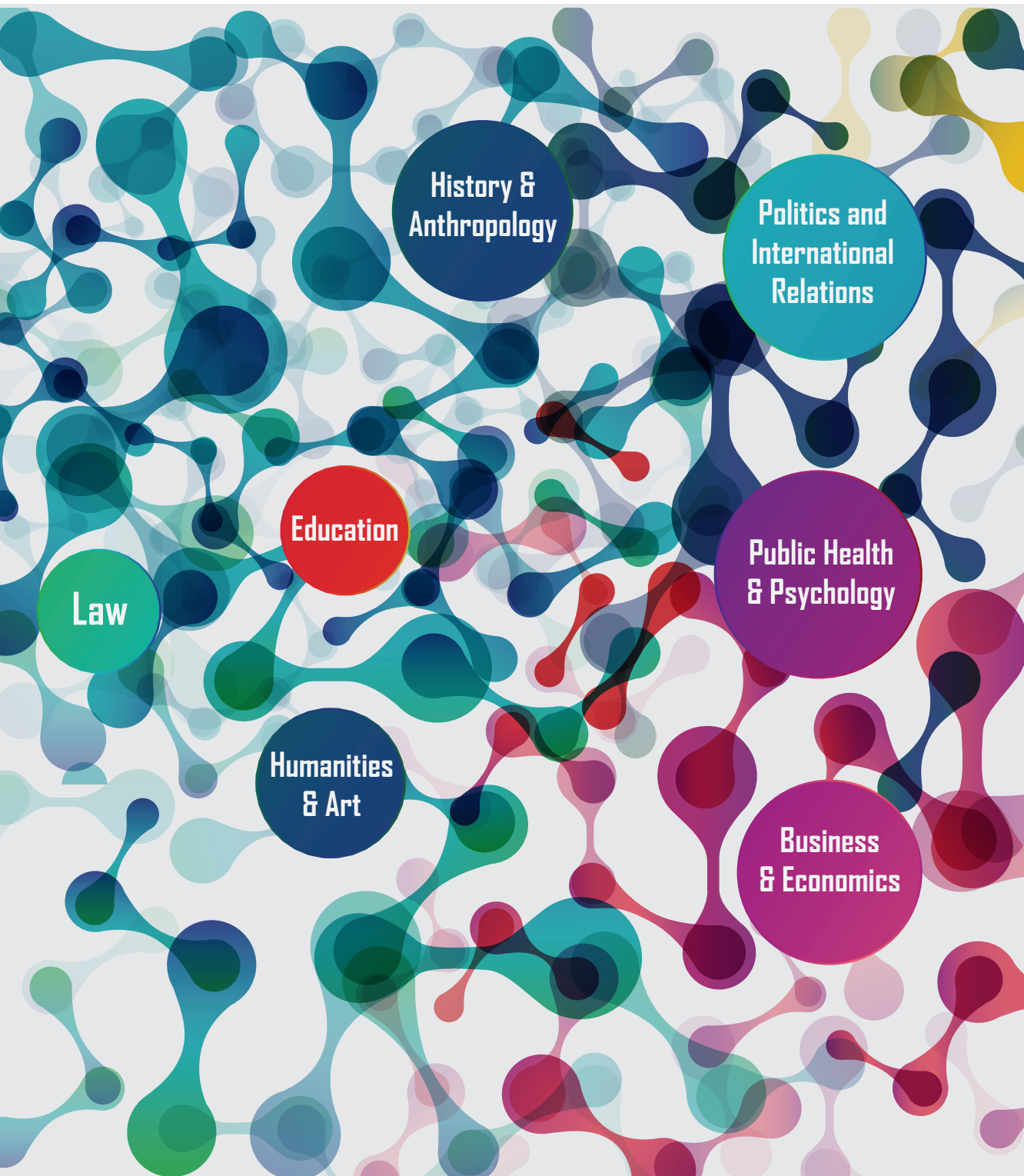


# Caucasus Journal of social sciences



Volume 17, 2024

ISSN 1512-3677



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# Caucasus Journal of Social Sciences

Volume 17, 2024

Issue 1



THE UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA  
PUBLISHING HOUSE

Caucasus Journal of Social Sciences  
C(uak) 908 (479) (06)  
k144

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ISSN: 1512-3677

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## Investigating the Convergence of Linguistics and Cultural Anthropology in Decoding the Dynamics of Gender Roles: A Case Study of Georgia

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DOI: [HTTPS://DOI.ORG/10.62343/CJSS.2024.236](https://doi.org/10.62343/CJSS.2024.236)

### ABSTRACT

This article explores the intricate relationship between linguistics and cultural anthropology to elucidate the complex dynamics of gender roles within Georgian society. Employing a multidisciplinary framework, the research aims to uncover the ways in which linguistic structures and cultural practices intersect to shape and perpetuate gender norms and expectations.

The significance of this study lies in its potential to contribute meaningfully to both theoretical discussions and practical interventions aimed at advancing gender equality. The following points highlight the relevance of this research:

- Investigating gender roles within the specific cultural context of Georgia enhances cultural sensitivity.
- By integrating linguistics with cultural anthropology, this study offers a comprehensive understanding of how culture and language collaboratively influence gender roles.
- This study can serve as a benchmark for comparative analysis with other cultural contexts, enhancing cross-cultural understandings of gender diversity. By highlighting the unique gender dynamics in Georgia, enables a broader examination of global gender experiences.
- The research advances theoretical frameworks in linguistics, cultural anthropology, and gender studies by illustrating how these fields can mutually inform one another. It paves the way for future theoretical exploration in these intersecting areas.

This study employs an interdisciplinary approach that integrates linguistics and cultural anthropology. The research methodology is designed to capture the nuances of how these two domains interact and contribute to the construction and reinforcement of gender norms.

*Keywords:* Linguistics; cultural anthropology; interdisciplinary approach; gender roles; Georgian society

## **INTRODUCTION**

In the ever-shifting terrain of societal dynamics, the intricate relationship between culture, language, and gender roles remains a compelling area of scholarly exploration. This complex nexus, where cultural anthropology and linguistics intersect, offers a nuanced lens through which to unravel the multifaceted nature of gender roles within distinct socio-cultural contexts (Frodeman, Klein, and Mitcham, 2010). This article embarks on a journey to examine the rich cultural and linguistic landscape of Georgia, a nation teeming with tradition, linguistic subtleties, and evolving gender perceptions. By weaving together the threads of language, societal norms, and anthropological insights, we aim to illuminate the layers that shape and redefine gender roles in this unique cultural context.

The intersection of cultural anthropology and gender studies facilitates a comprehensive exploration of how cultural practices, social rituals, and structures both shape and are shaped by gender dynamics. Cultural anthropology offers ethnographic methodologies to study these phenomena in specific cultural settings, while gender studies provide critical frameworks to analyze power relations, identity formation, and the social construction of gender (Keesing, 2016). By examining the gender roles in Georgia through both cultural anthropology and gender studies lenses, this research offers a rich, multifaceted understanding of how cultural practices and gender expectations intersect, and how individuals navigate and negotiate their gender identities within these complex social frameworks.

Let us delve into the intricate convergence of cultural anthropology and gender studies, exploring their symbiotic relationship and their capacity to enrich our understanding of human experience:

**Cultural anthropology** is dedicated to the study of cultures and societies, aiming to understand how people live, organize their social worlds, and derive meaning from their experiences. Central to cultural anthropology are the following key concepts:

- **Cultural Relativism:** This foundational principle challenges us to perceive and assess cultural practices, beliefs, and norms within their own contexts, free from ethnocentric biases and universal judgments. Cultural relativism underscores the diversity of human cultures, affirming the value and significance of different cultural expressions (Atkinson, 1990; Kuper, 1999).
- **Kinship and Social Organization:** This aspect of anthropology focuses on the study of kinship systems, family structures, and social organizations that define the relationships and roles within communities. It explores how these structures influence the roles assigned to different genders (Rivers, 2012).

- **Symbolic Anthropology:** This branch examines the role of symbols, rituals, and symbolic meanings in constructing and reinforcing gender identities and norms. Symbols – whether through language, ritual, or social practice – serve to define and perpetuate gender expectations within a society (Deflem, 1991).

Gender studies emerged as an interdisciplinary field designed to offer a more nuanced understanding of gender beyond the simplistic binary of male and female. Some of the foundational concepts of gender studies include:

- **Social Construction of Gender:** Gender studies challenge the notion that gender is solely biologically determined. Rather, this field investigates how societies construct and sustain gender roles, norms, and expectations, exploring the fluidity and social nature of gender identity (Abbott, Wallace, and Tyler, 2005).
- **Intersectionality:** Gender studies often incorporate an intersectional approach, recognizing that gender interacts with other social categories – such as race, class, sexuality, and ethnicity. This perspective highlights the complexity of individuals' experiences and underscores the interconnectedness of various systems of identity and power.
- **Feminist Theory:** Feminist theory is central to gender studies, offering a critical examination of power relations, patriarchy, and the historical marginalization of women. It also addresses strategies for achieving gender equity and dismantling oppressive societal structures (Teitelbaum, 1989).

The interdisciplinary relationship between cultural anthropology and linguistics examines the ways in which language and culture – two fundamental aspects of human experience – interact and shape each other. This approach enriches our understanding of how language influences culture and vice versa, particularly in the context of gender. By exploring the inseparability of culture and language, this perspective reveals how linguistic practices contribute to the construction of gendered identities and social roles, deepening our comprehension of the complex dynamics at play.

In conclusion, the confluence of cultural anthropology, linguistics, and gender studies provides a robust framework for understanding the evolving nature of gender roles, particularly in unique cultural contexts like Georgia. Through this interdisciplinary lens, we aim to uncover the interplay of tradition, language, and identity that continues to shape and redefine gender norms in society.

## **METHODS**

This study adopts a qualitative research design to explore the cultural and linguistic dimensions of gender roles in Georgia, emphasizing the complex ways in which cultural practices and language intersect to shape gender dynamics. A multi-layered, interdisciplinary approach was employed, combining ethnographic fieldwork, linguistic analysis, and an intersectional framework to provide a holistic understanding of gender roles within this specific socio-cultural context.

To gain an in-depth understanding of the cultural practices and lived experiences surrounding gender roles, we conducted participant observation across various communities in Georgia. This ethnographic approach involved direct engagement with local populations, attending community events, and participating in daily activities to immerse ourselves in the cultural environment. By embedding ourselves in the social context, we were able to observe firsthand how gender norms are enacted, reinforced, and challenged in everyday life.

A core component of the study involved the collection and analysis of a corpus of spoken and written language related to gender in Georgia. This included interviews, personal narratives, and public discourse surrounding gender roles, as well as texts, media, and other forms of communication. Linguistic analysis was used to explore how gender is linguistically constructed and communicated, paying attention to discourse patterns, language use, and symbolic meanings embedded in everyday communication. This approach sought to uncover how language both reflects and shapes cultural perceptions of gender.

Purposive sampling was employed to ensure a diverse representation of participants across different demographic variables, such as gender, age, socioeconomic status, and geographic location within Georgia. The sample was designed to reflect the diversity of experiences and perspectives present within society, ensuring that both urban and rural contexts, as well as different social strata, were included in the research.

In addition to broad ethnographic data collection, individual case studies were developed to explore specific instances where cultural and linguistic factors intersect to influence gender roles. These case studies provided rich, detailed accounts of individuals' lived experiences, highlighting how gender identities are negotiated in different cultural settings. By focusing on specific case studies, we were able to gain a deeper understanding of how cultural norms, language, and individual agency interact to shape gendered experiences.

A key feature of the study's methodology is the incorporation of an intersectional lens, which was employed to analyze how multiple social identities – such as

gender, age, socioeconomic status, and geographic location – intersect and influence individuals' experiences of gender roles. Intersectionality, as conceptualized by Crenshaw (1991), provided a framework for examining how different aspects of identity do not operate in isolation but are interconnected, shaping complex, multi-faceted experiences of gender in Georgia.

Through the intersectional approach, we aimed to:

1. **Analyze the Interactions of Multiple Identities:** Intersectionality encouraged us to consider the interactions between various social identities, recognizing that individuals' experiences cannot be reduced to one category but must be understood in relation to multiple overlapping dimensions (e.g., gender and class, gender and rural-urban divide).
2. **Contextualize Experiences:** The intersectional approach emphasized the importance of socio-historical and cultural contexts in shaping individuals' gender identities. We examined how the intersection of gender with other social categories such as age, social class, ethnicity, and geographic location influences how gender is experienced and perceived within Georgia.
3. **Capture Nuances of Power and Privilege:** By adopting an intersectional framework, the study examined how the interaction of various identities shapes systems of power, privilege, and oppression. This analysis allowed us to explore how structural inequalities are not simply the result of one aspect of identity but are often compounded by intersecting forms of marginalization and privilege.

Informed consent was obtained from all participants to ensure that their participation was voluntary and based on a clear understanding of the research objectives. The study strictly adhered to ethical guidelines to protect participants' privacy, ensuring that their identities were safeguarded and their information treated with confidentiality.

Intersectionality, as articulated by Crenshaw (1991), was integral to the design of this study. By applying this lens, we were able to analyze the interconnected nature of social categorizations such as gender, age, class, and geographic location, and how these overlapping identities shape individuals' experiences of gender roles.

Key aspects of how intersectionality was employed in this research methodology include:

- **Complexity of Identity:** Intersectionality encourages us to consider the complexity of individual identities. Rather than isolating one dimension of iden-



tity, we examined how gender is shaped by intersecting factors, including class, geography, ethnicity, and age, recognizing the multifaceted nature of identity formation.

- **Inclusive Sampling:** The intersectional framework informed our sampling strategy, ensuring that we captured the diversity of experiences and identities within Georgia. This approach allowed for a more comprehensive understanding of gender roles across different population segments.
- **Analyzing Power Dynamics:** Intersectionality also served as a tool for critically analyzing power dynamics. By examining how intersecting identities contribute to both privilege and marginalization, the study sought to uncover the structural forces that shape gendered experiences in Georgia.
- **Contextual and Social Inequality:** The intersectional approach highlighted the social inequalities that emerge from the interaction of multiple social identities. This framework provided a deeper understanding of how systems of oppression and privilege are constructed and maintained at both the individual and structural levels.

By combining ethnographic fieldwork, linguistic analysis, and an intersectional framework, this study provides a comprehensive approach to understanding the complexities of gender roles in Georgia. The intersectional methodology allows for a nuanced examination of how gender intersects with other social categories and how these intersections influence individuals' experiences. Through this approach, the study aims to contribute to a more inclusive and holistic understanding of gender in Georgia, offering insights that are both culturally specific and globally relevant.

## **RESULTS**

The findings of this study reveal significant differences in the perception of gender roles between urban and rural areas in Georgia, shaped by a variety of cultural, economic, and social factors. These variations are evident not only in the opportunities available to women but also in the cultural norms that govern gender expectations in different regions of the country. Additionally, generational divides and the evolving linguistic landscape further complicate the dynamics of gender roles.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Urban vs. Rural Differences in Gender Roles**

In Georgia, urban and rural regions exhibit notable disparities in gender role perceptions, influenced by factors such as access to education, economic opportunities, exposure to diverse ideas, and the strength of traditional values.

#### **Urban Areas:**

Urban areas in Georgia tend to be more progressive in terms of gender roles. These regions experience greater exposure to modern influences, including global trends, increased access to education, and more diversified economic opportunities. This broader access to resources and information has led to:

- **Greater Workforce Participation:** A higher percentage of women in urban areas (65%) participate in the workforce compared to rural areas (35%), reflecting the availability of employment opportunities beyond traditional gender roles, such as in education, healthcare, and the service sector.
- **Modern Family Roles:** In urban households, there is a broader acceptance of non-traditional gender roles, with a higher percentage of households (70%) adopting modern roles, where both partners share responsibilities, compared to 30% that still adhere to traditional expectations.
- **Educational Attainment:** Urban women exhibit significantly higher educational attainment levels. For example, in 2023, 70% of women in urban areas achieved higher education compared to 40% in rural areas.

#### **Rural Areas:**

Conversely, rural areas in Georgia tend to retain more traditional views on gender roles. The economic structure in rural regions is often centered around agriculture or smaller industries, limiting employment opportunities for women. Consequently:

- **Lower Workforce Participation:** Women in rural areas often focus on household responsibilities or traditional roles in agriculture, with only 35% participating in the workforce compared to 65% in urban areas.
- **Adherence to Traditional Roles:** Most households in rural areas (75%) adhere to traditional gender roles, where women are expected to focus on childcare, cooking, and domestic chores, compared to 25% in urban areas.
- **Limited Educational Opportunities:** Educational attainment in rural areas is lower, with only 40% of women completing higher education by 2023 compared to 70% in urban areas.

These differences are influenced by economic and educational factors, with urban areas providing more opportunities to challenge traditional roles and rural areas maintaining conservative views due to limited access to resources.

### **Key Data on Urban-Rural Differences:**

#### **1. Workforce Participation:**

- Urban: 65%
- Rural: 35%

#### **2. Traditional vs. Modern Gender Roles in Households:**

- Urban: 25% traditional, 70% modern
- Rural: 75% traditional, 30% modern

#### **3. Educational Attainment Among Women (2012–2023):**

- Urban: 50% (2012), 55% (2017), 70% (2023)
- Rural: 30% (2012), 35% (2017), 40% (2023)

#### **4. Household Chores Division:**

- Urban: Women 45%, Men 55%
- Rural: Women 60%, Men 40%

### **Generational Differences in Gender Role Perceptions**

Another key factor in shaping gender roles in Georgia is the generational divide. Younger and older generations display starkly different attitudes toward gender roles due to differences in education, exposure to global perspectives, and evolving social norms.

#### **Older Generations:**

- **Traditional Views:** Older generations generally adhere to traditional gender roles, with women prioritizing domestic responsibilities and men acting as primary breadwinners and decision-makers.
- **Limited Education and Exposure:** Women in older generations had limited access to education, and their views were shaped by prevailing cultural expectations during their formative years.
- **Resistance to Change:** Conservative values are prevalent, with skepticism toward changing roles.

### **Younger Generations:**

- **Progressive Views:** Younger generations challenge traditional roles, supporting gender equality and shared responsibilities within families.
- **Higher Educational Attainment:** Younger generations have greater access to education, contributing to a broader view of gender roles.
- **Activism and Advocacy:** Younger individuals actively engage in gender equality advocacy, leveraging social media platforms to challenge stereotypes.

### **Key Generational Data:**

1. **Attitudes Toward Traditional Roles:**
  - **Older Generation:** 75% embrace traditional roles, 30% challenge them.
  - **Younger Generation:** 25% embrace traditional roles, 70% challenge them.
2. **Educational Influence:**
  - **Older Generation:** 20% with higher education, 80% without.
  - **Younger Generation:** 75% with higher education, 25% without.
3. **Workforce Participation:**
  - **Older Generation:** 35%
  - **Younger Generation:** 65%
4. **Shared Household Responsibilities:**
  - **Older Generation:** 20% agree, 80% disagree.
  - **Younger Generation:** 60% agree, 40% disagree.

### **Cultural and Linguistic Influences on Gender Roles**

Cultural practices and the Georgian language play significant roles in shaping gender perceptions.

- **Gendered Language:** Georgian reinforces traditional norms through gendered nouns, pronouns, and verbs, perpetuating stereotypes.
- **Cultural Practices:** Rituals related to marriage, childbirth, and family structure emphasize caregiving roles for women and provider roles for men.

However, as Georgia modernizes, efforts to promote gender equality challenge traditional linguistic patterns, including adopting more gender-neutral terms.

## **CONCLUSION**

This study illustrates how the intersection of linguistics and cultural anthropology provides a nuanced understanding of gender roles, particularly within the context of Georgia. The analysis demonstrates how language, cultural practices, and societal norms converge to shape and reinforce gender identities, while also highlighting the transformative potential of integrating these disciplines. By examining the cultural and linguistic dimensions of gender roles, the study offers valuable insights into the complexities of gender dynamics, especially in areas with contrasting urban and rural experiences. This intersectional approach not only deepens our understanding but also supports efforts to challenge stereotypes, promote inclusivity, and advance gender equality in Georgian society.

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# The House of Vardanisdze and the Painting of Jumati Church of Archangels of the First Half of the Fourteenth Century

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## **ABSTRACT**

The article looks at the issues of establishing a powerful medieval Georgian feudal clan – the Vardanisdze – in Guria and, consequently, those of adopting the hereditary title of Gurieli seen through the portraits identified in the murals of Jumati Monastery. Based on the analysis of artistic style, the painting of the Church dates from the first half of the fourteenth century. The memorial portrait of the pridetworthy ancestor of the Vardanisdze family was identified during the 2022 expedition of Tamaz Beradze Institute of Georgian Studies of the University of Georgia. Indeed, in the first half of the fourteenth century, the Gurieli - governor of Guria - of the Vardanisdze dynasty, who would most probably be depicted on the north wall near the altar of the church, must have been the initiator of representing the portrait of their ancestor. Regrettably, the murals succumbed to the later period painting and architectural alterations of the church, although the layer of the painting of the first half of the fourteenth century on the western part of the north wall still preserves a donor portrayal of a strange couple - a monk and a nun. It is probable that the monk was the first Vardanisdze, who was granted the title of Gurieli after losing Svaneti dukedom.

*Keywords:* Jumati Monastery, medieval Georgian murals, portraits of historical figures, Vardanisdze-Gurieli

## **INTRODUCTION**

Jumati Monastery (Ill.1) enjoyed deep respect from the Gurieli ruling Guria region for centuries. In addition, based on the reading of the artistic program, it can be assumed that during a certain period it had a function of a family church. It is also evidenced by the crosses and icons of high artistic value and rich in epigraphic material which had been preserved there until the 1920s. They mentioned not only the Gurieli but their remote ancestors – the Vardanisdze, dukes of Svaneti – too (Bakradze, 1987, pp. 218–225). The earliest of these, which dates to the first half of the eleventh century, is an embossed icon of St. George (80 x 55 cm). Its central area was adorned by an inscription of Grand Duke Vardan Vardanisdze, while the lower border featured a later-period embossed inscription of Beshken Gurieli and his son Mikel, who presumably had the icon renovated in the fourteenth century (Bakradze, 1987, pp. 218–219; Kondakov & Bakredze, 1890, pp. 107–108, il. 51; Chubinashvili, 1959, pp. 245–256). Along with other relics of the church whose major part was recognized in scientific literature, the icon (Kondakov & Bakredze, 1890, pp. 102–110) was captured during the robbery in September, shortly after the inventory carried out in Jumati Monastery by the representatives of the Bolshevik government in 1921 (Chubinashvili, 1959, p. 245). Prior to that, at the end of the nineteenth century, during the well-known ‘robbery’ committed under the protection of the exarch and the ober-procurator of the highly influential Most Holy Synod, two embossed icons adorned with extremely valuable enamel cloisonne of St. Archangel Michael and St. Archangel Gabriel, described by Dimitri Bakradze, were lost. In the early 1880s, S. Sabin-Gust, photographer or artist from St. Petersburg or Tbilisi, who was ‘equipped’ with proper documents and references, carried the icons away from Jumati, as well as from other churches of Georgia, with the promise he would restore them. However, despite being a high-profile case (even Emperor Alexander III was informed about it) and the long-standing demand of the Georgian clergy, indeed, nobody was punished and nothing was returned (Maculevič, 1926, pp. 77–78; Amiranashvili, 1963, p. 257; Khuskivadze, 1981, pp. 107–108; Tavberidze, 2005, pp. 33–67). The looted relics, as it had been expected, were distributed among private collections and museums in Russia. Later, nine out of thirteen medallions of enamel cloisonne of the icon of St. Gabriel the Archangel, which had been purchased by J. Pierpont Morgan from collector A. Zvenigorodski at a very high price, ended up in the Metropolitan Museum in New York (all nine are included in the main exhibition, and Georgia, specifically, Jumati Monastery, is indicated as the place of their origin), while one ended up in the Louvre (later submitted to the Cluny Museum) as Byzantine works of enamel (Khuskivadze, 1981, pp. 108–109; Tavberidze, 2005, pp. 88–101).

Donor inscriptions of these two icons, as well as of the rest of the relics of Jumati, cite historical persons of different periods (Bakradze, 1987, pp. 218–225), including those whose donor images probably embellished the frescos of the church of Archangels of Jumati.

## ***METHODS***

The study is based on content analysis and critical approach to literary and pictorial sources, providing a solid basis for identifying the historical figures depicted in the wall paintings of Jumati Church. The historical-comparative method determines the settlement of the first generation of Vardanisdze-Gurielis in Guria as well as the sequence of members of this family. Using the methods of comparative analysis of iconographic-iconological and artistic styles used in the research, the highly artistic wall painting of Jumati church was studied and the time of its execution was determined.

## ***RESULTS***

In Georgian fresco painting the tradition of depicting memorial portraits, like, for instance, Bagrat III in the fourteenth-century murals of Bedia, David the Builder in the sixteenth-century layer of the main church of Gelati, or mandaturtukhutsesi Giorgi I Dadiani (1290s–1323) in the seventeenth-century décor of the central space of Khobi Church, is connected to the contribution these figures made to a particular church, whether it was founding, constructing, painting, embellishing or all together. Our case is somehow different. Vardan Vardanisdze, Grand Duke of Svaneti of the eleventh century, had made no contribution to either building or painting of Jumati Monastery. The reason for producing his memorial portrait is likely to have been the desire of the Vardanisdzes of the first generation, who had moved from Svaneti to rule Guria, to present their noble family to the local congregation by the portrait of their most famous ancestor; moreover, they brought the family icon left by him to Guria. The epithet ‘grand’ preserved in the accompanying inscription points to the nobility of the Grand Duke and, accordingly, of the Vardanisdze family. Notably, a similar epithet – ‘great and noble man’ – has been used in a historical source to refer to another Vardanisdze, an official of Tamar’s epoch (Meskhia, 1979, pp. 115–127). Thus, it seems logical for the Vardanisdze-Gurieli of the first generation to make claim by featuring the memorial portrait of the famous ancestor in a new place – Guria.

