke of the pen », the traditional singer « is not aware of any method » ; « he can take note of no technical procedure or theoretical concept » ¹⁰, but he discovers at every moment a precise musical meaning. different from that to which we are accustomed and which existed long before our « written art » ¹¹.

Indeed, « the absence of writing changes the conditions of creation » and of transmission so completely, by bringing into play human coordinates unsuspected by our « erudite art », that it obliges us to revise « the very idea that we have of it » ¹².

Among peoples of « high culture » who makes use of it ¹³, writing generally arises only by allusions and abbreviations. Such annotation is born of an acute sense of the real, which alone has enabled these peoples to know « from within » the content of the musical message — « the qualitatively

⁸ Y. GRIMAUD, *Note relative à la fondation d'un Centre International d'Anthropologie Musicale*, Paris, 1971.

⁹ C. BRAILOIU, *L'Ethnomusicologie*, II... — *Réflexions...*

¹⁰ Idem.

¹¹ Paul. COLLAER, *Polyphonies de tradition orale en Europe méditerranéenne*, in : *Acta Musicologica*, II-III, 1960; Y. GRIMAUD, *Trois chants de Géorgie occidentale*, in : *Bedi Kartlisa*, vol. XVII-XVIII, Paris, 1964. — *Musique de tradition orale... — Indices de pérennité des musiques transmises oralement : la tradition de Géorgie (Europe orientale)*, in : *Bedi Kartlisa*, vol. XXVII, Paris, 1970.

¹² C. BRAILOIU, *Réflexions...*

¹³ In the investigation of certain civilizations, particularly that of Georgia (the Asianic or Caucasian world), related to the great currents of tradition of early Asia and the Mediterranean world, the study of manuscripts (especially as regards iconography) and of archaeological data is an essential cross-check on the oral tradition (see 8 above).



different level» where «all the elements are changed»¹⁴ while the form remains the same — and to codify and read it (by means of symbols).

The fact is that when free of «spatial bondages», the primordial realities are equally «free of temporal bondages, or more precisely from the chronology» which «we use to define duration». Preserved until our day «in their purity and vigour» they «bear us perhaps near to the sources» where, little by little, an order is revealed, beyond all speculations and philosophies¹⁵. It is well known that the most highly evolved epochs arise from such an order and that within this order «beings and events» themselves «situate qualitatively their own time and history»¹⁶.

As for the «anonymous creator» in the form of a people, «no one, to tell the truth, has ever been able to grasp that incomprehensible being...». Yet it continues to live in the innermost depths of each one of us and whosoever fully attunes himself to it calls down upon himself that grace «whereby his face shall be like the flowers, and his look like the dawn...»¹⁷.

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of the University of Paris.

¹⁴ Henri CORBIN, *Terre céleste et Corps de Résurrection*, Buchet-Chastel, Paris, 1960.

¹⁵ C. BRAILOIU, *La vie antérieure*, in : *Histoire de la Musique, Encyclopédie de la Pléiade* Gallimard, Paris, 1960. — *Œuvres*, II...

¹⁶ H. CORBIN, *Terre céleste...*

¹⁷ C. BRAILOIU, *Réflexions...* — *Folklore musical*, in : *Encyclopédie de la Musique*, Fasquelle, Paris, 1959. — *Œuvres*, II...

GEORGIAN MUSIC

Folk music has been the prime source of Georgian musical art — its solid foundation over many centuries. It lies at the root of the history of Georgian music, which dates back more than three thousand years.

The art of song, a vigorous branch of great richness and striking originality, is one of the characteristics of Georgian folk music. Its particularities of mode, of intonation, and means of musical expression, its highly developed vocal technique in songs (monophonic) for several voices (2, 3 or 4), the extreme complexity of its musical structures, the diversity of its styles, distinguish it radically from the folk-created songs not only of countries far from Georgia, but even of peoples who have had age-long political, cultural and economic links with the Georgians, and among whom monodic singing is characteristic. It is a fact that the polyphonic song which is highly developed in its choral styles is the cornerstone of traditional Georgian musical art.

In the Georgian folk art of song, monodic songs also have their special importance, and outstanding among them for their artistic value are the men's work songs, songs of *Araba* and *Orovéla* (songs of ploughing, threshing and winnowing) and the women's songs of family and daily life, lullabies, and laments (funereal or for commemorations, and such).

Folk songs accompanied the most varied moments in the life of the Georgian people : work, hunting, struggle with the elements, antique drama performances, dances and rounds, weddings and burials, historical events, the sagas of heroes, popular uprisings, and so on. The best examples reveal the powerful creative talent, the mastery of execution, the overflowing fancy, the delicate artistic taste, the wealth of harmonic and polyphonic thought, of the Georgian people.