Who was the Vardanisdze-Gurieli of the first generation that had the church painted



and when could it have occurred? Indeed, after receiving lordship of Guria. The sources of Guria principality are silent about it and the term ‘Gurieli’, which is recognized as bearing the meaning of owning the land in Guria and ruling it, emerges only in the 1340s (Kartvelishvili, 2008, p. 268). It has been suggested that both in the early feudal epoch and in the eleventh–thirteenth centuries Guria must have been a royal domain and it was only from the fourteenth century that it was given to rule to the Vardanisdze, who laid foundation to the family of Gurieli (Khidureli, 1977, pp. 282–283). Vakhushti Batonishvili dates the occurrence of depriving the house of Vardanisdze of lordship of Svaneti and appointing their representative as the ruler of Guria by 1361 and associates it to King Bagrat V (Vakhushti Batonishvili, 1973, p. 261). However, historian Tamaz Beradze doubted the correctness of this date and believed that it must have occurred several decades earlier (Beradze, 2018, pp. 372–373). Researcher Goneli Arakhamia not only shares this opinion, but also suggests that the first duke of Guria from the family of Vardanisdze was Beshken Gurieli, the one mentioned on the icon of St. George of Jumati and depicted in the wall painting of the church of the Savior of Baghlebi. Pavle Ingorokva identified Beshken Gurieli with Beshken Vardanisdze, the mandaturtukhutsesi, mentioned in the agapes of the Cross Monastery of Jerusalem (Ingorokva, 1963, p. 584; Arakhamia, 2003, p. 54). This identification sounds convincing to other researchers as well (K. Chkhatarashvili, T. Kartvelishvili) (Kartvelishvili, 2008, pp. 268–269). Thus, considering the presumable date of the agape included in the Memorial Note of the Cross Monastery (Metreveli, 1962, pp. 134–135) and the date of possessing the title of mandaturtukhutsesi, Vardan Vardanisdze is regarded to be the historical figure of the first third of the fourteenth century (Arakhamia, 2003, pp. 54–56). This date is supported by the style of the murals of Jumati.

Images of the representatives of the Vardanisdze-Gurieli dynasty - the main commissioners of the wall painting of Jumati Church - could, according to tradition, be assumed to be depicted in the east part of the north wall of the church (Alibegashvili, 1979, p. 30), which is also evidenced by the extant fragment of the feet of the donor. At the same time, the blind arched niche of the west part of the north wall features a donor depiction of the monk and the nun. Despite the poor condition, the composition with the Savior in blessing and the couple of religious persons seems to be contemporaneous with the main painting judging by the artistic rendering of the figures. This common iconographic scheme of the Savior blessing a royal couple established in the Christian artistic tradition is evidenced in the examples of Byzantine art from the tenth century, while it is encountered in Georgian fresco painting for the representations of the members of the royal family from the twelfth–thirteenth centuries; later it is applied by local rulers too (Skhirtladze,

2000, pp. 14–18). The man dressed in a monk's garment is depicted on the west, while the nun is shown on the east. He is wearing a black cloak and a cowl hugging the shape of the head and spread over the shoulders (Ill. 4). The painted layer of the nun (Ill. 5) is also badly managed but, unlike the man, a fragment of an asomtavruli inscription made in white paint against green background can be identified left of her head:

...misi Tekla

... misi Tekla (...His Tekla)

It is presumed that this part of the inscription must be reconstructed as 'his former spouse Tekla'. Donor compositions in which former spouses who had taken monastic vows are depicted side by side are rather rare. However, there had been another case in the same Guria region which Dimitri Bakradze describes in the wall painting of a stone church in Askana (Bakradze, 1987, p. 173).

The main question is who the donor monk and nun of Jumati could be. Knowing the name of nun Tekla does not assist in their identification. On the other hand, we might reminisce about another donor - who had taken monastic vows - depicted in the church of Zarzma. The inscription at the portrayal reads that he is 'the Grand Duke, Lord Great Chamberlain, governor of the Svans Suimon Gurieli' (Takaishvili, 2018, p. 44; Beridze, 1955, p. 133). There is a strange coincidence here. The column in Zarzma where Suimon Gurieli is depicted features a figure of St. Tekla right next to him, while no other holy mother is depicted nearby. 'The Grand Duke, Lord Great Chamberlain, governor of the Svans Suimon Gurieli' is contemporaneous with the family of the Jakeli, rulers of Samtskhe in the fourteenth century (Arakhamia, 2003, pp. 57–58; Kartvelishvili, 2006, p. 116) and his identification with his namesake Gurieli who lived in the seventeenth or the eighteenth centuries was excluded by Ekvtime Takaishvili (Takaishvili, 2018, p. 44). It is incorrect to consider him as Simon Gurieli, living in the seventeenth century (1606–1672), which emerged in an undoubtedly remarkable work of a foreign researcher Manuela Studer-Karlen about the wall painting of Zarzma Church (Studer-Karlen, 2021, p. 150). As is known from the history of the monastery of Zarzma, at the end of the 1570s, following the conquer of Samtskhe by the Ottomans, the monastery ceased to function. The Gurieli transferred the valuable crosses and icons to Shemokmedi and had the church of Zarzma in Shemokmedi built during the same period (Zakaraia, 1981, p. 59; Beridze, 1997, p. 173; Kartvelishvili, 2006, pp. 60–62).

Researcher Arakhamia discusses S. Kakabadze's and P. Ingorokva's opinions with reference to the period of activities of Suimon Gurieli. He supports the date of the 1340s–50s suggested by Kakabadze, but shares P. Ingorokva's viewpoint, according

to which Suimon Gurieli of Zarzma was a member of the Vardanisidze family and that he must have been the duke of Guria in the period following Beshken Vardanisidze (Arakhamia, 2003, p. 57). However, there is a particularly important point to be considered: in the inscription of Zarzma, apart from being Gurieli, Suimon Gurieli refers to himself as the lord great chamberlain and the governor of the Svans too, which should mean that prior to taking monastic vows he had been the grand duke, chamberlain, and the governor of the Svans and afterwards became Gurieli. If we also recall that Beshken is only Gurieli in the inscription of the icon of St. George of Jumati, it can be admitted that Suimon was the very first Vardanisidze – the governor of Svaneti – who was granted lordship of Guria by the royal authority. Apparently, after some time he became a monk and separated himself from the secular world. Indeed, following this, the title of Gurieli would be passed down to his son. It is difficult to claim whether the monk-donor of Jumati Monastery is ‘the Grand Duke, Lord Great Chamberlain, governor of the Svans Suimon Gurieli’, depicted in Zarzma, and nun Tekla – his former spouse. But one thing is obvious: the compositional scheme of the monk and the nun being blessed by God depicted in Jumati Church represents high-ranking honorable members of the Vardanisidze-Gurieli family, and the initiator of depicting the couple, who had already taken monastic vows, together was probably their son, who was the main benefactor of the wall painting and presenter of the noble house of the Vardanisidze in Guria through the memorial portrait of his famous ancestor Vardanisidze Vardan the ‘Great’. It is highly likely that it was Beshken Gurieli.

There arises another problem. Suimon seems to be the name adopted after taking monastic vows and we are unaware of his name in his secular life. In 2016, researcher N. Zhgenti tracked down parts of an old chancel screen with a fragmentary inscription in the church of the monastery of the Archangels of Erketi. He deciphered the inscription as “...souls of thy wretched slaves Mikel, Grand Duke of the Svans and...the king and protect us and remember souls of our parents, amen” (Zhgenti, 2022, pp. 221–222). Based on paleographic analysis, the researcher identified the similarity of the inscription of Erketi with Georgian majuscule characters of the twelfth–thirteenth centuries (Zhgenti, 2022, p. 224) and, in addition, assumed that Grand Duke Mikel of the Svans lived in the mid-twelfth century (Zhgenti, 2022, p. 228). According to N. Zhgenti, following the year 1073, the Vardanisidze, lords of Svaneti, must have owned lands in Guria, while at the turn of the twelfth and the thirteenth century, a separate branch of the noble family of the Vardanisidze must have been formed (Zhgenti, 2022, p. 229). The researcher relies on the source according to which in 1073 Vardan, Duke of the Svans, rebelled against King Giorgi II, and the King put down the rebellion by granting him Askalana (Kartlis

Tskhovreba, 1955, p. 316), which some historians identify with Askana in Guria (Gasviani, 1973, p. 82; Kartvelishvili, 2008, p. 267). Even in the case this assumption is accepted, in Guria the presumable representatives of a separate branch of the Vardanisdze were not grand dukes of Svaneti at the turn of the twelfth and the thirteenth century (Kartvelishvili, 2008, p. 267) and, consequently, Grand Duke Mikel of the Svans could not have been the representative of this branch of the Vardanisdze. On the other hand, it is less likely that in the eleventh–thirteenth centuries the Vardanisdze, including grand dukes of Svaneti, commissioned icons for the churches and monasteries of Guria and donated some of them to Jumati (Kartvelishvili, 2008, p. 267). This is not evidenced by the epigraphy of the icons either. Therefore, we should consider Ekvtime Takaishvili’s opinion that the Vardanisdze moved the family relic from Svaneti to Guria only after they became rulers of Guria (Takaishvili, 2017, pp. 32–34). Different is the case of the donor inscription of Grand Duke Mikel of the Svans on the chancel screen of Erketi Church, which points to his rights with reference to the monastery and, accordingly, the region. It may be assumed that Mikel was the secular name of Suimon Gurieli, the grand duke, lord great chamberlain and governor of the Svans, which is indirectly supported by the fact the son of his presumable successor Beshken Gurieli is also Mikel. Therefore, it could be suggested that, after Arishiani Vardanisdze, governor of the Svans and lord great chamberlain, who, according to his agape of the Cross Monastery of Jerusalem is considered to have lived in 1273–1305 (Metreveli, 1962, p. 158; Bakhtadze, 2003, p. 218), Mikel, former Suimon, was probably the last representative of the Vardanisdze family who ruled Svaneti in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth century. He probably inherited the title of chamberlain from Arishiani, and after losing dukedom of Svaneti, was granted the title of Gurieli by the king.

It should be mentioned that the list of the governors of Svaneti which is provided in M. Bakhtadze’s monographic research dedicated to the institution of dukedom in Georgia does not cite Suimon Gurieli even though the author cites the inscription of Zarzma discussed by Ekvtime Takaishvili (Bakhtadze, 2003, pp. 222, 224). Furthermore, the author mentions two other Gurielis who, like Suimon, refer themselves to as governors of the Svans (Bakhtadze, 2003, pp. 222–223). Dimitri Bakradze identified the inscription of one of them on the fragment of a silver plaque found in the chest at the church of the Savior of Shemokmedi: “Oh, icon of God, give help and protect Grand Duke, Duke of the Svans Gurieli Kakhaber...his spouse Ana and who chased the revetment of this icon” (Bakradze, 1987, p. 129), and the other - on the back of the icon of St. Archangel Michael of Jumati: “O, powerful Archangel Michael, give help to your embellisher Grand Duke and Duke of the Svans Giorgi Gurieli, Loma and his spouse...Queen of Queens...” (Bakradze, 1987, p. 220). Re-

searcher Bakhtadze assumes that as representatives of the house of Dadiani got hold of the lordship of Svaneti after the Vardanisdze had lost it and there was no sight of the Gurieli among them, all three of the Gurieli “took over lordship of Svaneti on the basis of their being a branch of the house of Vardanisdze and their successors”. However, it should be noted that such an explanation does not sound sufficiently convincing to the researcher himself (Bakhtadze, 2003, pp. 219–223). It should also be noted that unlike Kakhaber and Giorgi, apart from being the duke of Svaneti Simon Gurieli was the royal chamberlain too, as were earlier period dukes of Svaneti - Vardanisdze Ivane (late eleventh – early twelfth century) (Bakradze, 1987, p. 220; Meskhia, 1979, pp. 124–126) and Arishiani (second half of the thirteenth century – beginning of the fourteenth century) (Metreveli, 1962, p. 92; Bakhtadze, 2003, p. 218). However, there is a sound argument with reference to Giorgi and Kakhaber Gurieli, that they are not Vardanisdze, but later period representatives of the house of Dadiani, and if the first decade of the fifteenth century is considered the time of Giorgi’s lordship, Kakhaber is thought to have ruled in the 1470s–80s (Arakhamia, 2003, pp. 59–63). The date in question is regarded as the time when the duchy of Svaneti was under the influence of the house of Dadiani (Bakhtadze, 2003, p. 222) and the Gurielis cited as dukes of Svaneti represented the same house of Dadiani.

## ***DISCUSSION***

The main painting fragmentarily preserved in the central nave of Jumati Church is visible in the parts of the south, west, and north walls. The vast space of the hall is divided into irregularly distributed sections with blind arched niches on the south and north walls and arches resting on high pilasters. The walls articulated with windows and architectural profiles mainly feature single figures, while scenes including, first, the Twelve Great Feasts were probably laid out on the panels of the vault. The extant part of the Twelve Great Feasts expanded with the passion cycle is depicted in the western sections of the south and north walls and the lower tiers of the west wall. On the south, near the western edge of the vault panel, one can discern a fragment of Martha’s or Mary’s kneeling figure from the Raising of Lazarus. Only a minor fragment of the scene of Bringing Jesus to the Cross can be identified on a narrow, arched panel in the upper tier of the south wall. Part of the body of the executioner embracing the arm of the Cross and leaning down can be discerned against the background of the mountains depicted as ‘broken’ rocky platforms. Even though this scene is included in the Passion cycle of Betania dated to the mid-twelfth century, the image of the executioner embracing the arm of the Cross is missing there, as well as in the thirteenth-century Byzantine murals in

Greece (Chatzidakis, 1986, p. 51). This detail emerges in the wall paintings of Italy and the Balkans from the thirteenth–fourteenth centuries (Schiller, 1972, p. 83). Then follow parts of the scenes of the Crucifixion depicted on the broader arched panel, multi-figure scenes of the Descent from the Cross and the Lamentation, loaded with emotional details, on the west wall, while the north wall features a fragment of the Descent into Hell. An extensive scene of the Dormition is also fragmentary on the second tier of the west wall. The scene is flanked by full-length figures of John of Damascus and Cosmas of Maiuma (Konstantinidi, 2018, p. 87) holding open scrolls. The figures are separated from the main scene by a line but are essentially connected to it. They are identified by iconographic features and fill the scene up with liturgical content (Etingof, 2000, pp. 213–217).

This layer of the wall painting of Jumati, whose iconographic program comprises Twelve Great Feasts expanded with the scenes of the passion cycle of Jesus, reveals clearly indicated features of the high Palaiologan artistic style with the compositions loaded with narrative details, gestures expressing the figures' strong emotions, volumetric bodies, and pictorial artistic means of depicting images. It is also indication of the highly artistic decor of the first half of the fourteenth century distinguished by theological knowledge. Furthermore, the elongated, elegant proportions approximated to the so-called Classical ones, the volumetric forms shaped with free strokes, the manner of painting images 'modelled' with colorful layers reveal common features of the so-called 'golden age' of the late thirteenth – first decades of the fourteenth century - the Palaiologan Renaissance (Mouriki, 1975, pp. 65, 70; Jurich, 2000, p. 54). Although the fragmentary and damaged painting does not allow to restore the complete picture, certain tendencies are still very obvious. While constructing the bodies of the figures, the artist chooses elongated proportions; however, excessively 'inflated' shapes characteristic to the first decades of the fourteenth century are not encountered. Conversely, the painting of flowing draping, which is free of sharp and broken lines, conveys elegant figures approximated to the 'Constantinopolitan' standard. Deprived of compact, narrative episodes and detailing, striking are the compositions communicating the sense of monumentality. Such an artistic interpretation is different from artistic approach of the high Palaiologan style, which is loaded with architectural background and landscape elements indicating spatiality (Mouriki, 1975, p. 70).

At the same time, application of this kind of approach in the décor of Jumati promotes highlighting the tendencies inclined to dramatization of the emotions created in the murals of the second quarter of the fourteenth century and depicting them with dynamic movements (Longinus the Centurion in the Crucifixion), gestures (mourning women in the Descent from the Cross and in the Lamentation) and facial



expressions (John the Theologian in the Crucifixion, Peter the Apostle in the Dormition). However, it should be mentioned that neither in this case can one identify the growing tendency towards exaggeration, exaltation, and deformation of figures, which took place from the second quarter of the fourteenth century and was referred to as the so-called 'cult of the ugliness' (Mouriki, 1975, p. 65). In Jumati artistic means and methods of execution are moderate and reserved, but as far as the iconography of the scenes is concerned, it chooses the rarer versions of the traditional schemes of the time, which enhance the urge of dramatization of emotions typical of the Palaiologan style of the second quarter of the fourteenth century. Thus, the artist of Jumati, who is loyal to the common artistic approaches formed in the early stage of development of the Palaiologan artistic style in the monuments of Thessaloniki-Mount Athos and Mystras-Constantinople and who renders compositional and painting tasks inclined to dramatization of emotions typical of the monuments of the second quarter of the fourteenth century, also seems to maintain local artistic traditions to some extent.

Figures of the holy martyrs depicted in the eastern part of the south wall, as well as separately standing figures of the holy warriors that, according to iconographic features, are identified as St. George, St. Theodor Stratilat, and St. Demetrios, shown in the first tier, belong to the same painting layer. In the same group are included the historical figures whose deplorable remnants are visible in the western part of both south and north walls.

A partly preserved portrait of a historical figure is independently depicted near the altar, east of the entrance on the south wall of the central nave of the church of the Archangels (Ill. 2). The man's image portrayed against the light yellowish-white background is 'cut' at the chest by the brownish-red line of the frame, while the rest of the body is covered with the late medieval portrayal of St. Michael the Archangel. The face of the elderly donor is frontal, but, according to the position of the shoulders (the left shoulder seems to be narrower), he must have been turned towards east and his arms were probably raised in supplication towards the altar. The man's trapezoidal white hat flared at the top and adjoining the dark red line dividing the tier is like the headdresses of the donors depicted in Achi, which date to the end of the thirteenth century (Iosebidze, 1989, pp. 49–50; Chikhladze, Datunashvili, & Gvelesiani, 2017, p. 197, pl. 286). It also appears similar to the presently lost four portraits of secular figures of Likhauri Church, whose garments and headdresses reminded Dimitri Bakradze of those of the donors of Achi (Bakradze, 1987, p. 99). The shapes of the facial features, as well as the gaze enlivened by white beams, convey the manner of painting images in the high Palaiologan style, which shows direct link with the main painting of the second quarter of the fourteenth century. The

damaged asomtavruli inscription made in black color against the white background on both sides of the donor's head (Ill. 3) is read in three lines (we are grateful to Mr. George Gagoshidze for reading the inscription and performing its schemes):

...rdan/ sZ...vrdn/ did

...Vardan/[i]sdz[e] Vardan /Didi... (Vardanisidze Vardan The Great...)

There is no mention of Vardan Vardanisidze among the historical figures ruling Guria in the fourteenth century, although Vakhushti Batonishvili indicated stemming of the Gurieli from the Vardanisidze (Batonishvili Vakhushti, 1973, pp. 37). The nineteenth-century researchers knew that the dynasty of Vardanisidze - grand dukes of Svaneti, were predecessors of the Gurieli (Bakradze, 1987, pp. 101, 225). It is clearly evidenced by the epigraphy of the eleventh-thirteenth-century crosses and icons of the churches of Guria. These inscriptions mention different Vardanisidzes: Marushiani on the icon of St. James of Likhaura (Bakradze, 1987, p. 99), Liparit on the enamel icon of the Archangels of Jumati (Kondakov & Bakredze, 1890, pp. 104–106, fig. 50), Ivane, the duke, mandaturtukhutsesi (master of ceremonies) and msakhurtukhutsesi (great chamberlain) of Svaneti on the icon of St. Gabriel the Archangel of Jumati (Bakradze, 1987, p. 220). However, the earliest is Grand Duke Vardan Vardanisidze, mentioned in the inscription of the eleventh-century embossed icon of St. George of Jumati, who is identified by some historians as the fighter against the royal authority, 'Vardan, Duke of the Svans' and contemporaneous with King Giorgi II (1072–1089) (Meskhia, 1979, p. 123; Bakhtadze, 2003, p. 217). Whether it is the correct identification and he really is the figure of the second half of the eleventh century or the first half of the eleventh century (for instance, Giorgi Chubinashvili dates the icon of St. George of Jumati by the 1030s (Chubinashvili, 1959, p. 262), we consider that the Great Vardan Vardanisidze, depicted in the church of the Archangels of Jumati must be the memorial image of the grand duke mentioned on the icon of St. George, which was commissioned by a Gurieli, or Gurielis, representatives of Vardanisidze dynasty.

## **CONCLUSION**

To sum up, in 2022, identification of the memorial portrait of Vardanisidze Vardan the 'Great', 'forefather' of the Vardanidze clan, involved in the painting of the church of the Archangels of Jumati of the first half of the fourteenth century, allowed us to see the position of Vardanisidze-Gurieli, ruler of Guria, commissioner of the painting of the mentioned period. The successor of grand dukes of Svaneti, presumably Beshken Gurieli, who is mentioned together with his son Mikel in a lat-



er-period inscription of Vardan Vardanisdze's eleventh-century icon of St. George of Jumati, presents his old and noble family name by the portrait of his worthy ancestor in a 'new place' – Guria.

A weird donor composition executed on the same layer of the painting that features images of a monk and a nun being blessed by the Savior provides grounds to assume that: a) an elderly man depicted in monk's clothing is Grand Duke, Lord Great Chamberlain, and governor of the Svans Suimon Gurieli, while nun Tekla is his former spouse; b) the initiator of depicting them together is their son, assumingly Beshken Gurieli; c) Suimon is the last member of the Vardanisdze family holding the title of the Grand Duke of the Svans; he is a figure of the late thirteenth – early fourteenth century who received the title of the Gurieli; d) Mikel, Grand Duke of the Svans, identified on the slab of the chancel screen of the monastery of the Archangels of Erketi in 2016, could be the secular name of Suimon, which is indirectly confirmed by the name Mikel of his assumed grandson.

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**ILLUSTRATIONS:**

**Figure 1**

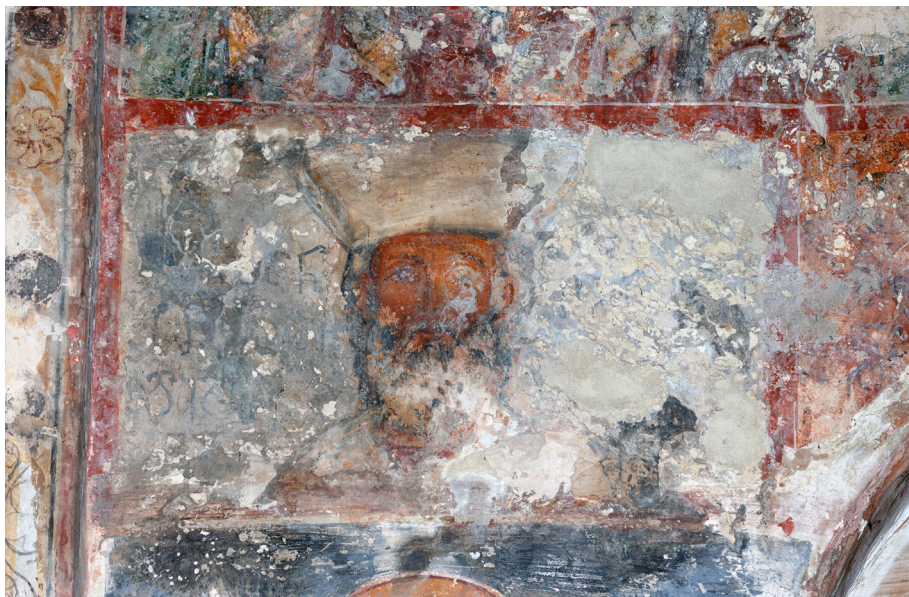
*Church of Archangels of Jumati*



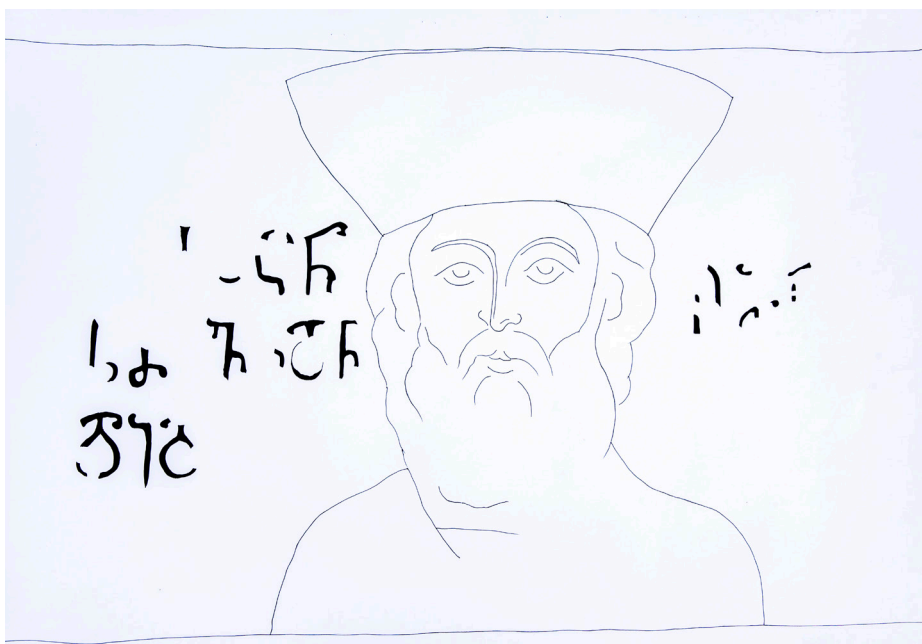
**Figure**

*Jumati. Memorial portret of Vardanisdze Vardan the Great*

2



**Figure 3**  
*Jumati. Schemes of Vardaniszde Vardan the Great*



**Figure 4**  
*Jumati. Probably Suimon Vardaniszde-Gurieli*



**Figure 5**

*Jumati. Schemes of nun Tekla*



# From Saint Nino to Women in Georgia's Winemaking

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## **ABSTRACT**

The “Grapevine Cross” of Saint Nino symbolizes the sacredness of the vine and wine in Georgia. Despite the prominence of female images in the country’s heritage, a patriarchal culture and gender segregation have survived through centuries in Georgia. This state of affairs applies to winemaking – a key sector for the economy and social life. However, against all odds, the recent decades have seen an incredible women’s arrival in the Georgian wine scene. Women break barriers and destroy outdated stereotypes by building successful businesses focused on premium wines with high export potential. While contributing to the renaissance of Georgian wine culture, they also establish themselves as valuable players in the country’s wine community.

*Keywords:* Georgia, winemaking, wine industry, culture, gender, economy



## **INTRODUCTION**

### ***Symbols and Culture***

The Grapevine Cross is a major symbol of the Orthodox Church of Georgia – a mountainous country where Europe meets Asia. To bring Christianity to Georgia, Saint Nino traveled from either the Eastern Roman Empire or Jerusalem in the 4th century carrying a cross made from grapevines (Cross of St. Nino, 2024). Since then, Georgian church architecture and paintings have used the vine leaf as one of the most distinctive motifs. The 6th-century Jvari Monastery in Mtskheta – the continuous religious center of Georgia – has a painting of the Virgin Mary holding grapes for Christ as a child.

Leaping from ancient to modern times, the Mother of Georgia sculpture, which overlooks Georgia's capital, Tbilisi, holds a bowl of wine in her left hand to greet those who come as friends and a sword in her right hand for those who come as enemies (Mother of Georgia, 2024). Representing the spirit of resistance and hospitality, the sculpture also reminds us that Georgia is the “Mother of Wine” – the birthplace of this ancient drink that has been made and celebrated continuously there for the last 8,000 years (Maghradze, 2016; Lordkipanidze, 2017; Georgian Wines, 2017; Georgia: The Cradle of Wine, 2024).

The vine and wine are considered holy in Georgia. Through female images, they symbolize the country's rich religious, cultural, and socioeconomic heritage. They also reflect the Georgian national character, as the hymn *Thou Art the True Vine* is the most important sacred song (Culture of Georgia, 2024).

Yet, despite strong women in Georgia's history and present time – from Saint Nino to the most famous ruler, Queen Tamar of Georgia's Golden Age (12th–13th centuries) (Rayfield, 2019; Jagiashvili, 2024), and the country's president since 2018, Salome Zourabichvili (see Exhibit 1) – patriarchal culture and gender segregation in family roles and occupations have persisted in Georgia. This endurance of old patterns applies to Georgia in general as well as to its wine industry – a significant sector that produces the second most exported commodity (Exports by Commodity Groups, 2024), provides a multiplier effect on the economy through secondary activities, and is critical for both economic growth and employment.

## **METHODS**

This paper aims to demonstrate that, against all odds, a change in gender patterns is coming to Georgia. This change is tangible and visible in winemaking – a key sector of the country's economy long dominated by men. To trace gender-related

developments in Georgia, the paper seeks to determine whether the country's legislation and international agreements have translated into progress in women's labor participation, wages, political power, and cultural attitudes. The analysis of Georgia's general context helps pinpoint the difficulties of rooting out gender stereotypes, task segregation, and men's control over land, finances, and decision-making in winemaking. The objective is then to identify the strategies female winemakers undertake to break multiple barriers to success.

The employed research methods include desk research, analysis of Georgian national and international statistics, interviews conducted in May–June 2024 as part of the author's Fulbright Scholarship in Georgia, and observations during participation in a meeting of the Women in Wine Industry and a visit to a wine tourism site in Kakheti. The snowball sampling of interviewees through persons with knowledge of Georgian winemaking or referrals by previously selected participants made data collection feasible within the two-month time frame and helped integrate interviews into other research methods. The interview guide, which was partly used for conversations with female winemakers, received an exemption determination by the George Washington University Committee on Human Research Institutional Review Board. The research could, therefore, proceed without further oversight as it adhered to common guidelines of studies involving human subjects.

The paper builds on previous research on gender relations in Georgia, including national evidence and international assessments by UN Women, the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, USAID, and the European Union. It benefits from articles about pioneering female winemakers worldwide and trailblazers in Georgia, as well as reports of their support by national and international organizations. These sources offer useful background for making sense of the author's interviews with Georgian female winemakers.

The paper is organized into five sections. The introduction reveals a contradiction between the veneration of women throughout Georgia's history and patriarchy in culture and economy. The second section sets the objective of the paper and designates methods that seek to unpack this contradiction in reference to winemaking. Supported by a variety of research methods and available literature, the third section assesses Georgia's strides toward gender equity, from commitments through questioning male domination to women's breakthrough into winemaking. The fourth section discusses the profiles of female entrants into Georgia's wine scene and their paths to success, focusing on specific approaches to getting ahead and advancing the country's reputation for wine. The conclusion spells out women's strategies to change the status quo and position themselves within Georgia's wine community.

## **RESULTS**

### ***Toward Gender Equity***

#### **Georgia's Commitments to Gender Equality and Current Status**

In the last thirty years, Georgia has made strides toward creating an enabling environment for gender equality (Georgia: Country Gender Assessment, 2018, p. X). The Constitution of Georgia recognizes the equality of all people before the law, regardless of gender (Constitution of Georgia, 2020). The Law on Gender Equality, adopted in 2010, prohibits discrimination in all spheres of social life and creates conditions for the implementation of equal rights and freedoms for women and men. It also determines the functions of the Gender Equality Council as a permanent body in the Parliament of Georgia to coordinate work on gender issues (Information prepared by the Government of Georgia, 2024). Furthermore, Georgia has become a party to international treaties and conventions promoting women's rights and gender equality (Treaties and Conventions, 2024; Key Findings, 2023).

However, progress in implementing the national legislative and international commitments has been slow. Over the past ten years, the labor participation rate stood at about 62–67% for men and 40–46% for women (Women and Men in Georgia, 2023, pp. 63, 75). The discrepancy among younger women can be attributed mainly to the burden of unpaid care work, including caring for small children below school age (Georgia: Country Gender Assessment, 2018, p. XII). Gender differences in wages remain significant, as women earn less than two-thirds of men's average monthly salary, and the gender pay gap was 31.7% in 2022 (Women and Men in Georgia, 2023, pp. 63, 75; Figures 1 and 2). Men are generally employed in higher-paying professions and attain more senior positions than women. However, even accounting for demographic and job characteristics, women in Georgia earn roughly 16% less than men (Molineus, 2022).

Georgian women have also made little progress in their political influence and power. In the top executive branch positions, the share of women varies from 17% among government ministers to 19% among ambassadors. The share of female members of the Parliament of Georgia was 18% in 2022, not significantly higher than in 2016 (Women and Men in Georgia, 2023, p. 123; Figure 3).

Georgia ranked 69th in the 2024 World Economic Forum Global Gender Gap Index (WEF GGI) – behind most European countries and Armenia (Global Gender Gap 2024, 2024, p. 12) – and lower than in 2006, when the country was ranked 54th (Georgia: Country Gender Assessment, 2018, p. X). While Georgia's advances in institutional frameworks and instruments move the country toward gender parity,

some perceptions and attitudes slow down change. According to a UNDP study based on face-to-face interviews with a nationally representative sample of around 2,500 citizens and focus group discussions in five regions of Georgia, 48% of Georgians believe that women's primary duty is to take care of the family rather than seek a professional career, and 39% believe that men are better business leaders than women (Men, Women, and Gender Relations, 2020). Given these entrenched views, it is no wonder that according to the most recent data, the number of men founding businesses is almost twice as high as the number of women (Women and Men in Georgia, 2023, p. 95).

### **Traditional Male Domination of Winemaking**

A Georgian traditional stereotype is that men dominate both public and family life, while most housework is done by women (Culture of Georgia, 2024). According to the Caucasus Barometer Report, traditional gender roles are held to be "ideal": only 1% of Georgians said that the main decision-maker at home should be a woman, and only 2% considered a woman an ideal breadwinner (How Does Gender Determine Roles, 2024). Surveys conducted for the World Bank's gender assessment of Georgia revealed that 31% of respondents had a preference for sons, and 57% of respondents in rural areas preferred to have a boy (Country Gender Assessment, 2021, p. 6). As a result, the skewed sex ratio at birth persists: the number of boys born per 100 girls was approximately 107.2 in 2023 (Women and Men in Georgia, 2023, p. 6).

Much of vine-growing and winemaking happens in rural areas, where gender stereotypes and patriarchal attitudes are especially deeply entrenched and prevalent. Women often play submissive roles in families and communities as traditional gender roles impede their economic functions and decision-making abilities in villages (Country Gender Equality Profile, 2020, pp. 75, 84).

Men have controlled the Georgian wine sector for centuries. Though winemaking has always been a family-based activity, men occupied leading decision-making roles in wine businesses, while women participated in the auxiliary operations of vineyard treatment and helped with harvesting (Country Gender Equality Profile, 2020; Berekashvili et al., 2008, p. 9). Winemaking was essentially considered "man's work," and superstitions often restricted women's entrance into traditional masculine activities (Berekashvili et al., 2008, p. 10). (See Exhibit 2.)

Gender segregation of tasks in winemaking reflects a legacy of the divide between stereotypically male occupations and female care- and service-related jobs or unpaid subsistence farm work (Georgia: Country Gender Assessment, 2018, p. XIII;

Analysis of the Gender Pay Gap, 2020, p. 8). Even though Georgian women are legally entitled to own and inherit land and property, men enjoy property inheritance, ownership, and administration privileges. It is essential for winemaking that according to the agricultural census data, 70% of total agricultural holdings were operated by men (Georgia: Country Gender Assessment, 2018, p. XIII). The latest statistics confirm that the share of agricultural holdings whose heads are women has been steadily around 32%, and the annual average profit from the latter holdings in 2020 was 43%-51% less than from the holdings headed by men (Women and Men in Georgia, 2023, p. 105). Insufficient assets and inadequate access to finances have been additional impediments faced by women seeking to become entrepreneurs (Country Gender Equality Profile, 2020, p. 60).

### **Women's Breakthrough into Winemaking**

Given the Georgian context, women's advent in the wine scene has been remarkable. Change is bubbling in the country's wine sector, and it happens against all odds. Women manage to break multiple barriers and destroy outdated stereotypes. To venture into winemaking, they display passion, courage, and determination. They also need mutual support to sustain their new wine businesses, gain recognition, and reap benefits.

The founding of the Women in Wine Industry (WIWI) association in 2019 was a significant milestone. Manana Akhlediani, a vibrant, energetic woman with experience in the Soviet-period wine industry and a penchant for unifying people, was the mastermind behind this association (Interview with Manana Akhlediani, 2024). In recent years, WIWI forged ties with the National Wine Agency, the Wine Department of the Ministry of Agriculture, and the agricultural program of the Ministry of the Economy. These ties helped to sponsor several tours of association members to European countries – including Belgium, the Netherlands, and Poland – to present their products. The association and its supporters also enabled women's participation in wine fairs and festivals, professional business training programs, and study tours abroad. These engagements have advanced women's communication, marketing, and management skills, stimulated their businesses, and uplifted their image and prospects.

By coming together, Georgian female winemakers walk in the footsteps of pioneering female winemakers around the world who have been developing international partnerships to exchange knowledge and experience and elevate their status in the global wine industry (Povey, 2024; Women Who Influence, 2024; The History of Women, 2022; Morning Star Darling, 2021; Mariani, 2024). Building on worldwide practices, female trailblazers in Georgia enjoy the support of international organiza-

tions. Within the project titled Women in the Georgian Wine Business, the German Society for International Cooperation (GIZ) has worked to enhance the visibility and capacity of female winemakers, integrate them into cooperation networks, and promote their products. The establishment of a close partnership between WIWI and the German association “Vinissima – Women & Wine” was one of the tangible outcomes of the GIZ project (Georgia: A Gently Fermenting Revolution, 2024).

The United Nations Development Programme and the European Union have also stepped in to support the entrepreneurial spirit of female winemakers in Georgia via grants, technical and consultative assistance, fostering innovation, and enhancing competitiveness (Tchitchinadze, 2023). As part of A Joint Action for Women’s Economic Empowerment, UN Women has supported entrepreneurs from western Georgia engaged in agritourism and winemaking to expand their businesses and move up the value chain. The program, held in partnership with the Georgian Farmers’ Association, involved a study tour co-hosted by Le Donne del Vino, the Italian national association of female winemakers and experts in related sectors (Women Entrepreneurs, 2018).

### **Madam Wine**

The Madam Wine company, founded by Manana Akhlediani in 2010, is a great example of an innovative marketing and business approach that shatters archaic stereotypes and disrupts Georgia’s wine scene. Produced by women, Manana’s wines are primarily intended for women. Catering to a range of wine varieties for women of different characters, the Madam Wine labels include names such as “Lovely Woman,” “Coquette,” and “Rose.” One wine marketed to men, which is stronger than the ones for women, shows women’s lips on the label, following the saying, “Your lips are red as this wine.”

Having identified her unique niche in boutique wines, Manana was able to employ a European-style factory following European standards, extend her connections, and present her wines to Western distributors. She now exports to Europe, including Estonia, Germany, Poland, and the United Kingdom. By building her business, she also inspires and assists other female winemakers – as a successful entrepreneur and the leader of the WIWI association (Madam Wine, 2024).

## ***DISCUSSION***

### ***Female Winemakers’ Paths to Success***

The community of Georgian female winemakers is diverse and effervescent, but a few features are common to many newcomers to the industry.



## Family Connections

Most of the women who entered the wine field have family connections or grew up watching their fathers produce wine. This is not surprising because winemaking is a family affair in Georgia. Baia Abuladze, who was named to Forbes' 2019 30 Under 30 Europe entrepreneurs list (Sorvino, 2019), is a fourth-generation winemaker. She grew up on the family farm and helped her parents manage it. Following traditional methods and rules, she now produces an average of 40,000 bottles of wine a year, mostly exported to the United States (Foucault, 2023). Tamara Bidzinashvili named one of her Saperavi wines "Temo" in honor of her father-in-law, who helped her develop her business. She found her place among natural winemakers and also exports to the West (Foucault, 2023). Sommelier Lika Nebieridze, who works for the prestigious Château Mukhrani—a successful modern enterprise that revived the winemaking traditions of Prince Ivane Mukhranbatoni (Gelashvili, 2024; Château Mukhrani, 2024)—was born and raised in the Mukhrani village amidst vineyards (Interview with Lika Nebieridze, 2024).

## Sharp Focus

With a few exceptions, pioneering female winemakers are involved in small-scale enterprises focused on premium-level wines. This approach is consistent with the strategy highlighted by Julie A. Peterson, Managing Partner at the Marq Wine Group and a former contractor of the National Wine Agency of Georgia. "Georgia needs to make exceptional wines and to align the types of wines with trends in wine consumption," said Peterson, referring to the benefits of entering the U.S. market with its 19 million wine consumers. Georgian wines are sold for an average of \$5.15 per bottle in the U.S. market and only for \$2 per bottle in Russia; some wineries can sell for \$9–\$11 per bottle (Interview with Julie Peterson, 2024).

Manana Akhlediani's efforts to orient WIWI (Women in Wine Industry) association members toward the premium wine category are driven by her interest in improving the quality of Georgia's wines and prioritizing the country's higher-value exports to the West. She is also concerned about recovering the original 525 varieties of grapes grown in Georgia in the 19th century and diversifying the types of wines that Georgia can produce and export (Madamwine, 2024; Interview with Manana Akhlediani, 2024).

## Skills

Education and experience in winemaking are essential for professionalism and enterprise success. Ketevan Kochiashvili, a close colleague of Patrick Honnef, the German-born CEO of Château Mukhrani (Gelashvili, 2024, p. 226), is second only



to him in making decisions about producing high-quality wines. Ketevan received a bachelor's degree from the Agricultural University in Tbilisi and a master's degree from the Technical University in the field of microbiology. She was also an exchange student at Geisenheim University in Germany, which offers excellent programs in viticulture and wine business (Interview with Ketevan Kochiashvili, 2024). Ketevan is much valued by her boss, who hired her fresh from university and promoted her to a high position in his company (Interview with Patrick Honnef, 2024).

Similarly, Ane Parjiani represents a new generation of winemakers who combine academic knowledge with practical experience. She recently earned her winemaking diploma. While working as a cellar employee at Château Mukhrani, she benefits from learning from master winemaker Honnef and also builds on her background in South African vineyards (Foucault, 2023).

Some female winemakers accompany lifelong learning by sharing their expertise, including teaching at local universities and offering courses through professional entities such as the Georgian Wine Guild, which offers certificates in viticulture and viniculture. These programs are accredited by the Ministry of Education of Georgia and supported by the government and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations (Interviews with members of the WIWI association, 2024).

### **Promotion**

Effective marketing is critical for the success of start-up women-owned and women-managed enterprises and their sustainability. Promotion of their products happens at wine festivals, exhibitions, and fairs, as well as via social media and personal contacts. The COVID-19 pandemic intensified reliance on social media. Tinatin Jakhua, who was educated in information technology, is skilled with computers and worked as a social media manager, started her wine business by publicizing her products on Instagram. She now exports her wines to Holland, France, India, the U.S., China, Poland, and other countries (Interview with Tinatin Jakhua, 2024; Tinatin Wine, 2024). The Madam Wine company attracted new clients and explored new export markets by increasing its online presence. In this endeavor, it was helped by the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development through funding from the European Union's EU4Business initiative (Madam Wine: EU4Business Helps, 2024).

### **From Winemaking to Wine Tourism**

Female winemakers increasingly link their businesses with wine tourism to raise their exposure and benefit from cross-fertilization of related economic sectors.

“Tasting local cuisine and wine” was the most popular tourist activity in Georgia in 2023, as 78.1% of international visitors cited it (Conducted Activities, 2024). Since many rural producers in Georgia do not have distribution contracts enabling them to retail their wine, the openness of their establishments for visitation and direct sales is indispensable (Georgia’s Alcoholic Beverage Industry, 2024).

Nina Qochiashvili is one of those who ventured to complement winemaking with a wine tourism site. Benefiting from the Produce in Georgia program of the national government in cooperation with USAID, which supports start-up businesses with loans (Produce in Georgia, 2014; Overview of Agriculture Sector, 2017; USAID Celebrates, 2024), she bought a 19th-century historical house in the Kardenakhi village, one of the best areas for winemaking in Kakheti. Restoring the decrepit house and the adjacent wine cellar was a giant undertaking. However, now Nina and her husband Kakha can boast the availability of six guest rooms for wine and food tourism, including space for holding conferences and tastings. Nina’s high-quality wines are sold to Germany, Japan, Poland, the U.S., and the United Kingdom, as well as locally. Blending winemaking and wine tourism is certainly a challenge, but it is also a promise of higher business profitability and resilience (see Exhibit 3).

## **CONCLUSION**

“Georgia is extremely exceptional: it has a perfect story—amazing history, tradition, sustainable farming, and also good wines, including natural ones,” stated Peterson, a U.S. consultant (Interview with Julie Peterson, 2024). This positive assessment was shared by Honnef, who referred to a “renaissance of Georgian wine culture” (Interview with Patrick Honnef, 2024). Female winemakers are now part of this exciting story and Georgia’s wine renaissance. Having chosen the wine sector as an avenue to express their creativity, they have made headways in turning their enterprises into sources of both pride and livelihood. They have challenged old stereotypes and heralded a new age of women-led winemaking. What are the strategies that they have employed to change the status quo and establish themselves as valuable players in Georgia’s wine community?

First, women’s breakthrough into winemaking did not happen in a vacuum. Georgia’s advances in the institutional frameworks intended to move the country toward gender parity have created a better climate for women-owned and women-managed businesses. Even though the agenda for gender equity is far from finished, national legislation and Georgia’s acceptance of international commitments have enabled the support of female winemakers by government structures—including the National

Wine Agency, the Ministry of Agriculture, and the Ministry of the Economy— and programs, such as Produce in Georgia. International bilateral and multilateral organizations also provided assistance.

Secondly, social capital is imperative for success in Georgia in general and in wine-making in particular. Friends and family networks can nurture start-up enterprises and help them flourish. Formal and informal associations serve as important forums for the exchange of information and best practices. The Women in Wine Industry association is one of those venues that offer both camaraderie and business advice.

Thirdly, finding a specific niche is an effective strategy to break barriers and venture into a new field. Women's smart choices to concentrate on producing high-quality natural wines, so-called boutique wines, and prioritizing exports to the West have brought them into a premium league in winemaking. Although most of their enterprises are small-scale, they can generate decent revenues because of the category of wines and their buyers. Another business strategy is bridging winemaking with wine tourism, which increases the customer base and benefits from a variety of promotional measures.

Fourthly, professionalism is a condition for the competitiveness and sustainability of the wine business. Many female winemakers are not complete novices as they can rely on family traditions in winemaking. But to build a modern and profitable enterprise, they need experiential knowledge acquired through training and internships. Lifelong learning includes both being mentored by world-class wine gurus and sharing the gained expertise with others. Future research can further explore the evolving role of female professionals in the wine industry and wine-related tourism from both national and global comparative perspectives.

Finally, all of the above ingredients of success would yield results only if they are mobilized and reinforced by individual and collective inspiration and determination. Georgian female winemakers who burst into the field and managed to favorably position themselves have proven to be intelligent, enthusiastic, and resourceful warriors. Their battles are not over, but their wins are already visible and consequential.

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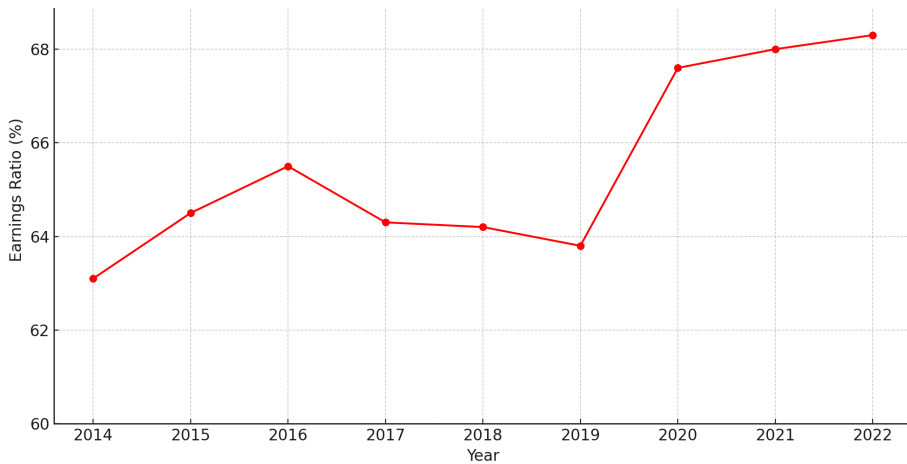
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**Exhibit 1**  
*Strong Women of Georgia.*



**Figure 1**  
 Women’s Average Monthly Earnings Ratio with Respect to Men’s Monthly Earnings (%)



**Note.** Reproduced from *Women and Men in Georgia: Statistical Publication*, National Statistics Office of Georgia, Tbilisi, 2023, p.74. ([https://www.geostat.ge/media/58119/Women\\_And\\_Men\\_In\\_Georgia\\_2023\\_ENG.PDF](https://www.geostat.ge/media/58119/Women_And_Men_In_Georgia_2023_ENG.PDF))

**Figure 2**  
 Unadjusted Gender Pay Gap (%)

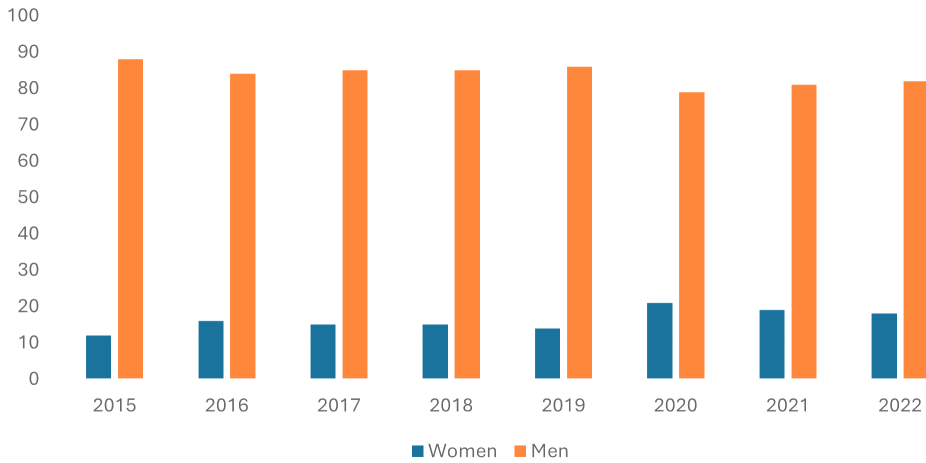
2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
34.5	35.7	35.8	36.2	32.4	31.4	31.7

Source: Establishment Survey (Survey in Enterprises and Organizations).