A rich variety of Georgian popular musical instruments have been known since ancient times. Let us mention particularly the antique *Soïnari* or *Larchemi* with six tubes (flute of Pan type), the *Salamuri* (a prehistoric shawm) made out of a swan's tibia and having three finger holes (XVth-

XIVth century B.C.), the *Gudastviri* and the *Chiboni* (both resembling bagpipes), the *Buki* and the *Sakviri* (trumpets); among the plucked-string instruments, the *Changui* (harp), the *Knari* (lyre), the *Ebani* (similar to the *kithara*), the *Chonguri* and the *Panduri* (both resembling the lute); as regards stringed instruments, the *Chuniri*, the *Chianuri*; among the percussion instruments, the *Dabdabi*, *Dapi*, *Doli*, *Daira*, *Tzintzila* and others. A variety of dances are also known : *Kartuli*, *Davluri*, *Dzabra*, *Mkharuli*, *Samaia*, *Perkhuli*, *Mtiuluri*, *Khorumi* and others.

Georgian church songs are of a high artistic quality. They date back to the IVth century when Christianity became firmly implanted in Georgia, bringing from Byzantium the monodic chants characteristic of the Greek church. But the Georgian people, possessing a many-centuried tradition of singing, sought to base their church songs on their own musical experience. And by the end of the Vth and beginning of the VIth century, Georgian church songs were introduced into the cycle of religious services. From the VIIth century onwards, these songs gradually superseded the Greek ones, and according to the great bardic singer and hymn writer Grigori of Khandzta (VIIIth-IXth centuries), it was at about this time that only the *Kyrie eleison* was sung in Greek in the churches of Georgia. Thus the solid foundations of professional Georgian religious music were laid from the Vth century onwards.

Religious schools, seminaries and academies, in which an important place was given to the teaching of singing, and to the training of chapel masters, were established near Georgian churches and monasteries, both in Georgia itself (at Tbilisi, Mtskhéta, Ghélati, Iqalto) and in Georgian cultural centres abroad (at Jerusalem, in the Sinai, on Mount Athos, and the Black Mountain (in Syria), at Pétritsoni (now Bachkovo in Bulgaria)). From the IXth century onwards, composers, theorists, hymn writers and singers — Ghiorghi and Ekvtime Mtatsmindéli, Johané Minchkhi, Giorgi Merchule, Mikaël Modrékili, Ezra, Arsène Monazoni, the catholicos Johané and others — composed hymns, organized choirs, and made collections of religious songs, noting them down by means of musical signs. Among these collections, the huge folio volume (978-988) by Mikaël Modrékili deserves special attention. In this very rare volume are noted down the "entirely correct" melodies of the hirmos and hymns, recorded by "absolutely exact" music signs.

According to the indications given by an eminent representative of the Georgian philosophical school, *Pétritzi* (XIth-XIIth centuries), three voices —

Mzakhr, *Gir*, and *Bam* — form the basis of Georgian harmony. In the XIIth-XIIIth centuries, the period of Rustaveli, secular and religious music reached their zenith. However, from the XIIIth century to the XVIIIth, Georgia was invaded successively by the Mongols, the Turks and the Persians, who put the kingdom to fire and sword. The struggle for the rebirth of Georgian culture, which gathered great momentum in the XVIIIth century, is linked to the names of the remarkable historian-geographer Vakhushti Bagrationi and of the great writer and lexicographer Sul Khan-Saba Orbéliani, the authors of Georgian musical terminology.

This struggle was crowned with success in the second half of the XVIIIth century, under the reign of Irakli II, a talented statesman and great admirer of literature and music, who undertook to reinstate the national musical traditions. Unfortunately, the treacherous attack of Agha-Mahomed-Khan in 1795 brought these promising beginnings to a halt.

In 1871, the Caucasian Society of Music founded a School of Music, but the real educational centre for active, responsible persons in the field of music was formed from the music classes started in 1873 by Kh. Savaneli et A. Mizandari. These classes grew into a school in 1876, a college in 1886, and later, in 1917, became a conservatory — now bearing the name of Vano Sarajishvili. In 1883, concerts were organized on a solid basis: symphony and chamber music concerts took place at regular intervals and recitals were also organized. So the public of Tbilisi was able to become acquainted with famous pianists, instrumentalists and conductors.

Musical life in Tbilisi thus became more and more rich and varied. However, the original Georgian musical culture was doomed to oblivion under the Czarist regime. And it was only in connection with the national liberation movement, which started in the 1860's, that the progressive elements of Georgian society set themselves the goal of dedicating all their energy to the great work of reviving and developing their national art. The prominent representatives of music and literature were actively engaged in the struggle against the Reaction, and in the early '60's courageous articles appeared, praising the high artistic qualities of Georgian folk and religious music and appealing to the public at large to gather together and study these "pearls of popular art".