Note. Reproduced from *Women and Men in Georgia: Statistical Publication*, National Statistics Office of Georgia, Tbilisi, 2023, p. 75. ([https://www.geostat.ge/media/58119/Women\\_And\\_Men\\_In\\_Georgia\\_2023\\_ENG.PDF](https://www.geostat.ge/media/58119/Women_And_Men_In_Georgia_2023_ENG.PDF))

**Figure 3**

*Distribution of the Members of the Parliament of Georgia (as of 31 December 2022)*



**Note.** *Reproduced from Women and Men in Georgia: Statistical Publication, National Statistics Office of Georgia, Tbilisi, 2023, p.123. ([https://www.geostat.ge/media/58119/Women\\_And\\_Men\\_In\\_Georgia\\_2023\\_ENG.PDF](https://www.geostat.ge/media/58119/Women_And_Men_In_Georgia_2023_ENG.PDF))*

**Exhibit 2**

*Men in Georgia's Winemaking*



“Vintage” by Niko Pirosmiani



Carriers of wine



Family-style traditional winemaking

**Exhibit 3**  
*Women in Georgia's Winemaking*



Baia Abuladze



Manana Akhlediani  
Photo by author, 15  
May 2024.



Ketevan Kochiashvili  
Photo by author, 29  
May 2024.



Nina Qochiashvili  
Photo by author, 20  
May 2024.

# **Georgian Nationalism: Language, Homeland, Faith in the Context of God's Sovereignty**

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DOI: [HTTPS://DOI.ORG/10.62343/CJSS.2024.239](https://doi.org/10.62343/CJSS.2024.239)

## **ABSTRACT**

This research examines the complex relationship between Georgian nationalism and its interaction with the ecclesiastical and state spheres, focusing on power, authority, and identity. It investigates the Georgian Orthodox Church's influence on sovereignty through traditional forms of authority. The study defines nationalism within theoretical frameworks, such as ethnosymbolism and the distinction between civic and ethnic nationalism. It traces the historical development of Georgian Orthodox nationalism and its entanglement with religious discourse.

*Keywords:* Georgian nationalism, sovereignty, orthodox church, national identity, authority, messianism, Ilia Chavchavadze

## ***INTRODUCTION***

This study examines Georgian nationalism's complex interplay with ecclesiastical authority and state power, focusing on the Orthodox Church's engagement with sovereignty. It explores the historical and contemporary evolution of Georgian nationalism, its entanglement with religious discourse, and its impact on individual freedoms and societal cohesion.

## ***METHOD***

The research employs a historical and textual analysis methodology, drawing from ancient Georgian sources and canonical texts. It includes examining significant events, such as the canonization of Ilia Chavchavadze and explores the intersection of nationalism, religion, and statecraft through primary and secondary sources.

## ***RESULTS***

The study reveals that Georgian nationalism is deeply intertwined with the Orthodox Church and state mechanisms, often using religious authority to reinforce national identity. The research also highlights how historical and contemporary expressions of nationalism have shaped Georgian identity, with significant figures like Ilia Chavchavadze promoting a national ethos centered on language, homeland, and faith.

## ***DISCUSSION***

The research highlights the deep intertwining of Georgian nationalism and the Orthodox Church, where faith and national identity have historically shaped cultural and political dynamics. While the Church has played a pivotal role in fostering Georgian identity, often using religious symbolism to support nationalist agendas, this alignment has raised concerns about its impact on individual rights and freedoms. The canonization of figures like Ilia Chavchavadze exemplifies how religious narratives have legitimized state power, entrenching the Church's nationalist role. However, the study argues that this model is increasingly unsustainable and calls for the Georgian Orthodox Church to reevaluate its mission, advocating for inclusivity and human rights. Drawing on early Christian teachings, such as those in the Epistle to Diognetus, which reject nationalism in favor of a transcendent, faith-based identity, the Church could redefine its authority to honor its spiritual heritage and support a more inclusive and equitable national identity.

## **Theoretical Approaches to Georgian Nationalism**

Georgian nationalism, as understood through ethnosymbolism, modernism, and the blend of civic and ethnic nationalism, draws heavily from broader theoretical frameworks, though not directly from Georgian-specific studies. The ethnosymbolic perspective, as articulated by Anthony Smith (1991, 1-38), links nationalism to the historical myths and symbols that shape national identity. This connection connects with Georgian religious and cultural narratives. The modernist view, supported by scholars like Benedict Anderson (1983, 1-24) and Ernest Gellner (1983,1-41), suggests that nationalism is an outcome of modernization, the emergence of the modern state, and mass education. In Georgia, nationalism has evolved with these modern processes, mainly through key figures such as Ilia Chavchavadze, whose national identity vision combines ethnic and civic elements. His “Language, Homeland, and Faith” concept promotes a form of nationalism that incorporates shared cultural heritage and political values, offering a more inclusive model of identity.

**Research Question:** How has Georgian national identity shaped the Georgian Orthodox Church’s authority across different historical periods, including the Middle Ages, the Chavchavadze era, and the present?

As I reminisce about my anticipation as a student awaiting the arrival of a university professor, a significant moment unfolded when one such professor, adorned in clerical attire with distinct regalia, assumed authority before our interview. This attire, coupled with the inherent prestige of the professorial position, imbued a sense of superiority. While the professor’s expertise was undeniable, their perceived trustworthiness and ability to make judicious decisions truly vested them with authority (Heyward, 1999, 56-57).

Within academic and ecclesiastical settings alike, the love for power and authority (McWhorter, 2009, 20-25) often manifests as a natural fixture and standard. Instances may arise where a professor fails to respond, breaks promises, disregards communication, and deems engaging unnecessary. Prioritized needs influence these displays of power collectively exercised by those in positions. Responses may vary depending on the correspondent’s status or significance in societal hierarchies (Feder, 2011,54-55). This dynamic underscores how authority can either facilitate or impede interactions, contingent upon one’s perceived utility or insignificance.

Despite contemporary skepticism towards authority, particularly within institutional frameworks, the Church grapples persistently with its significance. Whether rooted in conviction, scripture (Fiorenza, 2007,11), tradition (Ivelashvili, 2019, 10-15),<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The implementation of preservationist policies aimed at safeguarding tradition may inadvertently



Alternatively, office and authority remain deeply entrenched in ecclesiastical life. Nevertheless, the Church confronts a conspicuous crisis of authority, compelling introspection and adaptive measures.

At the heart of this dilemma lies the Church's entanglement with sovereign (Jackson, 2007,22) power. While unavoidably influenced by societal norms, the Church must resist full assimilation into prevailing power structures. Instead, it must reclaim its distinctive calling, disentangling itself from notions of sovereign exceptionalism.

This multi-faceted issue demands a comprehensive examination of significant dynamics and their intricate interplay. Firstly, the challenge resides in leaders assuming entitlements akin to sovereigns, often obscured under the guise of prerogative. Secondly, drawing insights from ecclesiastical discourse, individuals within the Church must acknowledge their inherent positioning within power relations and actively shape their interactions with authority (Kalantzis, 2009, 28).

However, this pursuit encounters hindrances posed by a pervasive allure toward monarchical ideals, frequently marginalizing dissenting voices. Consequently, the Church must redefine its mission, prioritizing inclusivity and collaborative endeavors over hierarchical paradigms.

This does not endorse completely abandoning authority; instead, it offers an opportunity for its renewal. By reimagining authority within the Church, rooted in humility and collective discernment, it can effectively navigate the complexities of modern society while remaining true to its core values. This expression of authority finds its most fitting embodiment in the concept of nationalism.

### **The Challenge of Nationalism**

The prominence of nationalism<sup>2</sup> within both the Georgian Orthodox Church and the state highlights the importance of understanding its historical roots (Hillerbrand,

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precipitate the marginalization and suppression of minority religious practices and beliefs, a phenomenon recurrently observed in Georgia and persisting in contemporary times. Such occurrences manifest through both overt and covert mechanisms. For further exploration of this topic, refer to the following scholarly text: *Religious Minorities in Samtskhe-Javakheti* (Ivelashvili, 2019).

<sup>2</sup> Georgia's historical narrative and its national aspirations prompt a nuanced consideration of the term "national." This term encompasses political affiliations with nation-states, religious fervor, ethnic distinctions, the subtleties of conventional or imaginative nationalist sentiments, and its intimate connection with personal identity. Readers are urged to approach this complexity with attentiveness.



1971; McGreevy, 2003, 26).<sup>3</sup> This research explores its historical foundations, employing a methodological framework grounded in ancient Georgian sources. Central to this inquiry is the evaluation of nationality through the lens of Eastern Orthodox Church teachings, particularly delving into the pivotal issue of the Orthodox Church's relationship with nationality. Such discourse has gained paramount importance in recent years due to alarming instances of distortion within the Orthodox Church, where it is erroneously perceived as a nationalistic entity. Hence, it is essential to critically analyze both historical and contemporary viewpoints to identify evolving perspectives over time. Criticism does not merely involve pinpointing isolated issues within the church; it is about reshaping a church culture entrenched in sovereign power dynamics.

Among the myriad facets to consider, one stands out as paramount: the gradual, pervasive, and quasi-official entwining of the “national” descriptor with the essence of the “Orthodox Church” (Grdzeldze, 2023b 6-7), signaling a profound integration that borders on institutionalization (Kekelia, 2013, 1-9).

### **The Perspective of the Early Church on Nationalism**

The *Epistle to Diognetus* unequivocally acknowledges that Christians are indistinguishable from one another, regardless of language or location. Nationalism and ethnic distinctions are deemed irrelevant, as Christians are defined not by their earthly affiliations but by their shared faith and unity as a singular community: “For Christians cannot be distinguished from the rest of the human race by country or language or customs” (Richardson, 1970, 216). For Christians, the distinguishing markers of their identity were not rooted in traditional cultural attributes but rather in their spiritual ethos. This disregard for earthly distinctions, such as food and language, served to dismantle barriers between Christianity and the burgeoning phenomenon of nationalism, which has since evolved into a formidable challenge for the faith. The Letter to Diognetus elucidates the mindset and practices of early Christians, highlighting their adaptable engagement with diverse cultural contexts:

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<sup>3</sup> The researcher concludes that the notion of a “national church” is a recent concept, not found in early Christianity or the early Middle Ages. Instead, the concept of territorial churches prevailed during this period. The emergence of the idea of a “national church” coincides with the rise of powerful states seeking control over religious institutions, notably during the Reformation in the 16th century. Movements such as Anglicanism and Gallicanism contributed to the development of this concept, embodying elements of religious nationalism by intertwining secular and divine authority. Despite this influence, the concept was not present during the era of the Ecumenical Councils. The researcher suggests that while these movements did not directly establish the model for the “national church,” they fostered the seeds of religious nationalism that later materialized into this form.

“Yet, although they live in Greek and barbarian cities alike, as each man’s lot has been cast, and follow the customs of the country in clothing and food and other matters of daily living, at the same time, they give proof of the remarkable and admittedly extraordinary constitution of their commonwealth... Every foreign land is their fatherland, and yet for them, every fatherland is a foreign land” (Richardson, 1970, 217).

Their pragmatic approach to life prioritized unity beyond geographical confines, rallying around a shared ideology while navigating challenges posed by cultural differences. Central to their ethos was the notion of solidarity and the belief in a universal human fraternity, transcending boundaries of identity and contention (Hippolytus, 2022, 41).<sup>4</sup> *The Preaching of Peter* echoes the sentiment, advising against worshipping like the Greeks or the Jews but advocating for a new form of worship through Christ (Ferguson & Kalantzis, 2016, 63). Ceasing from further elaboration on the early church discourse, the *Letters of Ignatius: Smyrnaeans* offers a more nuanced perspective, positing that the essence of the church transcends terrestrial delineations such as land, language, or nationality and is instead rooted in Christ Himself. Ignatius articulates this notion succinctly, asserting, “Wherever Jesus Christ is present, there resides the Catholic Church” (Richardson, 1970, 115). (cf. ὅπου ἂν ᾖ ἡ Χριστὸς Ἰησοῦς, ἐκεῖ ἡ καθολικὴ ἐκκλησία, 8.2) (Ignatius, 2024, 1). While Ignatius may espouse contentious viewpoints, it prompts inquiry into his stance on the concept of nationalism.

The notion of a national church lacks precedent in the traditions of the early church; it emerged subsequently, as I aim to illustrate using the example of the Georgian church.

## The Georgian Church and National Identity

The advent of Christianity in Georgia during the early 4th century marked a watershed moment, catalyzing political and cultural changes. Geopolitical tensions often mirrored religious and national divides, exemplified by the conflict between Georgians and Persians, who clashed largely due to their divergent religious affiliations. Georgians aligned themselves with the Greeks in matters of faith (Javakhishvili, 1960,

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<sup>4</sup> This excerpt is particularly interesting, as it discusses the concept of “one house,” suggesting that Christians should have everything within a single household: “Eat in one house and do not take meat outside,” for there is one assembly and one house, that is, one church, in which the holy body of Christ is consumed. Therefore, from this one house—the church—the meat will not be taken out, and anyone eating it elsewhere will be punished as a godless person and a thief (Hippolytus, 2022, In *Sanctum Pascha*, Brepols Publishers NV; Les Éditions du Cerf, 41, 1-6: Ἐν οἰκίᾳ μιᾷ βροθήσεται καὶ ἔξω τῶν κρεῶν οὐκ ἐξοισητή, μία γάρ ἐστὶν ἡ συναγωγὴ καὶ μία ἐστὶν ἡ οἰκία, τοῦτ’ ἐστὶν ἡ μία ἱερὸν σῶμα τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐσθιεται, καὶ διὰ τοῦτο ἔξω τῆς μιᾶς οἰκίας – ἐκκλησίας – τὰ κρέα οὐκ ἐσθήσεται, ὁ δὲ ἀλλαχοῦ ἐσθίως καὶ κλέπτως κολασθήσεται).

286). However, the embrace of Christianity ushered in a redefinition of Georgian identity. With the emergence of a common religious framework, Georgians began to perceive themselves as bearers of a unique spiritual mission, consolidating around a collective sense of purpose and significance (Chkhartishvili, 2009, 1-9). This shift in consciousness elevated Georgia to a symbolic center of religious authority and cultural distinction on the world stage. This profound sense of spiritual identity, forged during the period of religious transformation, proved instrumental in sustaining Georgian cohesion, eclipsing the conventional markers of power such as economic prosperity or military strength (Brosset, 1849, 45-78).

In the fifth century, Georgian nationalism emerged from a deep-rooted devotion to Christianity, which had become synonymous with Georgianness. Prior to the fourth century, Georgians were pagans until the arrival of Saint Nino, marking a significant shift towards Christianity (Jeck, 2021, 221-238). *The Life of Kartli* portrays the gods of Georgia as powerful entities in a comprehensive nature-religion, with Mtskheta serving as a notable cult site. Despite Persian attempts to introduce Zoroastrianism, the Georgian elites resisted, viewing Christianity as a preferable alternative. This resistance stemmed from a desire to avoid Persian influence and maintain their distinct identity. Conversion to Christianity, catalyzed by figures like Saint Nino (Vashalomidze, 2007, 50-54), ultimately solidified Georgian national identity, with King Mirian and his queen Nana leading the nation in embracing the new faith.

The Christian conduct of the monarchs, along with their sermons, cultivated narratives that reinforced the ethos of nationalism. These accounts emphasized divine favor and the omnipresence of God. Vakhtang's admonition highlights a failure to grasp the spiritual dimension, reluctance towards embracing the infinite and luminous life, and a profound lack of comprehension regarding the divine essence as the creator of all existence (Jeck, 2021, 235). Vakhtang's campaign is framed within a paradigm that extends beyond the ephemeral realms of self-interest and geopolitical maneuvering. Contrary to seeing himself merely as a subordinate to the Persian monarch, he conceives of his role as a humble devotee to the eternal God of Christianity. This deity, whom he venerates as the "consubstantial Trinity" and the "creator of the world," embodies an enduring source of divine glory and eternal significance in Vakhtang's worldview.<sup>5</sup> In a manner akin to the narrative propagated by Russia, which asserts its

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<sup>5</sup> For an examination of the early dogmatics of Georgian Christianity, refer to Kekelidze (1955) and Hage (2007). Kekelidze's work, *Geschichte der Kirchlichen Georgischen Literatur*, edited by P. Michael Tarchnišvili and Julius Assfalg, provides a comprehensive overview of ecclesiastical Georgian Literature (Kekelidze, 1955). Hage's *Das orientalische Christentum* offers an in-depth analysis of the Georgian Orthodox Church within the broader context of Eastern Christianity (Hage, 2007, pp. 112-126).

invasion of Ukraine as a safeguarding measure to uphold sanctity within its borders, Patriarch Kirill perceives the conflict as a “holy war” (Understanding War, 2024, 1). It is framed as a mission to defend Christian principles, national dignity, and identity. Drawing parallels, the portrayal of Vakhtang’s endeavors in *the Life of Kartli* echoes a similar sentiment. He is depicted as safeguarding the sanctity of Jerusalem and rescuing Christendom from the brink of destruction by the Persian king (Jeck, 2021, 235).

Subsequent rulers of Georgia similarly tread the path of forging national identity under the banner of divine sanction. Nonetheless, it is pertinent to acknowledge that ecclesiastical authorities confronted analogous challenges. Commencing from the 8th and 9th centuries, the transformation of spirituality into a cornerstone of national identity becomes increasingly evident.

### **Nationalizing and Dogmatizing Language, Fatherhood, and Faith**

Spanning from early medieval manuscripts to 19th-century correspondences penned by “founding fathers,” the narrative of conversion is depicted not solely as Georgia’s embrace of Christianity but also as the gradual shaping of its political identity (Aleksidze, 2016, 227). The enduring resonance of Gregory of Khandzta’s words, enshrined within the annals of Georgian history, highlights the intertwined identity of faith and nationality. Specifically, within these conceptualizations of nationhood, Georgianness becomes inexorably linked to adherence to the Orthodox faith.

Khandzta states, “Georgia is reckoned to consist of those spacious lands where church services are celebrated, and all prayers are said in the Georgian tongue. Only the Kyrie-eleison, which means ‘Lord, have mercy,’ or ‘Lord be merciful to us,’ is pronounced in Greek” (Lang, 1956, 148). This oft-cited passage from a 10th-century hagiographic text serves as a cornerstone for inscribing Georgian nationhood within the realm of Christianity. Moreover, as demonstrated by Aleksidze, it delineates the contours of the ‘body politic’ by demarcating the territory where prayers are uttered in the Georgian language (Aleksidze, 2016, 227-28).

Furthermore, from a nationalistic theological perspective, the belief in Georgian messianism, particularly intertwined with the Theotokos, holds significant significance. This belief’s origins can be traced to monastic centers outside Georgia’s borders. Messianism, aligning with the broader Judeo-Christian-Muslim tradition of anticipating a divine Savior, originated in late Judaism and was further developed within Christianity. García-Arenal (2006, 3-4) emphasizes the importance of examining messianic movements not only through theological or religious lenses but also from political and social viewpoints to understand their impact on originating communities.

The study of religious factors shaping national identity during the medieval period is exemplified in Georgian hagiographic texts from the 10th to 11th centuries (Grdzelidze, 2009a, 53-162), particularly those composed outside Georgia (Lang, 1976, 154). These texts, such as the “Life of Hilarion the Georgian” and others, provide insights into Georgian nationalism beyond its borders, notably reflecting messianic beliefs. The establishment of the Georgian Monastery of Iviron on Mount Athos facilitated the preservation of Georgian identity amidst Byzantine imperialism (Porphyrogenitus, 1967, 45-46). Tensions between Greek and Georgian monks on Athos underscored questions of orthodoxy and linguistic differences, with Georgian monks led by figures like Hilarion asserting their rights and credibility. These texts serve as foundational sources for understanding the interplay of religion and nationalism in shaping Georgian identity.

The latter section of the “Life of John and Euthymios” reveals a significant rift between the Greek and Georgian communities on Mount Athos, centered around the wealth of the Iviron Monastery. Greek monks targeted the monastery due to its riches, exacerbating tensions between the two groups (Končošvili et al., 2014, 156-159). The Greeks’ impetus for targeting the monastery derived from a perceived deviation from orthodox doctrine on the part of the Georgians, a sentiment bolstered by linguistic and liturgical disparities, notably the absence of Greek language in their religious observances (Grdzelidze, 2009a, 30,89, 91-93). This episode not only highlights the intricacies of intercommunal relations on Mount Athos but also underscores broader themes of Georgian nationalism and religious fervor, as evidenced by the depiction of the Georgian faith as intrinsically national: “This is the true faith of our people: having accepted it once, we have not strayed either to the left or to the right, and will never stray unless it is the will of God” (Grdzelidze, 2009a, 144). Furthermore, the invocation of Mary’s authority to legitimize the Georgian presence on Mount Athos further accentuates the intersection of religious and nationalist sentiments. The historical significance of this episode lies in its citation of a purported dialogue involving Mary, serving as a compelling defense of Georgian orthodoxy and cultural distinctiveness. While the authenticity of this document remains subject to scrutiny, its historical resonance endows it with narrative potency, symbolizing the enduring struggle for identity preservation in the face of external encroachments:

“Do not you know that many people are settled on this Mountain who speak their language and they can be saved by God? Whoever will not accept them will be my enemy because these people (the Georgians are implied) are given to me by my Son because of their steady orthodoxy and because they believed in my Son and were baptized” (Abuladze, 1967, 20).

The concept of the sacredness of the Georgian language predates the events discussed. It was articulated by the monk Ioane, also known as Ioane Zosime, in his hymn titled: “ქება და დიდება ქართულისა ენისა” (“Praise and Glorification of the Georgian Language”). This hymn extols the Georgian language and ascribes to it a singular purpose. Ioane Zosime expounded the notion that the Georgian language lay dormant, akin to a martyr, awaiting the second coming of the Messiah. Drawing a parallel, he likened the language’s revival to that of Lazarus in the Gospels (Rayfield, 2000, 32-33). The Georgians cherished their language as sacred, viewing it as the cornerstone of their identity. This belief spurred them to fight both physically for their homeland and intellectually for their language’s preservation. The Iviron monastery played a central role in safeguarding Georgia’s cultural and intellectual heritage amidst adversity.

Linguistically, Greek represented sacredness for Greeks, while Georgian served as the foundation of Georgian ethnicity and messianic belief. This cultural conflict unfolded amid Byzantine imperialism and Georgia’s political consolidation, shaping the Georgian messianic faith, which portrayed Georgia under the protection of the Mary. This belief, originating in texts from the Iviron Monastery, became emblematic of Georgian identity, both within and beyond Georgia’s borders (Grzelidze, 2009a, 52-162).

## 20th Century Struggle, Present Ultra-Nationalism

Ilia Chavchavadze was later sanctified by the church as St. Ilia the Righteous, earning the epithet “Uncrowned King of the Nation” (Abašize et al., 2006, 61). His canonization was a testament to his embodiment of national consciousness. Chavchavadze’s endeavor to nurture national identity revolved around three fundamental pillars—“E-na, Mamuli, Sartsmunoeba” or “Language, Homeland, Faith.” He perceived nations as ethical communities, underscoring the imperative role of shared moral obligations in their cohesion and survival (Chkhartishvili, 2024, 1-5).

One of Chavchavadze’s notable works, published in 1887 in *Iveria* (no. 74), delved into the notion of a nation as a community blessed by divine grace, drawing inspiration from E. Renan’s essay “What is a Nation?” This paper reflects his profound perspective on the subject.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> During the 19th century, known as the era of nationalism, new conceptions of nationhood emerged across Europe and beyond, each emphasizing the need for a distinct identity. For the French, Germans (especially after unification in 1870), and the British, national identity was closely tied to statehood and imperial ambitions. Meanwhile, many peoples around the world formed nations within imperial-colonial contexts, shaping their unity through diverse factors. After the Russo-Ottoman



In 1860, at the age of 23, Ilia Chavchavadze embarked on his journalistic career with a critical evaluation of Revaz Eristavi's translation of Ivan Kozlov's "Madwoman" in the magazine *Tsiskari*. This discourse marked a significant exploration into the essence of Georgian identity. Chavchavadze evocatively expressed, "From our ancestors, we inherited the three sacred treasures: fatherland, language, and faith. If we do not even take good care of them, what kind of men are we, what will we be able to say to our heirs?" (Nodia, 2009, 89).

Chavchavadze's intellectual journey reshaped Georgian historiography by redefining the nation's foundational elements. He endowed territory with the concept of "mamuli," symbolizing an ancestral legacy, envisioned language as the embodiment of the national ethos, and attributed an unparalleled devotion to Christian faith among Georgians. Each facet of this triadic framework became integral to Georgian national identity, illustrating Chavchavadze's pioneering contribution to scholarly discussions on nationhood.

Ilia Chavchavadze dubbed the "father of the nation," introduced the inaugural definition of the Georgian nation. Soviet authorities in 1937 initiated a cult around Chavchavadze, merging his ideology with state narrative and control. In 1987, amidst Soviet influence, the Georgian Orthodox Church canonized him (Tsipuria, 2024, 2-4), blending national and religious identity. However, his slogan, "Language, Homeland, Faith" was later manipulated by the late 20th-century nationalist movement, fostering ethno-religious extremism (Shogren, 2024, 4). Revising this, protesters in April 2024 altered it to "Language, Homeland, Unity," aligning with Chavchavadze's original ethos against divisive narratives. This signifies a modernized return to Chavchavadze's principles amidst contemporary political strife (Maisuradze, 2024, 1).

In Georgia, nationalism manifests in multiple forms; one operates under the guise of divine authority, where the state collaborates with the church to regulate public sentiments. Together, they assert divine providence, positioning themselves as earthly arbiters of power and sovereignty. This particular form of nationalism intertwines

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War of 1877-1878, Adjara, which had been part of the Ottoman Empire for over four centuries, was integrated into the two Georgian-inhabited gubernias of the Russian Empire. It was during this period that Ilia Chavchavadze articulated his seminal programmatic letter, "Osmalo's Georgia," in which he proposed a revolutionary, secular conception of nationhood tailored to Georgian realities. He asserted, "Neither linguistic unity, nor religious conformity, nor tribal affiliations can unite people as profoundly as shared historical experiences. A nation bound by common historical struggles, enduring together through trials and tribulations, finds strength in unity and loyalty." Chavchavadze's formulation redefined the Georgian nation as a historically-rooted collective, where individual attributes such as language, religion, or clan affiliations were secondary. In this framework, the nation transcends ethnicity, linguistic homogeneity, or religious adherence, elevating the homeland—the collective estate—as the sole sacred entity that unites all its inhabitants into a cohesive national identity.



tradition, language, and faith, supplanting the traditional role of God, as previously outlined. However, nationalism in Georgia also takes secular forms, influenced by cultural and historical narratives extending beyond religious authority. This broader spectrum of nationalist expressions poses significant challenges to individual rights and freedoms, mainly when fundamentalist orientations dominate, undermining the principles of diversity and liberty.<sup>7</sup>

## **DISCUSSION**

Nationalism, often intertwined with religious interests, uses language, land, and faith as robust identity markers, fostering unity and a shared sense of purpose. However, when nationalism prioritizes exclusivity over inclusivity, it risks marginalizing others and perpetuating discrimination. In particular, the exclusion or discrediting of foreign believers under the guise of nationalism undermines both religious and human values. True nationalism should celebrate diversity, embracing cultural and spiritual differences as sources of strength rather than division. Balancing national identity with respect for others ensures a harmonious coexistence, aligning with the ethical principles that sustain a just and inclusive society.

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<sup>7</sup> For further exploration of the concept of freedom, readers are encouraged to consult Papanikolaou's (2017) work, "Whose Public? Which Ecclesiology?" In *Political Theologies in Orthodox Christianity: Common Challenges and Divergent Positions* (pp. 229-242). New York, NY; London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark. Nationalist ideologies fuel oppression and discrimination against sexual minorities, as evidenced by numerous instances in Georgia where the church, often with state backing, perpetrates aggression against these marginalized groups.

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## Seljuk Traces in Medieval Georgia: Title of Atabeg<sup>1</sup>

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### ABSTRACT

Atabeg is a title used in the Seljuks and later Turkish states. This title started with the Seljuks in Turkish political life and then gained an essential place in the administrative structure of other principalities and states. This title was also used in the Georgian Kingdom. The Georgian Kingdom was in a feudal structure in the Middle Ages and was ruled by a feudal monarchy. This title, which found its place in Georgian political life when Georgian King Tamara gave the title of Atabeg to Ivane Mkhargrdzeli, was later used by members of the Mankaberdeli family. The title of Atabeg, which became obsolete towards the end of the 13th century, began to be used in Saatabago under the rule of the Cakeli family from the beginning of the 14th century. In this study, information will be provided about the title of Atabeg, which is historically significant for the Georgians and was an important political title for the Seljuks.

*Keywords:* Seljuks, Georgians, Atabeg, Saatabago, Ivane Mkhargrdzeli

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<sup>1</sup> This article is a revised version of the abstract presented at The Fifteenth International Scientific Conference “Education, Science, Innovation in the Post-Pandemic Period” on December 15-16, 2022.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The concept of Atabeg (اتابك), which emerged from the combination of the words Ata and Beg (Bey), was known by different names and forms of usage before the Seljuks in Turkish political history. However, it gained political and administrative meaning during the Seljuk period and was systematically used as a title and civil servant role. In the Seljuk Empire, the Sultans, after assigning various regions of the Empire's territory to their family members, appointed an Atabeg as a counselor to their younger family members, i.e., the princes. The Atabeg took care of the prince's education and controlled the region on his behalf. Atabegs were chosen among experienced and powerful emirs who had gained the Sultan's trust (Alptekin, 2021, p. 195).

There is no information on the use of the title of Atabeg in Muslim Turkish states such as the Karakhanids and Ghaznavids before the Great Seljuks (Köprülü, 1978, p. 712). The Seljuks were a community that continued the traditional life of the Oğuz in every geography they traveled to. Although there are doubts that they created and used various political institutions and titles such as Atabeg inspired by ancient Turkish traditions, it is possible to say that the institution of Atabeg was established as a continuation of a tradition called "Atalık." It is known as a historical Turkish family tradition that the Turks, among different Caucasian communities, sent their children to another family at a young age for the purpose of upbringing and education, and the elder of the family was called Atalık. This institution established a kind of kinship law between the two families. There is an idea that the institution of Atabeg in the Seljuks may be related to "Atalık" (Alptekin, 2021, p. 195).

In the Seljuk State, the concept of Atabeg was used both as a title and as a high state official. According to the statement of Mîrhând, one of the historians of the Timurid period, Atabegs were the border (serhad) emirs of the Seljuks, and the rulers gave the task of raising their children to these people (Mîrhând, 2015, p. 100). Here, Atabeg appears as a civil service responsible for border security. When the Seljuk Sultans distributed the various regions of the Empire to the members of the dynasty, they appointed an Atabeg to educate and train the young Meliks (children of the rulers).

Apart from the Great Seljuks, the title of Atabeg was used in different states such as the Ayyubids, Anatolian Seljuks, Mamluks, the Rum State of Nicaea, and the Georgian Kingdom and was seen as an honorary title given to people at the military level (Cahen, 1987, p. 878). The term Atabeg was a title given to the commander of the Mamluk forces with the title of "Atabekü'l Asâkir ve Emîr-i Kebîr" (Gezen, 2019,



p. 144). When Sultan Kılıçarslan I of the Anatolian Seljuks died in 1107, his wife Ayşe Khatun sent a message to Belek, the ruler of the Artukids. She asked him to be the Atabeg of her son, Sultan Tuğrul Arslan of Malatya. Accepting Ayşe Khatun's request, Belek ruled Malatya as Tuğrul Arslan's Atabeg and married Ayşe Khatun (Alptekin, 2021, p. 199).

In the early periods of the Atabeg, Ayyubids, and Mamluks, it was used as it was in the Seljuks. In the following periods, it turned into an army command. In the Halep and Damascus regions of the Mamluks, people appointed as Atabegs were also given the titles of "Atabeg al-Cüyûşun" and "Beylerbeyi." The institution of Atabeg, which somehow continued its existence until the 15th century, later lost its importance. In the Ottoman Empire, the institution of Atabeg was used as a title given to those who were in the position of teachers of princes in the palace rather than military leaders and continued its existence under the name of "Lala" (Baykara, 2003, pp. 70–71).

## **METHOD**

This study used the historical research method, as well as explanation, comparison, and critical and systematic analysis. The historical research method explains how social events occurred in the past (Fraenkel et al., 2012, p. 14). The historical sources used in the study were analyzed using document analysis. This paper focuses on the use of the concept of Atabeg, which has an important place in Turkish and Georgian administrative systems. The study employs qualitative research methods, particularly descriptive and historical event interpretation methods, to explain the different ways of using the title of Atabeg in the context of historical sources. Furthermore, through the analysis of primary sources such as Georgian and Islamic sources, this research attempts to explain the historical background of a title used by two neighboring nations in the Middle Ages.

## **RESULTS**

1. At the beginning of the study, the emergence and use of the concept of Atabeg in the Seljuk Empire was studied. However, the title of Atabeg emerged in 3 different ways according to its usage in both Seljuks and Georgians. What makes the study original is to identify these 3 different usage areas and to emphasize that this is common for both states in the light of historical sources. The first of these usage methods is that a powerful ruler delegated the administration of the

state to a person he appointed as an Atabeg in general terms. Another use of the term was when a young Seljuk prince was sent to a region as an administrator, or when an Atabeg was appointed to guide him in governance after he had taken over the administration. The last one is the elimination of the Seljuk princes in the region they were assigned to and the subsequent use of this title by the Atabegs to take over the administration semi-independently from the state center. Although these areas of usage are also seen in Georgian history, the details of these issues can be found in the discussion section.

2. The Seljuks influenced the communities they encountered politically and culturally. In this context, the Georgian Kingdom was also influenced by the Seljuks in terms of the title of Atabeg and its use. Georgian political life was affected by the introduction of the concept in the Georgian Kingdom.
3. By explaining the usage patterns of the Atabeg concept in the Seljuk and Georgian state structures, it was concluded that these two communities were influenced by each other not only in the context of war but also in political, administrative, and cultural terms in the Middle Ages.

## ***DISCUSSION***

### **Atabeg Title and Usage in Seljuks**

The Seljuks frequently used the title Atabeg, and in time, it became a concept with a broad range of usage rather than just a title. Prominent people within the administrative structure of the Seljuk State established many states under the name of Atabeg. The Seljuk sultans either sent loyal individuals to whom they gave essential duties at state levels to cities as governors or appointed them as Atabegs to ensure that their children gained experience in state affairs (Uzunçarşılı, 2014, p. 47).

Atabegs played an essential role in the struggles between Seljuk princes and in the fights for the sultanate. In addition to serving as advisors to princes, Atabegs also acted as provincial governors. Historical records provide examples of this. Semsettin Ildeniz was appointed as the governor of Azerbaijan by Gıyaseddin Mesud. Additionally, Damascus, Syria, Mosul, Erbil, and Artuk were small states established in this manner. Emir Atabeg İmadüddin Zengi, who fought against the Crusaders, was primarily one of the important Turkish governors and commanders in Seljuk history; he was appointed as an Atabeg by the Seljuk sultan (Cahen, 1987, p. 878).

The first person to use this title in the Seljuks was the great and famous politician Nizam al-Mulk. It is known that Sultan Alp Arslan appointed Nizam al-Mulk as

Atabeg for his son Melikşah after the Battle of Manzikert (Köprülü, 1978, pp. 712–713). Sultan Alp Arslan appointed Nizam al-Mulk with the titles of “ilig, ata hoca, and Atabeg” (Mîrhând, 2015, p. 100). This office, which began with the appointment of Nizam al-Mulk as Atabeg by Melikşah, shaped Seljuk politics for many years and appeared in various forms during the periods when it was actively used.

It is possible to see three different forms of the institution of Atabeg, which are similar to those in the Seljuks, especially in the political life of Georgia and the South Caucasus (Subaşı, 2017, p. 509). The first use of the title of Atabeg was when a person given the title by a powerful ruler had a say in the administration of the state. This method, in which the person given the title of Atabeg shared the administrative powers of the Sultan, is evident in the relationship between Melikşah and Nizam al-Mulk. The first example of this usage in Georgia is the relationship between King Tamara (1184–1213) and Atabeg Ivane. Atabeg Ivane, with whom King Tamara shared her military and administrative powers in addition to her recognized power and authority in the region, was arguably the most powerful administrator of the period. With the title of Atabeg, Ivane fought important battles with the Georgian armies, where he served as commander-in-chief for many years, and later took his place among the essential figures in Georgian history (Kartlis Tskhovreba, 2012, p. 233).

The most widely used method in the Seljuks was the form of administration created by the Atabeg, who was appointed to guide the young Seljuk princes as regional administrators or to guide them in administration after they took over. These Atabegs, who were the educators and, at the same time, advisors of the princes and directly subordinate to the great Sultan, sometimes acted as the rulers of the significant administrative area they oversaw; all administrative and military authority was gathered in their hands. Additionally, sometimes the son of the deceased Atabeg was appointed as the new Atabeg (Köprülü, 1978, p. 713).

In Georgian history, an Atabeg title used this way is observed during the reign of King Demetre II (1271–1289). Sadun Mankaberdeli was appointed as an Atabeg by Abaka Khan to assist King Demetre II, who did not have enough experience in state administration due to his young age (Mikaberidze, 2007, p. 153). By appointing Sadun to a high rank, Abaka left the King under the rule of Atabeg Sadun, who soon became one of the most influential figures in Georgian history.

Another type of administration in the Seljuks using the title of Atabeg occurred when the Seljuk princes who continued their lives in their region disappeared for any reason, and the Atabegs took over the administration semi-independently from the state center using this title. This is how various Atabegs dynasties emerged in Turkish history when the Seljuk dynasty had not yet collapsed.

The Zengids, the Salgurids in Fars, and the Ildeniz in Azerbaijan were political structures that emerged in this way. This is the longest-lasting use of the title of Atabeg in the political life of the South Caucasus. After the death in 1308 of Beka, the ruler of Samtskhe, which the Ilkhanid ruler Abaka (1265–1282) separated from the sphere of influence of the Georgian administration centered in Tbilisi and connected to the Ilkhanid center in a semi-independent manner, Sargis II began to use the title of Atabeg. Due to the activation and use of this title in Samtskhe, the domain of Atabeg Sargis II was known as Saatabago for many years (Cavakhisvili, 1982, pp. 110–112). After Sargis II, the Atabegs belonging to the Cakeli family ruled in the Georgian administrative structure, sometimes under the Georgian Kingdom and sometimes semi-independently, in northeastern Anatolia and southern Georgia for centuries.

### **Atabeg Title and Atabegs in Georgia**

The Seljuks influenced many contemporary Christian states administratively, economically, and militarily. It can be stated that Georgian rulers established the title of Atabeg by taking the Seljuk organization as an example within the administrative structure of Georgia, and those who held this office managed all internal affairs just like the Seljuks. The office of Atabeg, which began to be seen in Georgian political life in the early 13th century, was generally passed from father to son and was actively used in political life by the feudal families of Mkhargrdzeli, Mankaberdeli, and Cakeli (Peacock, 2012, pp. 50–56).

The Seljuk incursions into Georgia in the 11th century had political, economic, and social effects, as well as cultural impact (for the economic impact, see Güven, 2022, pp. 99–126). The cultural impact refers to the process of integrating some of the terms used in the Seljuk administrative and military structure into the Georgian feudal structure. Another title used like Atabeg is Amirspasalar. As seen here, the Georgian Kingdom adopted and used Atabeg and other titles. Amirspasalar is generally defined as the commander-in-chief of the royal army, a position found in the medieval Georgian military organization. Amirspasalar is also referred to as the highest military position and the vizier of the King (Mikaberidze, 2007, p. 123). This title, like Atabeg, was used by important feudal families. Ivane Orbeliani, Sargis Mkhargrdzeli, Gamrekeli Toreli, Zakaria Mkhargrdzeli, and members of the Cakeli dynasty are known to have used this title. At the beginning of the 13th century, the title was divided between the brothers Ivane and Zakaria and continued among their descendants, and from 1334 it passed to the Cakeli family. The title was even preferred in this period as “Atabeg-Amirspasalar” (Ercan, 2022, p. 19).

Atabeg was one of the influential and essential figures in the Georgian state structure of the feudal period. Georgian historians have put forward various views on the emergence of this concept in Georgia. Surguladze, who wrote the article “Atabeg” in the Georgian Soviet Encyclopedia, emphasized that the Atabeg was the teacher and protector of the Sultan’s son within the Seljuk state structure; after the weakening of the state, the Atabeg acted independently and served as the chief of a Samtavro administration (Surguladze, 1975, p. 222). Surguladze also stated that the Atabeg was one of the viziers in Georgia. Among the duties of the Atabeg was to place the person he had trained on the throne. Surguladze also stated that Atabeg emerged due to the strengthening of feudal lords against the centralized administration of the Kingdom in general. In 1212, the title was first associated with Ivane Mkhargrdzeli, which weakened the institution of the scribe “Mtsignobartukhutses-Chqondideli.” In the following period, the title of Amirspasalar was combined with Atabeg (Surguladze, 1975, p. 222).

Ivane Cavakhisvili stated that the first Atabeg was Ivane Mkhargrdzeli, who received this title from King Tamara in 1212 (Cavakhisvili, 1982, p. 179). Many scholars repeated this statement of Cavakhisvili after him. Bakhtadze put forward a different view, stating that it was difficult for Ivane to dare to ask Tamara for such a title in this period (Bakhtadze, 2011, p. 119). Bakhtadze also questioned whether, even if Ivane had dared to do such a thing, the King would have accepted this request from such an influential and powerful feudal lord for what purpose. He also discussed what the Georgian Kingdom would gain from introducing such a position, which was completely unnecessary regarding the administrative system. Indeed, as Georgian historiography emphasizes, the institution of the Atabeg became a natural competitor to the office of the clerk Mtsignobartukhutses-Chqondideli, which was unified during the reign of David Agmashenebeli (1089–1125) and corresponded to the office of the vizier, leading to the deterioration and even the disappearance of this vital and necessary institution (Bakhtadze, 2011, p. 119).

Shota Meskhia has the following to say about the title of Atabeg and its use by Ivane: “The institution of Atabeg, which was quite common in the Muslim world of the Middle East at that time, was alien to the Georgian official structure... Ivane used the office of Atabeg for his benefit. With the title of Atabeg, Ivane was to take the title of Royal Vizier and create another position in King Tamara’s court as the ‘father/patriarch’ of the prince. Only in this way would it be possible to weaken the role of the vizier and strengthen himself. In addition, Ivane adopted a different strategy; by introducing and having the Atabeg recognized, he achieved a powerful position by gathering the titles Amirspasalar and Mandartukhutsesi under himself. Ivane Mkhargrdzeli

grdzeli's demand for the establishment of the Atabeg institution was not motivated by a concern for the creation of an independent unit in the form of the Atabeg, but rather to achieve both main tasks" (Meskhia, 1979, p. 309).

M. Bakhtadze states that the first person to use the title of Atabeg in the Georgian Kingdom was Ivane/Ioane Akhaltsikheli, according to the Georgian chronicle *Kartlis Tskhovreba*. Bakhtadze states that the first use of Atabeg in the Georgian administrative structure was as the ruler and protector of a particular region. After the capture of Kars by the Georgian army, Ivane Akhaltsikheli became the Atabeg of the region (Bakhtadze, 2011, p. 123). Subsequently, Ivane Mkhargrdzeli transformed the institution of Atabeg and changed the function of this title to something like "vizier." M. Bakhtadze provides interesting information about Ivane's taking the title of Atabeg. He emphasizes that Ivane received the title of Atabeg at the beginning of the reign of Giorgi IV Lasha and that the Georgian historical source *Histories and Laudations of the Kings* conveys false information about the granting of the title of Atabeg to Ivane by King Tamara (Bakhtadze, 2011, pp. 123–126).

The sources mention Ivane Mkhargrdzeli as the first Atabeg, who served as *Msakhurtukhutsesi* under King Tamara and was later given the title of Atabeg (*Kartlis Tskhovreba*, 2012, pp. 235–240). The son of Sargis Mkhargrdzeli, who shaped the political and military life of Georgia towards the end of the 12th century, Commander-in-Chief Zakaria Mkhargrdzeli, died in 1212. King Tamara was very saddened by Zakaria's death because he came from an old tradition and was the most precious and above all *mtavaris*. Since Zakaria's son was too young, the King summoned Zakaria's brother Ivane, the chief of the *Msakhuris*, and asked him to succeed his brother as commander-in-chief (*Kartlis Tskhovreba*, 2012, pp. 235–242).

In fact, brothers Zakaria and Ivane oversaw the internal affairs of the Kingdom and ruled the country with King Tamara in a compelling way. These two administrators brought the Kingdom to the highest level under Tamara. Zakaria and Ivane continued to manage the affairs of the Kingdom and command the armies for some time. In 1209, Zakaria crossed the Aras and entered the territory of the Atabegs of Azerbaijan, where he took the cities of Marand and Erdebil and returned to Georgia with large booty. Zakaria's death in 1212 (some sources say 1211) shook the King deeply. Afterward, his brother Ivane continued to rule Georgia with various titles. One of these titles was Atabeg (Martin, 1818, p. 381).

After Tamara invited him, Ivane made an interesting request to her, asking her to give him the title of Atabeg because Ivane cared about this title (*Kartlis Tskhovreba*, 2012, pp. 134–138). King Tamara accepted Ivane's request. With Tamara's acceptance of this title, the institution of Atabeg was added to certain significant offices in the Geor-



gian administrative structure as of 1212. The institution of Atabeg had military and administrative content, but military duties were more important. As a matter of fact, Atabeg had taken its place in Georgian history as an institution accepted by the King from the state level (Köprülü, 1978, p. 717). After Ivane, this title was inherited by his son Avag in 1227 and then by his nephew Zakaria in 1250. The Mkhargrdzeli family, serving as Atabeg-Amirspasalar, commanded the Georgian armies during the Khwarezmshah and Mongol invasions in 1221–1235 but lost this influential position in 1272 (Mikaberidze, 2007, p. 153).

Ivane Mkhargrdzeli's knowledge of the Atabeg title and its strong and widespread use is undoubtedly related to the Ildenizli Atabeg, with whom the Georgians had established relations. Şemsettin İldeniz, appointed as the governor of Arran by the Iraq Seljuk Sultan Mesud, succeeded in putting Arslanşah on the throne in 1160 during the throne disputes that broke out after the Sultan's death. Arslanşah, in turn, gave İldeniz the title of "Atabeg-i Azam." As a result, an atabegdom called "İldenizids" or "Azerbaijan Atabegs" emerged in a large part of Azerbaijan and Arran (Bünyadov, 2017, pp. 38–45). After the death of İldeniz, Cihan Pehlivan, who succeeded him, declared himself Atabeg and started to interfere in the political and administrative affairs of the Iraqi Seljuks (Kayhan, 2016, pp. 80–81). As can be seen, first İldeniz and then Cihan Pehlivan gained legitimacy in their administration with the title of Atabeg and reached a strong position. In the following period, the brothers Zakaria and Ivane, who were aware of these events taking place near them, recognized the title of Atabeg, its power, and its sphere of influence.

From 1190 onwards, the Mkhargrdzeli family rose rapidly through the ranks of the Georgian state. It is known that Sargis' sons Zakaria and Ivane Mkhargrdzeli commanded the Georgian army. Thanks to the success of these commanders, Georgian armies achieved great victories in about three decades. These victories were Shamkor in 1195, followed by Basiani, and in 1210 in Northeastern Anatolia. Zakaria later took the title of Mandartukhutsesi, an important position in the Georgian administrative structure, while his brother Ivane served as Msakhurtukhutsesi. These brothers ruled all North and South Georgia for a time and amassed great wealth; Zakaria and his descendants ruled Ani and its environs, while Ivane and his children ruled Eastern Armenia, including the city of Dvin (Peacock, 2012, p. 53).

In 1213, after Zakaria's death, his brother Ivane united the two powerful positions of Atabeg and Amirspasalar. This move undoubtedly made Ivane the most powerful person in the Georgian country after the King at that time. The Mkhargrdzeli family retained its power in the mid-13th century, resisted the first Mongol invasions in 1221, and fought against the forces of Jalaluddin Khwarezmshah in Garni and Bol-

nisi in 1225–1226. At the end of the 13th century, Zakaria's son Shahinshah became Msakhurtukhutsesi, and Ivane's son Avak became Amirspasalar and Atabeg of the Georgian armies. In the 1300s and later, there is very little information about the Mkhargrdzeli family (Mikaberidze, 2007, pp. 152–153).

Atabeg Avak held the position of Atabeg for 23 years during the Mongol invasion, when significant events that shaped Georgian history took place. Avak was the last member of the Mkhargrdzeli family to use the title of Atabeg and to take full advantage of the power of this position and to use the privileges it offered them without hesitation (Kartlis Tskhovreba, 2012, p. 176). Avak's lack of male children prevented the continuation of the title within the family. For a long time, until the appointment of Sadun Mankaberdeli as Atabeg, the institution of the Atabeg remained silent in the South Caucasus.

During the reign of Georgian King Davit VII, Sadun Mankaberdeli established himself in Georgian political life. It was under Davit VII that Sadun became an essential figure in the region (Cavakhisvili, 1982, p. 111). Davit VII, aware of Sadun's power, left him many lands in Avak's hands. Sadun managed to gain the trust of Abaka Kagan, as he had with Hulāgū. In 1271, Demetre II's accession to the throne and the subsequent appointment of Sadun Mankaberdeli by Abaka to advise the King led to his growing power in the region. Eventually, in 1272, Abaka gave him the title of Atabeg. Sadun continually added to his fortune whenever he had the opportunity and became one of the wealthiest men of his time. Of course, Abaka's trust in him and giving him the title of Atabeg played an essential role in this. Georgian researchers also call Sadun "the ruler of the modern country" (Cavakhisvili, 1982, p. 110).

Sadun Mankaberdeli's rise to power was not only economic but also political, and in 1278, he captured regions such as Telavi and Belean from Demetre. Sources say that Sadun settled in Kars with his wife Tamara after a while. Atabeg Sadun died in Kars in 1282 (Kartlis Tskhovreba, 2012, p. 218). After Sadun, his son Kutluk Buga received the title of Amirspasalar from Demetre II. Kutluk Buga hoped that he would be given the title of Atabeg. However, Sadun's growing power in the Georgian land and in the eyes of the Ilkhanids frightened the King, and he gave Kutluk Buga a title that was, in some sense, inferior to Atabeg. However, it seems that the concept of Atabeg continued to live on in Georgia. King Demetre gave this title to Tarsaich Orbeliani. This move of the King provided the Orbeliani dynasty, which had been away from the Georgian dynasty for a long time, with the opportunity to regain their lost influence (Cavakhisvili, 1982, p. 114).

However, it is known that Kutluk used the title of Atabeg for a while. After the death of Kutluk Buga, who served as an Atabeg for a while, the institution of Atabeg be-

came silent again in the political life of the South Caucasus. However, after Abaka Khan showed great merits in the wars with the Golden Horde ruler Berke, a new and more powerful structure emerged when Sargis Cakeli and his family separated the Samtskhe region from the Georgian Kingdom and connected it directly to Mongol rule (Peacock, 2012, p. 54). During this period, the rapid and unstoppable rise of the Cakeli family began in Samtskhe-Saatabago, which was detached from the Tbilisi-based Georgian sphere of dominance and completely connected to the Ilkhanid center.