From the 1870's on, an intensive work of collecting and publishing national folk songs was undertaken: in 1878 by M. Machavariani, in 1886 by

A. Bénashvili, in 1896 by Z. Chkhikvadzé, in 1889 by I. Kargarétéli. At the request of the "Committee for the Restoration of Georgian Church Song", religious songs were noted down in the '80's — those of Iméréti and of Guria by F. Koridzé, those of Kartli-Kakhéti by V. Karbélashvili — and they were published in separate volumes. The Georgian ethnographic choir founded in 1885 by L. Agniashvili, which gave successful public performances from 1886 on under the direction of the Czech Rátil, played an important role in the dissemination of folk song. From the very first concert the impression made was unforgettable : it was a demonstration of the power of Georgian song, which later became the wellspring of all types of Georgian professional music. The masters of national folk song, following in the footsteps of Agniashvili, helped to spread it everywhere in Georgia through the founding of choirs. During this same period, Georgian instrumentalists, as well as vocalists, gave public concerts, not only in Georgia, but also in Russia and western Europe : A. Mizandari (pianist), A. Karashvili (violinist), Iv. Sarajishvili (violoncellist) and the vocalists M. Nanobashvili, Pl. Kakabadzé, Kh. Savanéli, F. Koridzé (male singers), K. Guramishvili, E. Sarajishvili, M. Dznéladzé (cantatrices), with I. Paliashvili conducting. The first composer of a work for piano, "Fantasia", was D. Eristov (Eristavi), in 1871.

The pioneer of the Georgian romance song and founder of the national opera was M. Balanchivadzé. About 1889, he composed three romances, "Cradle Song", "You Are before Me", "As soon as You Look"; and a part of his opera "Tamar, the Wicked" (now entitled "Darejan, the Wicked") was performed in 1887 in St.-Petersburg. The romances by I. Karghérééli and the compositions for piano and violin by A. Karashvili belong to the same period.

Several authors published works on musical theory, and on the national folk music : the learned encyclopedist of many talents, Johané Bagrationi, wrote "Kalmasoba" (on the Georgian religious song of six voices), an "Abridged Manual of Music" (on the new system of musical notation — manuscript); I. Charabidzé, "The Art of Notation" (1890 and 1892); F. Koridzé, "The Art of Notation" (1895); P. Karbélashvili "Popular and Religious Georgian Motifs" (1898), and others.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, a long-held dream was put into action : a small group of prominent Georgian musical personalities (A. Karashvili, I. Kargarétéli, P. Mirianashvili (philologist), G. Natradzé, Z. Paliashvili, Z. Chkhikvadzé (originator and author of the statutes of the

Society) founded in 1905 the "Georgian Philharmonic Society", which undertook as its principal goal to collect, study, arrange, and make known by means of concerts, Georgian national folk music. In 1908, a School of Music and also one of religious music were founded under the patronage of the Society; its repertory included the works of Georgian composers. Collections of Georgian folk songs and religious songs composed by Z. Paliashvili, were published, as were also a series of his romances and choral arrangements. Several operas were performed in Georgian translations: "Carmen", "Faust", "The Barber of Seville". The School of Music also undertook such national tasks as the training of Georgian singers, vocalists, pianists, and instrumentalists.

All this bears witness to the unflagging creative work of Georgian musicians, who established sound foundations for the future development of the national musical art.

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GEORGIAN OPERAS

In 1919, an important change took place in the musical life of Georgia : for the first time Georgian national operas made their appearance on the stage of the Tbilisi Opera House. These included the lyrical opera in two acts "The Legend of Shota Rustaveli", by D. Arakishvili; the monumental, epic legend "Abesalom and Etéri" by Z. Paliashvili; and the comic opera "Kéto and Koté", by V. Dolidzé. The foundations of the national operatic art were reinforced by the opening in Tbilisi of the first opera studio (1919).

Zakharia Paliashvili was the first Georgian composer who succeeded in transposing on the very large scale demanded by the opera the most essential aspects of the national folk-creation in all its originality — the first to sense and reveal the secret wellsprings of the many-centuried musical energy of the Georgian people and to embody in the national classical opera the modesty, the purity and the poetic heights of this energy. Dimitri Arakishvili is a representative author of the Georgian romantic opera.

In the course of the 1920's performances were given of the operas "Daïssi" and "Latavra" by Z. Paliashvili, "Leila" and "Tsissana" by V. Dolidzé, "Life is a Joy" by D. Arakishvili. In 1926 a complete version of the first national opera was performed : "Tamar, the Wicked" (now "Darejan, the Wicked") of M. Balanchivadzé.

In 1922 the "Society of Young Georgian Musicians" was founded, whose varied activities played an important role in the development of youthful Georgian Soviet musical culture and in particular in the creating of symphonic music and chamber music (Anton Tsulukidzé).

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