Sargis and his son Beka soon owned Tasiskari, Karnukalaki, Samtskhe, Ajara, Şavşat, Klarceti, Göle, Karnipor, Valarshavan, Ardahan, Nigali River, most of Tao, and many villages in Javakheti. With the help they received from Abaka in return for their services to him and during their stay under King Demetre II, the power of this father and son grew significantly. After Sargis, his son Beka ruled the inherited lands until 1308 (Kartlis Tskhovreba, 2012, p. 217).

After King Vakhtang III of Georgia died in 1307/8, Beka, the ruler of Samtskhe, died in the same year. After Beka, his country was divided among his three sons, Sargis, Kvarkware, and Shalva. Sargis Cakeli II (1308–1334), who was the eldest son after his father, began to rule a significant part of Saatabago and began to use the title of Atabeg. In fact, his father Beka was known as Samtskhe Mtavari (მთავარი) since the reign of Abaka Khan, but he was never referred to as Atabeg.

The use of the title of Atabeg by Atabeg Ivane and his son Avak of Mkhargrdzeli and Atabeg Sadun and his son Kutlug Buga of Mankaberdeli before the Cakeli family paved the way for the emergence of a political organization that would last for hundreds of years in the history of the South Caucasus (Kakhaber, 2019, pp. 76–78). Although the adventure of Atabeg in these two families was short-lived, Sargis Cakeli II's revitalization of the institution of Atabeg ensured the existence of a regional power that would last for hundreds of years in the South Caucasus, especially in the geography known as the Land of Atabegs.

In the Caucasus, under Ilkhanid rule, there were prolonged struggles with the Golden Horde. However, the loss of power of the Ilkhanids from the first quarter of the 14th century onwards benefited the Georgian King Giorgi V. After the death of the last great Emir of the Ilkhanids, Emir Çoban (1327), the remaining statesmen and the military class gradually distanced themselves from Abu Saïd due to his young age. Some emirs went to Iran, Khorasan, Iraq, and Azerbaijan, while others went to Anatolia. Meanwhile, Giorgi V cleansed the Georgian region under his rule of the Mongols, sometimes with money and weapons. He subjugated all the Eristavis, especially those in Kartli.

After securing the region, the King succeeded in bringing the whole geography up to Derbend under Georgian rule. Then Giorgi V went to Atabeg Sargis II, agreed with him, reunited all the factions, and entered the Arran region without encountering any resistance. He then moved on to Shirvan and, from there, returned to Tbilisi. In fact, this initiative was of great importance for reorganizing Georgian political unity. However, although it is stated that they were included in the Tbilisi-based administration, the ruling class of Saatabago never stopped using the title of Atabeg, and this institution was passed down from father to son and maintained its place in the political life of the region for many years.

After Atabeg Sargis II's death in Samtskhe in 1334, King Giorgi V appointed Sargis II's son Kvarkvare to succeed his father and gave him the title of Atabeg. He then settled in Klarjeti, Ispir, Kalmaki, Ardanuc, Ardahan, and the Samtskhe region in his name, along with the Eristavis, the uncle and cousins of Atabeg Kvarkvare, and connected these regions to the center (Kartlis Tskhovreba, 2012, p. 225).

In 1334, after King Giorgi V Brtskinvale gave Sargis II Cakeli the title of Atabeg, the region under his rule became known as Samtskhe-Saatabago. Before 1334, terms such as Samtskhe Lordship/Beylik appear in Georgian sources. The concept of Saatabago emerged not in 1268 with Sargis I but by 1334. This structure, which rose on the territory of historical Meskheta, is mentioned in the sources as Samtavro (Principality) (Tao-klarjeti istoriul kulturuli narkvevi, 2018, p. 137). With the title of Atabeg, the Atabegs, who struggled with the Timurid Empire, Aq-Quyunlu, and Qara-Quyunlu States in the territory of Tao-Klarjeti, continued this struggle with the Ottoman Empire but eventually came under the rule of the Ottoman Empire.

## **CONCLUSION**

Atabeg, an indispensable institution of the Seljuk state organization, made significant contributions to the development and growth of the state since it was first used effectively and ensured that administrative matters were concluded quickly. As the Seljuks influenced the Turkish communities that came after them, they also profoundly affected the Christian societies and states with which they were in constant communication and interaction. It is a natural consequence of this interaction to find Seljuk traces in the political structure of the Georgian Kingdom in the Caucasus. The institution of Atabeg, shaped by the Seljuks, entered the political life of the South Caucasus with the appointment of Ivane from the Mkhargrdzeli family as Atabeg by Tamara in 1212. Atabeg Ivane remained in this position until his death in 1227. After his death, his son Avak was appointed as Atabeg and endeavored to

keep this office alive under Mongol oppression during perhaps the darkest years of Georgian history.

In 1250, the death of Atabeg Avak without leaving a male child behind meant the end of the Atabeg's influence for the Mkhargrdzeli family. Thus, the institution of Atabeg remained in deep silence in the South Caucasus until 1272. However, this silence ended when Abaka Kagan appointed Sadun Mankaberdeli as Atabeg to the Georgian King Demetre II. After the Mankaberdeli family, which operated in Georgian territories until the execution of Atabeg Sadun and then his son Kutlug Buka, Sargis II of the Cakeli family, who formed the ruling class of the Samtskhe region, started to use the title of Atabeg in 1308. For more than a century, the institution of Atabeg, a Seljuk heritage in the South Caucasus, made its influence felt in all political events.

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# Russian Ecclesiastical Policy in the Shida Kartli (19th C.)

(Transformation of Toponymic Vocabulary: how „Ossetia“and  
„South Ossetia“were forming in Georgia)

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DOI: [HTTPS://DOI.ORG/10.62343/CJSS.2024.241](https://doi.org/10.62343/CJSS.2024.241)

## ABSTRACT

In the given work, we attempted to highlight some aspects of the ecclesiastical-missionary and religious policy of Tsarist Russia in the nineteenth century, which contributed to the formation of Georgian-Ossetian relations, the creation of new administrative borders, and the transformation of toponyms. Between 1814 and 1818, the Russian authorities established the ecclesiastical-administrative unit “Eparchy of Ossetia” on the territory of the Shida Kartli Highlands. At the same time, a missionary society – the “Ossetian Ecclesiastical Commission” – was founded. The establishment of the “Eparchy of Ossetia” marked the territory where the “Ossetian Ecclesiastical Commission” was to carry out its missionary activity. Additionally, the term “South Ossetia” first appeared in the 1860s in the reports of the missionary organization, the “Society for the Restoration of Orthodox Christianity in the Caucasus.” Thus, Russian religious policy laid the groundwork for the establishment of the terms “Ossetia,” “Eparchy of Ossetia,” and “South Ossetia,” which were later solidified by administrative policy.

*Keywords:* History of the church of Georgia, Russian ecclesiastical policy, toponymy, Georgian-Ossetian relations, Shida Kartli

## **INTRODUCTION**

Shida Kartli is a historical geographical district of eastern Georgia, comprising the northern part of Kartli (the central region of Georgia). The Shida Kartli Highland (Shida Kartli mountainous area) includes the territory of the mountains and foothills of the Main Caucasian Range. Historically, it has always been an integral part of the Georgian political and cultural sphere.

The Shida Kartli Highlands shared borders with the realms of the North Caucasian mountain people; it was a frontier or border zone, which, on the one hand, protected South Caucasia and the Georgian state and, on the other, connected them with Northern Caucasian peoples.

Due to geographic, political, and migration processes, the mountainous area of Shida Kartli developed into a meeting place for various confessions and ethnicities, particularly influencing Georgian-Ossetian relations.

The Russian Empire's colonial policy in the 19th century created a political, administrative, and demographic situation in the Shida Kartli Highlands, contributing to the alienation of the people living there and the Georgian-Ossetian confrontation.

Following the conquest of the Georgian states – Kingdoms of Kartli-Kakheti (1801) and Imereti (1810) – by Russia, the Georgian Orthodox Church lost its independence. In 1811, the Russian authorities annulled the autocephaly of the Georgian Church in eastern Georgia, and in 1814, it was also abolished in western Georgia. The institution of the Georgian Catholicos-Patriarch was dissolved, and a Georgian exarchate was created, which was subordinated to the Russian Synod. The Church government was thus changed to follow the Russian model (Pavliashvili, 2008, pp. 21-79; Kokrashvili, 2014, pp. 63-83). The Russian Church became a means of implementing state policy, an instrument of assimilating the annexed territories and carrying out colonial policy (Kokrashvili, 2014, p. 63).

## **METHOD**

The intensive expansion of Russia in the Caucasus, particularly in the territories of Georgia, created new borders and a new political and ecclesiastical condition. The ecclesiastical policy was assigned an important role in the ethnically and confessionally diverse border region of Georgia, in the Shida Kartli Highland; being a form of “soft power,” the ecclesiastical policy was intended to prepare the ideological basis for conducting the political processes and developing new strategies desired by the Russian state. Consequently, we employed theories of “soft power” and “border studies” in this work.

The research is based on published sources and materials about religious and ethnic processes in Georgia in the 19th century. The ethnopolitical aspects of Georgian-Ossetian relations and issues of the ecclesiastical policy of the Russian Empire carried out in the region are represented in the contemporary studies of scholars such as Totadze, Itonishvili, Lekishvili, Topchishvili, Gvasalia, Tkavashvili, Pavliashvili, Bubulashvili, Tsverava, Kokrashvili, Togoshvili, and others.

The research was conducted according to the principle of historicism. To analyze and evaluate 19th-century documentary sources, materials found in scientific literature, and historical conceptions, we used comparative historical research, as well as methods of analysis and synthesis.

## **RESULTS**

In the given work, we tried to show some aspects of the ecclesiastical-missionary and religious policy of the Tsar's Russia, which had an essential contribution to the formation of Georgian-Ossetian relations, the creation of new administrative borders, and the modification of toponyms.

We tried to analyze missionary and ecclesiastical-administrative policy in the Shida Kartli in the 19th century, as well as the formation of new imaginary and real borders, the political transformation of ethnic terminology, and the role of church policy in it.

The available material allows us to assess how Ossetia and South Ossetia were created in Georgia, how the ethnopolitical context of the Russian ecclesiastical policy in Georgia, its influence on Georgian-

Ossetian relations, and the formation of new toponymic vocabulary in Shida Kartli. Analyzing the mentioned problem in Shida Kartli in the context of ecclesiastical policy is a novelty.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Migration of Ossetians to Shida Kartli**

Archaeological, architectural, and epigraphic monuments, as well as toponymical data, unanimously confirm that the inhabitants of Shida Kartli Highland have been Georgians since ancient times (Zakaraya, 1996, p. 125; Otkhmezuri, 1996, p. 156; Kharadze, 1996, p. 167). As a result of migratory, political, or historical processes, Jews, Armenians, and Ossetians settled along with the Indigenous Georgian population in this region.

Based on documents, at the beginning of the 19th century, the resettlement of Jews and Armenians in Shida Kartli was primarily based on trade reconciliation (Acts, Vol. I, 1866, pp. 465–469). Georgians living here were mainly adherents of the Orthodox faith, Jews of Judaism, and Armenians were followers of Gregorian and Catholic denominations.

Regarding the resettlement of Ossetians in Shida Kartli territory, Georgian historians reject the view of the residency of Ossetians in Georgia since ancient times. The historic homeland of Ossetians was in the North Caucasus. As a result of invasions of external enemies in the 13th century, they began to settle in the mountainous valleys of the North Caucasus. This process continued until the 15th century.

At the end of the 13th century, a group of Ossetians invaded Shida Kartli with the support of the Mongols. For a while, they occupied Gori and Shida Kartli fortresses. However, in the 14th century, King Giorgi Brtskinvale expelled the Mongols and Ossetians from Kartli and closed the entrances from the North Caucasus valleys to Shida Kartli. In this way, the migration of Ossetians to the territories belonging to the Georgian kings was suspended for some time.

In the historical province of Georgia – Dvaleti – located on the northern slopes of the Caucasus Ridge, in the so-called Nar-Mamison between the Dariali Gorge and Mamison Pass, the Ossetian settlement began at the end of the 15th century. Historical Dvaleti consisted of Kasri Khevi, the valleys of Nara, Zgeli, Zrogo, Zakha, and Zramaga. The processes of Ossetian migration continued here throughout the 16th century and ended in the 17th century with the assimilation of the Dvals – the local Kartvelian tribes – by the Ossetians (Topchishvili, 1997, p. 218). Despite the ethnic and demographic changes, Dvaleti was an integral part of the domains of the Georgian kings. Even after the establishment of Russian rule in Georgia, this province was within the borders of Georgia until 1858, when Russia administratively subordinated it to the Tergi District, which was created in the North Caucasus.

The first Ossetians settlements in today's Georgia appeared in the Truso Valley (the source of the Tergi River) and Maghran-Dvaleti (across the Caucasus ridge, near the headwaters of the Great Liakhvi, also an area inhabited by the Dvals). According to specialists, the settlement of Ossetians from the valleys of the North Caucasus in these areas dates back to the first half of the 17th century (Gvasalia, 1997, p. 56; Topchishvili, 2007, p. 96).

In the Shida Kartli Highland, particularly near the headwaters of Big and Little Liakhvi, the migration of Ossetians began in the second half of the 17th century (Topchishvili, 1997, pp. 218–219). By the 1730s, they had settled in the mountain range of the

Big and Little Liakhvi valleys, near the headwaters of the Mejudi, Jejori, Ksani, and Tergi rivers. In some mountain villages, Ossetians lived with the rest of the Georgian population. Scientist R. Topchishvili considers that by the end of the 18th century, Ossetians were mainly settled in the mountainous areas of Shida Kartli (Gvasalia, 1997, p. 57; Topchishvili, 2007, pp. 96–97).

From the end of the 18th century, Ossetians began to settle in the villages of the foothills, plains, and ancient settlements. They began to relocate from the mountains of Shida Kartli. For this period, they occupied the territories of the foothills of the Little Liakhvi, Lekhuri, Mejudi, and Frone valleys. Here, they often lived mixed with the Georgian population.

Georgian scientists substantiate that in the first half of the 19th century, the settlement process from Shida Kartli Highland to the foothills and plains was not intense. Active settlement in the villages of Ossetians in Shida Kartli plains dates from the middle of the 19th century (Gvasalia, 1997, p. 58; Topchishvili, 1997, p. 220).

It should be noted that in many cases, the Ossetian resettlement process was not peaceful. Many sources testify to the facts of Ossetians raiding the villages of Kartli, abducting people, and robbing them. They also occupied Kartli's populated villages through attacks (*Sakartvelos Istoriis Nark'vevebi*, Vol. IV, 1973, p. 431).

Information about the number of Ossetians living in the Tskhinvali region at the beginning of the 19th century and the conclusions expressed by scientists is interesting. Historian G. Togoshvili concludes that in the 18th century, 6,000 Ossetian families settled in Georgia (Togoshvili, 1969, p. 165).

Georgian scientists reject this point of view and believe that in the first half of the 19th century, the number of Ossetians in Georgia was insignificant. According to R. Topchishvili's calculations, at the end of the 18th century and the beginning of the 19th century, the number of Ossetians living in the territory of Georgia (excluding Dvaleti, a historical province of Georgia) was 2,130 households, that is, about 15,000 souls (Topchishvili, 2007, p. 100). According to demographer A. Totadze, the number of Ossetians in Georgia in 1833 should have been 14,000 souls. From the middle of the 19th century to the 1880s–1890s, the number of Ossetians in Georgia increased dramatically. By the end of the 19th century, it exceeded 70,000 (Totadze, 2006, p. 19).

Demographic data about Tskhinvali is also interesting. It should be noted that, according to data from Russian sources and censuses conducted by Russian officials, Ossetian families were not recorded in Tskhinvali during the entire 19th century.

Valuable information about the settlement area of the Ossetian population in Shida Kartli's Mtianeti valleys is contained in the description compiled by Archimandrite

Nikiphores, preacher of the “Ossetian Theological Commission” in 1817–1818, assembled by the order of Theophylactes, Exarch of Georgia. The report cards contain information about the settlement and number of Ossetians in the villages of 19 valleys of the mentioned region in the 1810s (Kokrashvili, 2010a, pp. 448–462).

Data from church sources, documents compiled by clerics, and their reports provide valuable material to restore the historical reality because the church officials had direct contact with the local population and were aware of the current situation. In the document prepared by Archimandrite Nicephorus, the data on the city of Tskhinvali is not included (Kokrashvili, 2010a, pp. 455–460). This source, together with other data, once again confirms that by the beginning of the 19th century, the Ossetian population was not recorded in Tskhinvali.

### **Anti-Russian Uprisings of Ossetians in Shida Kartli at the Beginning of the 19th Century**

The areas of Shida Kartli Highland have always been the domain of Georgian seigneurs: Machabels, Amilakhvars, Palavandishvilis, and Ksani nobles. Part of these territories was owned by the royal family of Kartl-Kakheti and given to princes. The historical region Dvaleti, located behind the Caucasus ridge, was considered to belong to the Georgian kings. After Russia’s conquest of the Kartl-Kakheti kingdom in 1801, the new government confiscated the lands belonging to the king and his family.

At the beginning of the 19th century, the establishment of Russian rule in Kartli-Kakheti was followed by anti-Russian uprisings and demonstrations led by the representatives of the royal Bagration dynasty. It should be noted that the Ossetians settled in Shida Kartli Highland, which provided special support to the Georgian princes. After settling in these territories, they were considered subjects of the Georgian kings and were ready to fight against the Russians on the side of the Georgian princes.

Ossetian protests against the Russians began as early as 1801. In 1802, the Georgian noblemen Iulon, Parnaoz, and Leon Iulon’s son established friendly relations with the Ossetians living in the mountains of Shida Kartli. As a result, in 1802, the anti-Russian uprisings of the Ossetians acquired a more intense character. The Russian authorities even sent an expedition of Lt. Col. Simonovich to the valley to quell the unrest of the Ossetians. He managed to pacify the Ossetians of the mountains and foothills of Shida Kartli and made them swear allegiance to Russia.

The connection of Ossetians with the liberation movement of Georgians was revealed in 1804 during the Kartli Mtianeti rebellion. Mountaineers, Mokheves, Khevsuris, Pshavles, and Ossetians of Truso Valley participated in this rebellion. Akhmet



Dudarov (Dudaruk), the leader of Ossetians from Tagauri (an Ossetian community in the North Caucasus), also joined their rebellion with a squad of 300 Ossetians and Kists. Together, they could close the entrance to the South Caucasus – the “Daryal Gate” – for the Russian army. After closing the Darial valley, only one way was left for the Russian army – the Rock crossing. A Russian regiment entered from the North Caucasus, caught and captured by the Ossetians between Java and Rock (Kokrashvili, 2020, p. 4). Although the Ossetians of Java agreed to obey the government, General Tsitsianov burned down the village of Krozha and destroyed the towers.

In 1807, the anti-Russian protests of the Georgian and Ossetian populations also took place in the Ksani and Lekhuri valleys. The Russian government expedition led by Major Zaitsev calmed the excitement (Togoshvili, 1969, p. 9).

In 1810–1811, Ossetians of Samachablo rebelled in support of Leon Batonishvili. He attacked Tskhinvali with 2,000 Ossetians but could not take it. The Russians brutally attacked the rebels, burned 20 villages, and destroyed the ancestral towers. Leon Batonishvili was forced to leave the mountains of Shida Kartli and go to Akhaltsikhe. Leks killed Leon Batonishvili on his way to Akhaltsikhe (Tkavashvili, 2012, p. 44).

The unrest of the Ossetians of Shida Kartli Highland also took place during the Kakheti rebellion (1812–1813). Alexandre Bagration, the son of King Erekle, appealed to the inhabitants of Liakhvi, Chvrivi, Geri, Aragvi, Mtianeti, Truso, and other valleys to revolt. Ossetian rebels tried to block communication routes on the main ridge of the Caucasus. A large part of the Ossetians supported Alexandre Erekle’s son, but due to the strong resistance of the Russian troops, they were forced to stop fighting (Kokrashvili, 2020, pp. 5–9).

Thus, at the beginning of the 19th century, the Georgian national liberation movement and the Bagration dynasty’s struggle to restore the throne were supported by the Ossetian population of Shida Kartli. With this, they confirmed their loyalty to the Kingdom of Kartl-Kakheti. This clearly shows that the Ossetian people settled in the territory of Shida Kartli and considered themselves an organic and indivisible part of the Georgian state and kingdom.

### **Transformation of Toponymy: The Establishing Terms “Ossetia” and “South Ossetia” for the Territory of Shida Kartli Highland**

From the 1820s, the Russian government attempted to change its policy towards the Ossetians and used new methods and techniques to regulate Russian-Ossetian relations, turning them from an opposing anti-Russian force into allies. The Russian government adopted a policy of inculcating pro-Russian sentiment among the Ossetians of Shida Kartli.

After Russia annexed the Kingdom of Kartli-Kakheti, from the beginning of the 19th century, the term “Ossetia” was used quite actively to denote the territories inhabited by the Ossetian population of Shida Kartli. Russian state officials facilitated this process. Back in 1802, Lieutenant-General Karl Knoring, in a letter sent to the Russian Emperor, called the mountainous regions inhabited by Ossetians at the head of the Big and Little Liakhvi valleys “Ossetia” (Itonishvili, 1996, p. 38). Subsequently, various Russian officials used this term to refer to the areas inhabited by Ossetians in the upper reaches of the Ksani, Mejudi, Lekhuri, and Ptsi rivers. Until the 1830s, Russian documents referred to the territories inhabited by Ossetians of Shida Kartli by the following names: Ossetia of Georgia, Ossetia of Kartli, Ossetians of Georgia, Ossetians of Northern Kartli, Ossetians of Imereti, or Ossetians belonging to Imereti, etc. (Itonishvili, 1996, p. 39). The term was mentioned mainly in personal correspondence, letters, and unofficial announcements.

Establishing the term “Ossetia” in Georgia was mainly facilitated by Russia’s ecclesiastical-religious policy, which the Russian government conveniently used.

The policy of establishing the Russian Empire in the Caucasus, the desire to expand the borders to the south, and the subjugation and Russification of the neighboring peoples required special activation of missionary work. Missions were sent to convert so-called “inorodtsy” (a term referring to all non-Slavic subjects of the Russian Empire) to Christianity. Conversion to Orthodoxy was the ideological lever that determined the Russian political orientation and course for other peoples (Kokrashvili, 2010b, p. 326).

Even in the 18th century, the Christianization of the Ossetians and the formation of a pro-Russian orientation became relevant for Russia. From 1745 to 1792, the organization “Ossetian Ecclesiastical Commission” operated in the North Caucasus, with its center in Mozdok. The formation of a missionary society, which aimed to Christianize the Ossetians in this region, indicated that Russia chose these people to gain and establish influence in the North Caucasus. In the second half of the 18th century, the direction of the empire’s colonial exploitation of the Caucasus was planned from the North Caucasus to the South. However, the work of this mission turned out to be unsuccessful, and the “Commission” was abolished at the end of the century.

After the conquest of Kartli-Kakheti and the annulment of the autocephaly of the Georgian Church, Russia tried to use Georgia to introduce Christianity to the Caucasus mountains. The project on the reorganization of the Church of Georgia drawn up by Dositheos Fitskhelauri, which Emperor Alexander I signed on August 30, 1814, included, among other things, the restoration of the “Ossetian Ecclesiastical Commis-

sion.” On September 15, 1815, by the decree of the Synod, the mentioned missionary organization resumed its activities. This time, its center was Tiflis (Review of the Activities of the Society for the Restoration of Orthodox Christianity in the Caucasus for 1860-1910, p. 27; Tsverava, 2003, p. 54; Bubulashvili, 2007, p. 234). Based on the created political situation, the direction of Russia’s use of the Caucasus changed radically – from the South Caucasus to the North. This time, the government started the process of Christianization of Ossetians from Georgia.

At the initial stage, it was considered expedient to Christianize the Caucasian mountaineers, especially the Ossetians, with the help of Georgian clergymen. However, since the 1830s, the tendency to replace Georgian clergymen with Ossetian and Russian priests and missionaries in the activity of the “Ossetian Ecclesiastical Commission” operating in the territory of Shida Kartli was already evident.

The function of the mission included the Christianization of the Ossetians, initially in the territory of Shida Kartli and then on the northern slopes of the Caucasus. The name of the commission remained the same – “Ossetian Ecclesiastical Commission.” Its activities involved sending missions to preach Christianity among the mountain people, building churches, opening schools, and translating theological literature into local languages. Initially, the state allocated 14,750 Russian rubles, a company of Cossacks, and 30 escorts for the operation of the mission. The “Commission” was headed by Archbishop Dositheos Fitskhelauri and was subordinated directly to the Holy Synod of Russia (Istorija Gruzinskoj Ierarhii, 1826, pp. 69–70).

Precisely, in parallel with this process, in the years 1814–1818, an ecclesiastical-administrative unit was created in the territory of Shida Kartli Highland, which was called the “Eparchy of Ossetia” (Istorija Gruzinskoj Ierarhii, 1826, p. 24; E. K., 1901, pp. 53–54, 56). At the same time, the archbishop of Gori, Dositheos Fitskhelauri, was appointed as the head of the “Ossetian Ecclesiastical Commission,” was put at its head.

Establishing the “Eparchy of Ossetia” marked the territory where the “Ossetian Ecclesiastical Commission” should operate. The newly restored “Commission” started Christianizing the Ossetians from this eparchy. The term “Ossetia” was already established in the name of the official organization (“Ossetian Ecclesiastical Commission”), as well as in the name of the ecclesiastical-administrative unit, to denote the indigenous territories of Shida Kartli Highland. The “Ossetian Ecclesiastical Commission” operated until the 1860s. Along with the settlement of the Ossetian population from the mountainous region to the south, the area within which this organization had to operate expanded (Kokrashvili, 2010b, p. 328).

Thus, thanks to Russia's ecclesiastical-administrative and religious policy from the 1810s to the 1820s, the term "Ossetia" was established and attached to the onomastic field of Georgia covertly but very effectively.

Soon, the name "Ossetia" was reflected in the political-administrative name of the northern part of the Shida Kartli territory as well. In 1843, the "Ossetian Okrug" was officially opened and divided into three districts – Java, Patara Liakhvi, and Nari (historical Dvaleti territory). In this way, the areas densely populated by Ossetians in the northern part of Shida Kartli were called "Ossetia."

From the point of view of Georgian historiography, the Russian authorities first introduced the toponym "Ossetia" into the territorial-administrative terminology of Georgia in the 1840s, when in 1843, they called the areas densely populated by Ossetians in the northern part of Shida Kartli "Ossetian Okrug" (Gvasalia, 1997, p. 58). However, it turns out that the term "Ossetia" appeared in the church territorial-administrative lexicon about three decades before the establishment of the political-administrative unit "Ossetian Okrug" in the territory of Shida Kartli (in 1843), when in 1814–1818 the "Eparchy of Ossetia" existed in the mountainous territory of Shida Kartli.

Thus, for the territories of Shida Kartli, the term "Ossetia" was officially used for the first time as the name of the Russian missionary organization and ecclesiastical-administrative unit, and then it appeared on the political-administrative map of Georgia. This was so-called toponymic sabotage, which was supposed to prepare the ground for the Ossetians' territorial claims on Georgian land. This kind of policy continued throughout the 19th and 20th centuries.

In 1859, the district of Nari was removed from the "Ossetian Okrug" of Tiflis Governorate and joined the "Military Okrug of Ossetia" created in the North Caucasus. Later, the district of Nari was transferred to the Tergi District, and in 1924, it entered the Autonomous Republic of North Ossetia. Thus, Georgia lost the historical territory of Dvaleti (Gvasalia, 1997, p. 58). At the same time, the names "Eparchy of Ossetia," "Ossetian Ecclesiastical Commission," and "Ossetian Okrug" already meant establishing in the self-consciousness of the Ossetians living in the territory belonging to Georgia that these lands belonged to them.

Regarding the territories of Shida Kartli, the term "South Ossetia" was mentioned for the first time in 1830 by the newspaper *Tifliskie Vedomosti* ("Тифлисские ведомости") (Itonishvili, 1996, p. 39; Totadze, 2009, p. 124). The correspondent used it on his own initiative. Officially, the term "South Ossetia" is found in the "Society for the Restoration of Orthodox Christianity in the Caucasus" report in the 1860s (Lekishvili, 1996, p. 272). This organization was created in 1860 when the "Ossetian

Ecclesiastical Commission” was abolished, which had fulfilled its mission for that period. The funds at its disposal were transferred to the “Society for the Restoration of Orthodox Christianity in the Caucasus.” It is known that in the second half of the 19th century, the activation of missionary work in the Caucasus acquired state importance for the Russian Empire, which was connected with the final stage of the Caucasian Wars. Christianity had to play an essential role in the process of subduing the Caucasian mountaineers who were conquered by weapons and their Russification.

Viceroy of the Caucasus Baryatinsky (1856–1862), on whose initiative the “Society for the Restoration of Orthodox Christianity in the Caucasus” was created, in a letter sent to the Committee of the Caucasus in St. Petersburg, explained the necessity of establishing a particular society for the activation of missionary work in the Caucasus. He noted, “Orthodox faith is the most important people’s power of Russia ... Every Russian must do his best to glorify the motherland and contribute to the spread of Orthodoxy. We need a common effort. The whole of Russia will be able to do what one Russian cannot do” (E. K., 1901, p. 109). Thus, the introduction and establishment of the term “South Ossetia” began through the missionary-religious organization, which later was strengthened by the administrative-political changes carried out in the territory of the mentioned region.

According to the administrative policy of Russia, still in the 19th century, the establishment of the “Military Okrug of Ossetia” in the North Caucasus and the “Ossetian Okrug” in the South of the Caucasus prepared the ground for the emergence of the toponymic pair – “North Ossetia” and “South Ossetia” – which already in the 20th century was established by the Soviet government in the names of political-administrative units (Itonishvili, 1996, p. 16).

## **CONCLUSION**

Thus, during the 19th century, Russia’s domestic, religious, and ecclesiastical-administrative policy in the Shida Kartli mountains and foothills envisaged the artificial strengthening of Ossetian unity in the indigenous territory of Georgia, which triggered the Georgian-Ossetian conflict. The role of Russia’s ecclesiastical policy is clearly defined in the official introduction of the terms “Ossetia” and “South Ossetia” to the territories of Shida Kartli. Initially, this terminology was officially announced through church-missionary and religious-administrative policies, which was strengthened by the process of political-administrative reorganization of these territories by Tsarist Russia during the 19th century.

By introducing the terms “Ossetia,” “South Ossetia,” “Eparchy of Ossetia,” and “Ossetian Okrug” to the territories of Georgia, the Russian government contributed

to the self-consciousness of Ossetians living in Shida Kartli, suggesting that these lands belonged to them. It was toponymic as well as mental sabotage. According to the Russian policy, as early as the 19th century, the ground was being prepared for the territorial claims of the Ossetians on the Georgian lands.

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# Unknown Georgian Chronicles Recounting the Persian-Byzantine War of 541-562 and the Khazar Capture of Tbilisi in 628 (Theses)

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DOI: [HTTPS://DOI.ORG/10.62343/CJSS.2024.242](https://doi.org/10.62343/CJSS.2024.242)

## ABSTRACT

While researching the details of the Georgian hagiographic work written around 1058 – The Martyrdom of Davit and Costantine – it became evident that the invasion described therein, followed by the martyrdom of the principals of Argveti, Davit and Costantine, was not actually the invasion of the armies of Marwan the Deaf and the Arabs, despite the attempt of the 11th-century author to portray it as such. But it narrates the history of the Persian-Byzantine War that took place in 541-562. Historian of the second half of the 11th century, Leonti Mroveli, possessed another chronicle describing the same event, different from the one available to the hagiographer. Because the text of The Georgian Chronicles in his possession had already been extended prior to the appearance of the Arabs and the reign of Stephanos II (mid-7th century), he positioned the obtained chronicle immediately after Stephanos II to further continue the narrative. In this way, the sons of Vakhtang Gorgasali, who lived during the Persian-Byzantine War and participated in it, namely Darchil and Mihrdat (also known as Mihr), turned into the sons of Stephanos II, Archil and Mihr. Another piece of information from one more chronicle, which Leonti also inserted, albeit with chronological confusion, is a narrative about Juansher and Ioane, whom he presented as the sons of Archil and actors of the end of the 8th century. In reality, the chronicle tells us about the situation in Kartli in 628–635 – specifically, the capture of Tbilisi by the Khazars in 628 and the history of the representatives of the Revian branch of the Sassanians (Khosrowids) of the Kartli Kingdom, Juansher, and his sister Shushana.

*Keywords:* The Martyrdom of Davit and Costantine, hagiography, Vakhtang Gorgasali, the Mighty, Persian, Anacopia Fortress, Darchil, Tsuketi, Kasri, Khazars, Khagan, Juansher, Shushana

## **INTRODUCTION**

Georgian historians have remained puzzled as to why our ancient historiography does not mention, even briefly, such a significant and epoch-making event for our country as the war between Persia and Byzantium in 541–562, especially considering the fact that it occurred mainly in the territory of Georgia, particularly Egrisi.

A special examination of a well-known hagiographic work known as *The Martyrdom of Davit and Costantine*, along with the section of *The Georgian Chronicles* dedicated to the life and activities of the alleged sons of Stephanos II – Mihr and Archil (including *The Martyrdom of Archil*) – has made it clear that both the unknown hagiographer, while composing his hagiographic work, and Leonti Mroveli, while extending the section of *The Georgian Chronicles* following Stephanos II, used chronicles that did not tell us about the Arabs, Marwan the Deaf, and the events of the 8th century in general. Instead, they depicted Khosrow Anushirvan’s invasion of Georgia (542/543) during the Persian-Byzantine War of 541–562, as well as the events happening during this invasion.

Also erroneously, this time, the chronicler of Bagrat IV (although the mistake may again belong to Leonti Mroveli), whom we consider to be the author of the section known as *Matiane Kartlisa* (Sanadze, 2019, pp. 235–237), chronologically misplaced the chronicle that narrated not the story of Arabs and the events happening at the turn of the 8th and 9th centuries, but rather the developments of the first third of the 7th century, in particular the events in Kartli during and following the departure of Heraclius Caesar from Kartli and the capture and annihilation of Tbilisi by the Khazars in 628. He “rejuvenated” the events by inserting them more than a century and a half later in the epoch of Asim Chichnaum, in the section describing historical events before Ashot Curopalates.

## **METHODS**

The study employs an analytical approach, juxtaposing and critically analyzing information preserved in various ancient sources, including hagiographic works, chronicles, and historical records, to uncover and interpret the misplacement of historical events, figures, and timelines within Georgian historiography. This method enables the identification of errors and the accurate contextualization of narratives related to the Persian-Byzantine War and the Khazar invasion of Tbilisi.

## RESULTS

Two ancient chronicles recount the Persian-Byzantine War of 541–562. One of these chronicles served as the basis for the hagiographic work composed by an unknown author in 1058 – *The Martyrdom of Davit and Costantine* (see Sanadze & Arakhamia, 2013, pp. 26–30). The second chronicle, somewhat later, at the end of the 11th century, was used by Leonti Mroveli as the foundation for both his narrative of the events of the first half and the middle of the 8th century in *The Georgian Chronicles* and a hagiographic work he specifically created – *The Martyrdom of Archil* (Sanadze, 2020, pp. 27–31, 154–182).

The first mistake made by the hagiographer was setting the Arab era as the historical backdrop for the events depicted in his source during the process of paraphrasing. This adjustment made the narrative in his newly created hagiographic work appear 200 years younger than the actual time.

The account of the battle and torture of the princes of Argveti was not given in the text that Leonti had access to. Nonetheless, his chronicle did recount the invasion of the enemy at Anacopia and the battle against the kings of Kartli, alongside the flood – the overflowing of the Tskhenistskali and Abashistskhali rivers – and the demise of a substantial number of horses (35,000).

Since these stories had already been described against the backdrop of the invasion of the Arabs and Marwan the Deaf by the hagiographer preceding Leonti, and the manuscript of *The Georgian Chronicles* he was working on to extend and continue the narrative ended with the description of the reign of Stephanos II – the son of Adarnase – and the appearance of the Arabs, Leonti reworked the information of the chronicle he had discovered and placed it after Stephanos II. He continued the narrative with the words: “And Stephanos had two sons, Archil and Mihr” (*The Georgian Chronicles*, 1955, p. 232). It should be noted that neither Stephanos III nor Stephanos II had children with these names. Regarding Stephanos III, it is known that he died in 738, while the following Erismtavari (the old Georgian equivalent of *Patrician*) of Kartli was Adarnase – the father of Erismtavari Nerse II, according to *The Martyrdom of Abo of Tbilisi* (Sabanisdze, 2020, p. 55).

The ancient chronicle available to the hagiographer primarily focused on the battle and torture of the princes of Argveti, Davit and Costantine. However, it also recounted a flood that struck the enemy army, resulting in the deaths of a large number of enemy horses (40,000), the battle of Vakhtang Gorgasali’s sons against the enemy at the fortress of Anacopia, and the death of Mihr.

In our view, the chronicle available to Leonti was the final section taken from

*The Georgian Chronicles* by Juansher (together with the testament), which Leonti placed following the narrative of Stephanos II (see Sanadze, 2019, pp. 100–101). This chronicle did not mention Davit and Costantine at all; instead, it focused on the battle of Vakhtang Gorgasali’s sons, Darchil and Mihr, against the Persians. Meanwhile, as a result of multiple cases of rewriting the text, Darchil had already been transformed into Archil. This section taken from *The Georgian Chronicles* by Juansher recounted the activities of Darchil in Western Georgia, including his construction of the fortress “above the border of Guria and Greece,” which is the same as the Petra fortress. The chronicle then recounted the Persian invasion, the battle of Darchil and Mihr against the enemy at Anacopia, and Mihr’s death. It also described the disintegration of Kartli into principalities, narrated through marrying Mihr’s daughters off to representatives of the elite families of Kartli and giving them territories as dowry. Later, the chronicle discussed the return of Darchil (the same Archil) to Eastern Georgia, his settlement in Kakheti, and activities in Mtianeti on the left bank of the Alazani River (“Kakheti Highlands”). Leonti based his own hagiographic work, *The Martyrdom of Archil*, on information from this same chronicle. In this work, he expanded the brief account of Darchil’s martyrdom, which is available in the chronicle, against the backdrop of the Arab commander Asim Chichnaum’s campaign in Kartli. It is worth noting that early on, C. Toumanoff equated Asim Chichnaum with the Arab commander Khuzayma ibn Khazim, who governed Armenia in the 780s (Toumanoff, 1963, pp. 409–410).

Likely influenced by the hagiographer of the mid-11th century, Leonti set the Arab era and the invasions of Marwan the Deaf as the historical backdrop for the stories narrated in this section taken from Juansher’s *The Georgian Chronicles* because his senior contemporary had already established the epoch!

No special attempt has been made to compare the accounts of *The Martyrdom of Davit and Costantine* and the corresponding sections of Leonti Mroveli’s narrative.<sup>1</sup> Research in this direction has revealed that these accounts do not originate from the same source and that their authors used different chronicles that presented the same events from different perspectives, leading to the fact that even the events recounted in both chronicles are presented in different ways. The most significant differences are as follows:

1. The timing of the flood: According to the hagiographer, the Persian army was caught in the flood while traveling to Tsikhe-Goji. However, according to Leonti’s source, this happened on the return journey after passing by Tsikhe-Goji.

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<sup>1</sup> In this regard, historians were interested only in determining whether the hagiographic work was Leonti’s source or vice versa.



2. The outcome of the battle near Anacopia: The chronicle used by the hagiographer as a source recounted the defeat of Mihr and Darchil near the fortress of Anacopia. The section of *The Georgian Chronicles* by Juansher, which had been removed from the work earlier and was available to Leonti, described the triumph of the kings of Kartli, or at least the narrative allowed Leonti to draw such a conclusion. Meanwhile, both chronicles documented Mihr's injury and eventual death.
3. The route of the Persian army's retreat: The hagiographer's source suggested the enemy's retreat along the seacoast, or at least its narrative allowed for such an interpretation of the route. In contrast, Leonti's source provided a much more precise account of the enemy army's retreat route: passing by Tsikhe-Goji, crossing the rivers Abashistskali, Tskhenistskali, and Rioni, and finally, via the Guria-Sper road.

As previously mentioned, Leonti's source was the concluding, removed section of *The Georgian Chronicles* by Juansher. As for the source of *The Martyrdom of Davit and Costantine*<sup>2</sup>, it was likely a Greek-language chronicle that described Khosrow Anushirvan's campaign in Western Georgia in 542/3. Alongside the narrative of the battle of the princes of Argveti against the enemy, their capture and execution, the chronicle also provided details about the battle of Vakhtang Gorgasali's sons, Darchil and Mihrdat, at the fortress of Anacopia as well as the death of Mihr.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **The Martyrdom of Davit and Costantine**

According to *The Martyrdom*, the children of Vakhtang Gorgasali, Archil and Darchil were fortified in the Anacopia fortress. They suffered defeat in a battle against the enemy. The "elder brother"<sup>3</sup> Archil was wounded and subsequently passed away, while Darchil returned to the fortress. *Archil* and *Darchil* appear to be a copyist's mistake. Only one sanatorium text has preserved a relatively correct version of the brothers' names – Mihr and Archil; however, even here, there is a mistake – Darchil has turned into Archil.

<sup>2</sup> While discussing the sources of *The Martyrdom of Davit and Costantine*, we mean the narrative concerning Davit and Costantine themselves, and not the lengthy introduction where the hagiographer initially discusses Heraclius Caesar and then Apostle Muhammad. We have conducted a thorough analysis of the sources for this introductory story (See Sanadze & Arakhamia, 2013, pp. 8-14).

<sup>3</sup> In reality, Darchil was the elder brother, and Mihr - the younger one. However, the hagiographer made a mistake, likely because in the text he used as a source, Mihr was mentioned first, and Darchil - second.

The fact that this entire story pertains to the lives of Vakhtang Gorgasali's sons, Persians, and Zoroastrians rather than Arabs, Marwan the Deaf, and the sons of Erismtavari Stephanos is evident in multiple places within the text (see Sanadze & Arakhamia, 2013, pp. 14–30; Sanadze, 2020, pp. 26–42). In this regard, let us first examine the introductory section of the work, which also serves as the title:

“The Martyrdom and Merits of Saints and Great Martyrs Davit and Costantine, martyred in the North country - Argveti area - Georgian Kingdom after the decease of the Great and Exalted King Vakhtang Gorgasali, who took the reign over the country and its glory with him to the grave, by the Ungodly and Powerful King of Persia Marwan Abul-Qasim called Marwan the Deaf, Nephew of the False Prophet Muhammad” (D. & C., 2013, p. 40).

As we can see in the first sentence, everything is in the correct place, i.e., there is no contradiction or anachronism: Kartli and Egrisi were referred to as the northern country both in Armenian and Byzantine sources and, influenced by them, in the Georgian writings of the Early and High Middle Ages. The fact that in the kingdom of Kartli, there is the Argveti region poses no contradiction or raises questions. It is not surprising that the recounted story, according to the chronicler, took place shortly after the decease of the Great and Exalted King Vakhtang Gorgasali – the ruler who, as the chronicler figuratively expresses, “took the reign over the country and its glory with him to the grave.” However, the second sentence comes as a surprise as it presents several pieces of information, none of which is true. Indeed, Marwan the Deaf and Abul-Qasim were not the same historical figure; they were separated by centuries. Marwan the Deaf and Muhammad were not related as nephew (sister's son) and uncle (mother's brother); they were not even relatives. Moreover, they belonged to different lineages. It is evident that the second sentence was fabricated by someone who had little or no knowledge of Arab history. When this author attempted to use the Arab period as the historical backdrop for the writing, errors were made.

Therefore, there is nothing contradictory or unbelievable about the first clause of the title-introduction, whereas the second clause is entirely fabricated, which clearly distinguishes the original part of the sentence from the hagiographer's fabrication. The mention of Vakhtang's sons in the text confirms that the events recounted indeed occurred shortly after Vakhtang Gorgasali's death:

“The children of the Great King Vakhtang Gorgasali – [Mihir] and Darchil were in the fortress called Anacopia, as they were scared of the Persians” (D. & C., 2013, p. 65).

Of course, aside from its literal meaning, in ancient Georgian texts, the word “child” also signifies a descendant (as Leonti likely understood it). However, we must clar-

ify to critics on this matter that understanding the intended meaning of the word requires consideration of the context. When the title states that the martyrdom of Davit and Costantine occurred “after the decease of the Great and Exalted King Vakhtang Gorgasali, who took the reign over the country and its glory with him to the grave” and later mentions that “at that time the children of the Great King Vakhtang Gorgasali – Archil and Darchil – were in the fortress called Anacopia,” the term “child” should naturally refer specifically to the king’s immediate offspring, not his descendants. Furthermore, the name Darchil mentioned in the text solely belonged to Vakhtang Gorgasali’s elder son. Neither before Darchil nor after him did anyone else in the royal family bear this name. The hagiographer concludes the writing with the following phrases:

“The saint martyrs Davit and Costantine were martyred in six thousand two hundred forty-nine from the beginning of times, in seven hundred and thirty after the crucifixion of Christ, in the period of the reign of the iconoclast – Leon Isaurian – over the Greeks, in the period of the reign of Vakhtang Gorgasali’s sons over the Georgians and in the period of our faith in the Heavenly Kingdom of Jesus Christ” (D. & C., 2013, p. 75).

Leo the Isaurian, the Byzantine Caesar (717-741), is mentioned here due to the overlap of the final years of his reign with the rule of Marwan the Deaf In the Caucasus (735–738), the year 730 after the crucifixion of Christ was inserted in the text later<sup>4</sup>. The copyists who introduced this dating into the text failed to correlate it with the date based on *the beginning of times* – 6249 – which, according to the Byzantine era (5508), corresponds to 741. This date does not align with Marwan the Deaf’s presence in the Caucasus, which dates back to 735–738. The year 741 marks the death of Leo the Isaurian, who died on June 18th. It is hard to imagine anyone embarking on a campaign to Western Georgia during the early spring in those days. Thus, much like Marwan the Deaf, Leo the Isaurian was inserted into the text to provide a historical background for the narrative. The only reliable information in this case is the following: “In the period of the reign of Vakhtang Gorgasali’s children over the Georgians.” In this context, it is impossible to understand the word “child” as a descendant of Vakhtang Gorgasali, especially considering the aforementioned sections of the text.

Several other circumstances support the assertion that the chronicle upon which the hagiographic work is based indeed portrays the events of the Persian invasion and

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<sup>4</sup> Dating based on *Christ’s Crucifixion* varies significantly across different manuscripts (synaxarium editions) of the text of *The Martyrdom*, whereas the date presented based on *the beginning of times* is consistently reiterated across all manuscripts. This testifies to the primacy of the date based on *the beginning of times* and the later development of the dating based on *the crucifixion of Christ*.

the great Persian-Byzantine War (542–562).

1. The fact that the work describes the era close to the rule of Vakhtang Gorgasali is additionally confirmed by the presence of Abashes in the Persian army. Historians have long debated the identity of these Abashes, who were allegedly part of Marwan the Deaf's army in the 730s. Some speculated they might be Abyssinians. The fact of the matter is that the Abashes appear right in *The Life of Vakhtang Gorgasali*. Vakhtang fights against these very Abashes when he journeys to India together with the Persian Shah. According to Juansher's account, after defeating the Abashes, the Persian Shah divided them: he left a part of them in the same place and relocated the other part from Persia's eastern borders to the west, within Persia itself. Thus, these very Abashes were present in the Persian army during the so-called Marwan the Deaf's invasion.
2. Mention of magi and magicians: The text also signifies its connection to the pre-Islamic era. The so-called Marwan the Deaf called:

“The magi and magicians of Persia sent them to the saint martyrs to convert them to their faith by cajoling” (D. & C., 2013, p. 59).

We come across “magus activities” from the conqueror's side in another passage: the oppressor Marwan the Deaf “was cajoling and converting them” – Davit and Costantine (D. & C., 2013, p. 55). Obviously, the summoning of magi and magicians by Arabs professing Islam is inconceivable. It is well-established that *magus*, *magus activities*, and *magic* are characteristic attributes of the Zoroastrian religion and not of Islam, which vehemently opposed such practices. Only followers of Zoroastrianism, not Islam, would have addressed a magus and a magician to convert Christians to another faith. This is another argument supporting the assumption that the source of *The Martyrdom of Davit and Costantine* was created in the pre-Islamic, Zoroastrian epoch (Sanadze & Arakhamia, 2013, pp. 14–26).

3. Professional terminology in the text also indicates Persians, not Arabs. In various places, we encounter “spasalar” and “spaspet,” yet the term “emir” is never used. For example, the so-called Marwan the Deaf says to Davit: “You will be the spasalar and commander of my entire army” (D. & C., 2013, p. 55).

Another example:

“I have heard from you from my spaspets – that you are a wise man” (D. & C., 2013, p. 55).

The question arises: Why did the author name the conqueror who invaded Georgia and executed Davit and Costantine as *Marwan the Deaf* in his hagiographic work

if he was not truly an Arab commander and later the last representative of the Umayyad dynasty on the Caliphate throne, Marwan ibn Muhammad?

There is only one explanation: in the ancient chronicle, which recounted this invasion and the punishment of the princes of Argveti, Davit and Costantine by the enemy, and which was used as a basis for the work created by the hagiographer at the end of the 1050s, the name of the commander of the invading enemy was not recorded. Instead, he was referred to by the following titles: 1) *the King of Persians*, 2) *the Great Ghaghadisi of Persians*, and 3) *the Mighty*.

It was evident that he was fighting Christians, i.e., he was *filthy, faithless, and despising Christians*. For an author of the mid-11th century, such characteristics could have been attributed only to Muslim Arabs. Therefore, convinced (or aiming to convince the reader) that he was dealing with an Arab invasion, he added the term *Arab* to *Persian*, as mentioned in the old chronicle, to make the latter sound more convincingly Arabic. Referring to *the King of Persians*, and at the same time to the *Great Ghaghadisi of Persians* as *Marwan the Deaf* and *Abul-Qasim* can be explained by the historical memory of Georgian society, both written and oral, where the campaigns of Arab commanders left an indelible mark due to their cruelty. Therefore, the author of *The Martyrdom* “restored” *Abul-Qasim* and *Marwan the Deaf* as names of *the Mighty* mentioned in the chronicle, also considering them as names for the nameless, as he believed, Persian king – *the Great Ghaghadisi of Persians* (Sanadze, 2020, pp. 40–41). Moreover, he did not even doubt that these names referred to different historical figures (Sanadze, 2020, pp. 40–41). The ancient chronicle used by the hagiographer as a source referred to a Persian king, whom the chronicler called Marwan the Deaf – Abul-Qasim. At the same time, throughout the text, the hagiographer encountered the epithets of this Persian king, *the Mighty* and *the Great Ghaghadisi of Persians*, numerous times.

“The torturers took the order of the mighty” (D. & C., 2013, p. 54);

“Then the mighty told them in anger” (D. & C., 2013, p. 55); see also pp. 56, 58, 63, 66, 70, and many others. “Don’t you know that the Great Ghaghadisi of Persians... desires freedom and luxury for them?” (D. & C., 2013, p. 61);

“the Great Ghaghadisi of the whole land of Persians” (D. & C., 2013, p. 60).

Marwan the Deaf, whom the hagiographer believes to be the same as Abul-Qasim, is a character invented by the hagiographer; as for *the Mighty* and *the Great Ghaghadisi of Persians*, these are the terms taken by the hagiographer directly from the chronicle. This is how the king of Persia was referred to in the text. The great and powerful Shah of Sassanian Persia, Khosrow I (531–579), had two epithets: 1)

*Anushirvan*, which means invincible (*possessing an immortal soul*) in Persian. This epithet was translated by the author of the old chronicle, on which the hagiographer based his work, as *the Mighty* into Georgian; 2) As for the second epithet, *Dadgar*, in Persian, it means *the establisher and the herald of faith and justice*, which the creator of the old chronicle translated into Georgian as *the Great Ghaghadisi of Persians*. Thus, there is no doubt that in the old chronicle used as a source for *The Martyrdom of Davit and Costantine, the Mighty and the Great Ghaghadisi of Persians* is Khosrow Anushirvan, the same Khosrow Dadgar, whom the hagiographer willingly or unwillingly turned into Marwan the Deaf (Marwan Abul-Qasim) in the hagiographic work that he created.

### **A section of *The Georgian Chronicles* depicting the lives of Mihr and Archil**

Upon analyzing a section preserved in *The Georgian Chronicles* portraying the lives of Mihr and Archil, it becomes evident that the narrative, placed by Leonti after the information given about Stephanos II, as a recount about the lives of his sons, and unfolded against the background of Marwan the Deaf's invasion, is actually about Vakhtang Gorgasali's sons, Darchil and Mihr (Mihrdat), and their battle against the Persians.

It is worth noting that Leonti introduces Stephanos's sons as Mihr (the elder) and Archil.<sup>5</sup> (the younger). As for Vakhtang Gorgasali's children, Darchil was the elder, while his half-brother Mihr (also known as Mihrdat) was the younger. Now let's see how the dying Mihr addresses his so-called younger brother, Archil, in *The Manuscript of Anna of The Georgian Chronicles*: "I will now pass away, my brother-lord, to join our ancestors" (G. C., 1942, p. 153).

From this excerpt alone, it is evident that we are dealing with the sons of Vakhtang Gorgasali: the younger brother Mihr and the elder Darchil, whose name was distorted by copyists and presented as Archil. Otherwise, the elder brother would not have addressed the younger one as "brother-lord."

Such a form of address was overlooked by Leonti Mroveli, who mistakenly placed the narrative of the chronicle available to him in the section concerning Stephanos II, the son of Adarnase. Otherwise, he would have "corrected" it. This correction, or "cleansing," was performed in the lists of the Mtskhétian edition; the editor-rewriter who created the common protograph noticed this contradiction and removed it.

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<sup>5</sup> Actually, Stephanos did not have children named Mihr and Archil! Stephanos III (not Stephanos II), who lived during Marwan the Deaf's stay in Georgia, passed away in 738. Afterwards (in 739-760s), the father of Nerse II (Nerse of Abo of Tbilisi), Adarnase (with a high likelihood, the son of Stephanos III) was the Erismtavari (Patrician) of Kartli.



The conversation between Archil and his brother Mihr proved equally intriguing. In our view, despite the additions later made by Leonti, it is evident here that the conversation occurs between the sons of Vakhtang Gorgasali, not the sons of Stephanos II. We will indicate Leonti's insertions with darker fonts.

“Then [D]archil said to his brother Mihr: ‘... if they capture us, they will inquire about the hidden treasures buried in our land, which have been gained by our **kings, first Mihrian wise by God, then Vakhtang wise by God and all their offspring, who gave birth to us. And they will demand of us what King Heracles hid,** the whole list we put together with two crowns of emerald, ruby and coral, which **our father the great King Vakhtang** brought here from India and Sindia... Take these two crowns, the golden one and the one made of red coral: **one belonging to King Mihrian, and the other to Vakhtang,** which was given him by the Persian King, together with the gold and silver which he loaded onto five hundred pack animals and two thousand infantry. You and our father placed all this in Kutaisi and Tsikhe-goji” (G. C., 1955, p. 236).

In the text above, the mention of Mihrian is an insertion by Leonti. It is evident that originally, only Vakhtang appeared in the text, and Mihrian was added later. However, this addition was done so crudely that the traces of the alteration are clearly visible.

We encounter a number of other unusual and inappropriate terms and facts in Leonti's account describing the lives and activities of the figures belonging simultaneously to the 7th century (the sons of Adarnase's son Stephanos) and mid-8th century (Marwan the Deaf's era), specifically, *erismtavaris* Archil and Mihr. This can only be explained if we assume that, similar to the author of *The Martyrdom of Davit and Costantine*, Leonti's source depicted events from the middle of the 6th century and the Persian era, rather than the 7th or the 8th centuries and the Arab rule.

Indeed, Archil is consistently referred to as the *King* throughout Leonti's writing. However, none of the other rulers of Kartli (naturally, following the abolition of kingship), either before or after Archil, is mentioned as king by Leonti. He refers to them as *Curopolates* (Guaram), *Principals* (*Mtavaris* in Georgian), or *Erismtavaris*. “Then the Kings of Kartli Mihr and Archil were there,” states Leonti. It is evident that in Leonti's source, Darchil transformed into Archil, was recognized as the king of Kartli. Furthermore, even the Byzantine Caesar, when speaking of his and his lineage's merits before Byzantium, acknowledges him as a king: “Yours was the kingship, glory, and wisdom of Kartli, even though you are being persecuted here for the worship of the Cross” ... (G. C., 1955, p. 239).

Historians have struggled in vain to explain the reference to Archil as a king. How-

ever, clarity emerges when we recognize that the figure in question is Vakhtang's son, Darchil, rather than Stephanos's non-existent son, Archil.

Now, let's quote another passage from the relevant narrative of *The Georgian Chronicles*. In his recount of the invasion of the so-called Marwan the Deaf and the resulting situation in Kartli, Leonti Mroveli, influenced by the chronicle he used as a source, notes:

“There was... a small amount of *tadzreuli* of theirs; as for *pitiakhshes* and family members - only a thousand of them. As to the Apkhaz fighters, there were two thousand of them” (*G. C.*, 1955, p. 237).

Another example: “And all the principals and *pitiakhshes*, the lineage of the *eristavis* and the nobles entered the Caucasus and took refuge in the woods and ravines” (*G. C.*, 1955, p. 234).

As we can see, Leonti clearly attempts to explain to his contemporary reader who the *pitiakhshes* mentioned in the text are. According to Leonti, they are the ancestors of the *eristavis* and noblemen of his time, suggesting that, in his view, the *eristavis* and noblemen of his time trace their lineage back to *the pitiakhshes mentioned in the chronicle he used as a source*. However, how could there have been *pitiakhshes* in Georgia during the mid-8th century – a period of Arab rule? Of course, this is impossible. We find an inscription from approximately the same period (second half of the 8th century) in Sioni of Samshvilde, where its *ktitors* refer to themselves as “offspring of the *pitiakhshes*,” indicating their descent from ancient *pitiakhshes*. They do not claim to be *pitiakhshes* themselves! The era of *pitiakhshes*, along with Persia, had consigned to history. It is clear that Leonti encountered the term *pitiakhshes* in the text he used as a source and was attempting to clarify its meaning to his readers.

We are dealing with the period immediately following the reign of Vakhtang Gorgasali in the part of the text which narrates how Archil, the so-called son of Stephanos, marries off his brother Mihr's daughters to the principals of Kartli. We tentatively label this part as *The List of the Sons-in-Law of Mihr*. In fact, this part of *The Georgian Chronicles* represents a primitive attempt to explain the disintegration of the Kingdom of Kartli into principalities.

It is recounted here that after the death of his brother Mihr, [D]archil married off his daughters and gave them various territories of the Kingdom of Kartli as dowries.

“[D]archil summoned the *eristavis* of Kartli and married off his nieces to them:

He gave one niece to the nephew of his/her father – to the son of Guaram Curopalates, who ruled Klarjeti and Javakheti;

The second one [was given] to **a pitiakhsh** from Peroz's family who ruled in Trialeti, Tashir and A[sh]ots;

The third one [was given] to Nerse Nersian, who was one of the distinguished officials of King Vakhtang;

The fourth one [was given] to Adarnase Adarnasian.

And divided the Upper Country, that is, Kartli, between the two of them;

The fifth one [was given] to Varazman, and he gave him the area from Kotman to Kurdis-Khevi; Varazman was from the family of the Persian ruler of Barda, who was the father of Vakhtang's mother;

The sixth [was given] to Juansher Juansheriani, who was the descendant of King Mihrian, from the offspring of his son Rev; and he was given Jvari and Kherki and entire Mtiuleti, the Manglisi Khevi and Tpilisi... And as the above-mentioned noblemen saw that Juansher was given the most substantial part, they were somewhat dispirited. So, he (Darchil) sent these principals together with their spouses to their dwelling places" (G. C., 1955, pp. 241–242).

We can see that, once again, we are dealing with the epoch of pitiakhshes, Guaram Curopalates, and the noblemen of King Vakhtang, and not with the epoch of their children in the figurative sense, i.e., descendants. Vakhtang Gorgasali is mentioned again, as it is noted that Varazman – the husband of the so-called fifth daughter of Mihr – was the relative of Vakhtang's uncle (his mother's brother), the ruler of Bardav, the eristavi of Persians (meaning Varaz-Bakur – Sagdukht's brother). Nerse Nersian is directly mentioned as "a nobleman of King Vakhtang." Juansher's emotions are obvious here – he believes that the other principals were jealous of him (Juansher), as he received more during this division: the fortress-city of Tbilisi, which had become the central city of Kartli by this time, and hence, the possession of which meant superiority over the others. It is another matter that he was appointed as the ruler of Tbilisi by Persia and not the king of Kartli, who, at that time (589), was either Darchil's son Bakur or, more likely, Darchil's grandson Pharsman, the son of Bakur<sup>6</sup>. It is obvious that, in this instance as well, we are dealing with the period shortly after the death of Vakhtang Gorgasali (531) – specifically, with the situation of the 580s (the era of Vakhtang's grandchildren and great-grandchildren), when, after Gurgen, Persia appointed Juansher as the ruler of Kartli (589/90). As

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<sup>6</sup> Bakur the son of Darchil, Pharsman the son of Bakur, Pharsman the Other and Bakur the son of Pharsman "reigned" in Kakheti alongside the patricians of Kartli - Guaram, Stephanos the son of Guaram, Adarnase the son of Stephanos and Stephanos the son of Adarnase (Sanadze, 2016, pp. 373-430; 2019, pp. 403-409). Their reign was not recognized by Persia, but within the country, they were regarded as "kings" due to their representation of the old royal lineage and were held in high esteem.

for Guaram's son Stephanos, like his father, he is still in Mtskheta and has not yet moved to Tbilisi – this will occur later, in 591.

We are dealing with a similar situation in the following excerpts: “After that, Archil came to Kakheti and granted Kakheti to all his nobles, awarded them the rank of *Aznauri*, and built a church in Sadzmori. He married the daughter of Guaram ‘Curopalates,’ being a descendant of one of Vakhtang’s children from his Greek wife” (G. C., 1955, p. 243).

We can read the following about the activities of the same purported Archil, the son of Stephanos, in Kakheti: “He settled in Tsuketi (one of the highland regions in the easternmost part of the Kartli Kingdom) and built a castle in Kasri, and in the Lakuasti ravine, he erected a fortress. He found there the rulers to whom Tsuketi was granted by King Vakhtang” (G. C., 1955, p. 243).

Here, too, it is evident that we are dealing with a period when the principals to whom “Tsuketi was granted by King Vakhtang” were still alive. This seems quite plausible, considering the fact that this part refers to Darchil, the son of Vakhtang, and not Archil, the son of Stephanos. At the same time, it would be absurd to imagine that we are dealing with an era 200 years removed from the reign of Vakhtang.

Finally, we will cite excerpts that leave no doubt that the chronicle used by Leonti Mroveli narrated the life of Darchil, the son of Vakhtang, and not Archil, the son of Stephanos. To begin with, what does the passage taken directly out of *The Life of Darchil* tell us?

“Dachi (nickname of Darchil) proposed Christ be recognized by the mountain-dwellers of Kakheti. But they showed no desire to do this, and all the Nukhpatians moved away from him” (G. C., 1955, p. 205).

For clarity, we will now provide an excerpt from the life of the purported Archil, the son of Stephanos. Upon closer examination, it becomes evident that the segment given below is a continuation of the one above, with the underlined part being an insertion made by Leonti to inform the reader:

“Archil... built a fortified town, Nukhpati, between two rivers. The Nukhpatians were heathens and of a predatory nature, but the Deaf (meaning Marwan the Deaf) killed plenty of them.<sup>7</sup> and [D]archil baptized them by force” (G. C., 1955, p. 244).

Finally, here's a quote from the original work by Leonti Mroveli, *The Martyrdom of Archil*, which is based on the chronicle he used as a source. In this work, Leonti's selection of the segments of the chronicle that he leaves intact, along with the

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<sup>7</sup> This insertion made by Leonti relates to interpreting the narrated story as having occurred during the era of Arab rule and Marwan the Deaf.

expansion and unfolding of the story of the martyrdom of Archil (actually, Darchil) against the background of these intact segments, clarifies that the chronicle narrated the life of Darchil, the son of Vakhtang, and not Archil, the non-existent son of Stephanos:

“And Saint [D]archil made an intention in his mind, with the strength of his heart, to come and see, and to ask him for peace in the country and the inviolable protection of the churches, and to not punish him for betraying faith” (G. C., 1955, p. 245).

In this case as well, while copying the text of the old chronicle without alteration, Leonti overlooked the following circumstance: as clarified in the excerpt above, the so-called Archil decided to appear before the commander who had entered Kakheti and ask him “to not punish him for betraying faith,” which could be interpreted as a plea to avoid punishment for renouncing one’s faith. It is interesting to consider which faith Archil would have had to betray, given that he had never been a Muslim. It becomes apparent that the old text, used by Leonti as a source for his hagiographic writing, recounted the martyrdom of Darchil, the son of Vakhtang Gorgasali, and not Archil, the son whom Stephanos never had. It was Darchil and his Khosrowid (Sassanian) ancestors who had changed their faith: originally Mazdean, they abandoned their ancestral religion and embraced Christianity. This is the instance of faith conversion, for which Darchil (whose name had mistakenly been turned by copyists into Archil) asked forgiveness from the Persian commander. Moreover, the plea was addressed to the Persian commander, not to the Muslim Asim Chichnaum, whom Leonti, much like Marwan the Deaf, inappropriately inserted into this narrative.<sup>0</sup>

Finally, we would like to add the latest information: in the spring-summer of 2024, under the VI floor of the Notkora temple near Telavi, archaeologists from the University of Georgia and Telavi University excavated the grave of a decapitated man. His body and head parts were sent to America for the C<sub>14</sub> research, which confirmed the date of death previously guessed by us as 558-564. We received a response from the US laboratory on 11.11.2024.

### **The Story of Juansher and his Sister Shushana**

Now let us consider another chronicle, the narrative of which also unfolds against the backdrop of Arab rule in *The Georgian Chronicles* and is positioned at the turn of the 8th–9th centuries, just before the reign of Ashot Curopalates, bridging a historical gap before the ascension of the Bagrationi dynasty (represented by Ashot Curopalates) to the throne of Kartli. As previously shown, Stephanos’s sons named Archil and Mihr did not actually exist. Therefore, Archil could not have had a son named Juansher and Ioane, simply because Archil himself was, in reality, Darchil,

who had been renamed Archil by scribes, and Darchil had a son named Bakur. Indeed, Juansher is a name typical among the Revian branch of Mihrian's descendants, not among the Bakurians. Simply mentioning Juansher Juansheriani suffices as an example. According to the testament preserved in *The Georgian Chronicles*, Juansher Juansheriani belonged to the Revian branch. Hence, Juansher could not have been the son of Archil Bakuriani, especially considering that Darchil, who later became Archil, lived not in the 8th century but in the first half of the 6th century.

Firstly, let's see what *The Georgian Chronicles* recounts about the activities of Heraclius Caesar in Kartli and the officials he appointed there:

Heraclius Caesar "brought the Western Turks" (*G. C.*, 1955, p. 223).

Heraclius "summoned the son of Bakur... the King of Georgians... who was the *eristavi* of Kakheti and was called Adarnase and granted him Tpilisi and rule over Kartli and left an *eristavi* with him, called Jibgha, and ordered him to fight for the Kala fortress... and in a few days they took Kala and captured the chief of the fortress. This *Eristavi*... removed the skin from his body and sent it to the Caesar in Gardabani" (*G. C.*, 1955, p. 225).

When discussing "the Western Turks," we must remember that during that period, the Turkic Khaganate was divided into two parts: the Eastern Turkic Khaganate and the Western Turkic Khaganate, with the Khazars forming the westernmost part of the Western Turkic Khaganate. The chronicler recounts the bringing of the Turks from this very Western Turkic Khaganate. The same people are referred to as Khazars in other sources, such as Movses Kaghankatvatsi. Regarding Jibgha, as demonstrated early on by V. Goiladze, the correct form of this name is Yabghu. Furthermore, Yabghu is not a proper name but a term denoting *deputy khagan*, the second person after the khagan (Goiladze, 1977, pp. 90–102).

Regarding the narrative on Juansher and his sister Shushana in *The Georgian Chronicles*, it's essential to note that once again, Arab rule is used as the historical backdrop of the story. Therefore, we are replacing the relevant terms used in the narrative to give it the flavor of Arab rule (there are only two instances), with the term *Persian*, while also indicating the original terms. After this adjustment, the text reads as follows:

"After this, when he - the holy martyr [D]archil<sup>8</sup> passed away, he left two sons: Iovane and Juansher. Iovane went to Egrisi, taking his mother and two sisters with him, while Juansher and his two sisters stayed in the country of Kartli and Kakheti. His younger sister was beautiful in face. Rumors of her beauty reached the king

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<sup>8</sup> Archil in *The Georgian Chronicles*.



of the Khazars – the khagan. He sent an envoy to ask for the hand of Shushan, promising aid against the [Persians]<sup>9</sup>. When the khagan’s envoy arrived, Juansher informed his brother and mother. But they expressed reluctance and said to him: ‘If our situation becomes unbearable, we had better retreat into Greece and appeal to Christians rather than have our daughter defiled by heathens.’ And Shushan too spurned the King of the Khazars” (G. C., 1955, p. 249).

In this case, the chronicler considers Iovane and Juansher to be the sons of Archil, in the same way as he identifies Darchil, transformed into Archil, and his brother Mihr as the sons of Stephanos. We cannot conclusively determine Iovane’s identity; further research is needed. As for Juansher, as we will see below, he is indeed a figure from the first half of the 7th century, and we cannot exclude the possibility that he was the grandson of Juansher Juansheriani (the ruler of Tbilisi and Kartli on the right bank of the Mtkvari River around 589–590). The text continues with the following: “Three years later, the khagan sent his *spasalar* Bluchan. Passing the road of Leketi, he entered Kakheti, arrived at the fortress in which Juansher and his sister Shushan resided. And after a few days, he seized the fortress, captured them, annihilated the city of Tpilisi, devastating Kartli and the entire country” (ibid., p. 249).

As we can see, here we are dealing with the Khazar invasion, during which they “annihilated the city of Tpilisi,” which occurred in the year 628. Regarding the Khazar commander being referred to as *Bulchan*<sup>10</sup>, this does not contradict the previously provided information but rather supplements it. In the first instance, the commander’s name is missing, and he is referred to only by the title “Jibgha” (Yabghu). As this case, however, the source provides the commander’s name. Concerning *Bulchan*’s title, the chronicle calls him “*Spasalar*,” which is an attempt to translate the Khazar title “Jibgha” (Yabghu) into Georgian. The chronicler continues:

As Bluchan “was marching through the Dariali Gorge, one day Shushan said to her brother: ‘I’d rather die to be granted by the Lord a place among the holy women rather than be defiled by the heathens.’ And she had a ring. She plucked the gem out of the ring, sucked the deadly poison that was under the gem, and died instantly. Bluchan arrived at the khagan’s residence, bringing Juansher with him and telling the story of the death of his sister, whom the khagan had longed to see. Bluchan was

<sup>9</sup> Persians] The Saracens in the lists of *The Georgian Chronicles*. It is conceivable that in the chronicle *Sparsta/Sparzta* (“of Persians”, in Georgian) was acronymized as “*S-rzta*”, and a later chronicler interpreted it as *Sarkinozta* (the Saracens). The interchangeable use of ‘s’ and ‘z’ is common in the lists of *The Georgian Chronicles*, as evidenced by cases like *Episkoposi//Episkopozi*, *Stephanos//Stephanoz*, etc.  
<sup>10</sup> In the lists of the Mtskhertian edition of *The Georgian Chronicles*, we find *Bulchan*, whereas in the lists of Ann’s edition, we have *Bluchan*. The latter spelling is favored by both the 1955 and 2008 editions. In general, variability in letter placement is common in the manuscripts of *The Georgian Chronicles*.

captured, a rope was thrown around his neck, and two riders were ordered to pull him in opposite directions and beheaded him mercilessly. After keeping Juansher for seven years, the khagan released him and sent him back home with many gifts” (G. C., 1955, p. 250).

These seven years are not accidental at all. Tbilisi was captured by the Khazars in 628. In the same year, Juansher was taken hostage. Adding seven years to 628 brings us to the years 635/636, which is already the period of Caliph Omar’s campaigns in Persia and Byzantium. During this period, Arabs achieved successive victories over the Byzantines, conquering Syria, Palestine, and Mesopotamia. We believe these significant political and geopolitical changes prompted the Khazar khagan to permit Juansher to return to his homeland.

Afterward, the chronicler inserts a special passage in the text where he merges the Khazars’ capture of Tbilisi (628) with the Arabs’ capture of Tbilisi already in the second half of the 8th century and their subsequent settlement in Kartli, presenting them as a cohesive narrative. In the same place, he offers his interpretation regarding the reasons behind the decline of the Khosrowid dynasty (the Sassanians of Kartli), which serves as a kind of introduction to the narrative of the reign of the Bagratuniani (Bagrationi) dynasty, beginning with Ashot Curopalates, in Kartli:

“Henceforth, the sway of the great Khosrowid kings began to decline. First, the power of the Saracens grew, and the whole of this country was, from that time, periodically subject to incursions and depredation. Then, there arose many principals in the land of Kartli, resulting in mutual enmity and strife. And if anybody worthy of being king emerged from among Vakhtang’s children, he would be diminished by the Saracens. As the city of Tbilisi was captured by the Agarenes and turned into their place of residence. They received tribute called *kharaj*. Thus, by Divine providence, because of the multiplicity of our sins, the nation of the Agarenes became glorious” (ibid.).

If we remove the chronicler’s reasoning that divided the text into two sections – one ending with the words: “the khagan released him and sent him back home” and the other, provided below, starting with the words “This Juansher married” – we will see that they are inherently connected to each other. This would have been the case before the chronicler separated the text by inserting his reasoning.

“This Juansher married Adarnase’s daughter, Latavri by name, a descendant of the Bagrationi. Juansher’s mother rebuked him for marrying Latavri, for she was not well aware that the Bagrationi were the descendants of David the Prophet, who was called the Father of God in the flesh. But when she saw her son’s wife, she liked and blessed her” (G. C., 1955, p. 251).

Firstly, let’s address the issue of Latavri. She is likely the granddaughter through the

maternal line of another Latavri, who was the daughter of Stephanos, information about whom can be found in the inscription on the Sinai manuscript of *The Conversion of Kartli* (N/Sin-50):

“When the blessed and majestic Mampali Adarnase, the son of Stephanos, the brother’s son of Demetre and the grandson of great Guaram, died after twenty years on December 2, his blessed spouse Guaramavri died. And the blessed queen Latavri, the daughter of Stephanos, the sister of Adarnase, the **mother of the Bagratuniani and of Curopalates** died on January 20, and was buried in Jvari, St. Mary Church, with her son and her daughter’s son” (Aleksidze, 2011, p. 121).

The mentioned inscription provides information that at the turn of the 6th and 7th centuries, i.e., nearly a century after the establishment of the Bivritiani prince in Kartli during the reign of Vakhtang Gorgasali, a new branch of Baghadads/Bagratunis established itself in Kartli. A representative of this branch marries Latavri, the daughter of Stephanos, thereby laying the foundation for the new Bagratuniani dynasty. This family later becomes the Curopalates of Kartli.

Z. Aleksidze compared the information of the above-mentioned inscription of N/Sin-50 with the following information about the Bagrationi preserved in *The Georgian Chronicles*:

“Then there came to him (meaning Darchil, who had turned into Archil) one principal, who was the descendant of Prophet David, by name Adarnase. He was the son of the son of Adarnase, the Blind (whose father [being Bagratoniani] became the father-in-law of Bagratonians as well, and he was appointed by Greeks as ruler in some areas of Armenia. At the time of the seizure by **the Deaf**, he went to the sons of Guaram Curopalates in Klarjeti and stayed there with them). He asked Archil: ‘If you desire to make me your subject, give me the land.’ And Archil gave him Shulaveri and Artani” (G. C., 1955, p. 243).

After the comparison, Z. Aleksidze concluded that they must be recounting the same story, namely that one branch of the Bagrationi – the family of Guaram and his son Stephanos – became relatives with another branch of the Bagrationi dynasty through the marriage of its representative, a certain Adarnase, to their family member (Z. Aleksidze, 2011, p. 126). As for “the Deaf,” marked in black, this term is an insertion by a chronicler who expanded *The Georgian Chronicles*. It is the result of the chronicler’s misinterpretation of historical information, attributing it to events occurring during the Arab rule.

Here, we will clarify that the inscription of the Sinai manuscript (N/Sin-50) was either composed or edited at a time when Ashot had not only been granted the title of Curopalates but had also already passed away. This is the period when the author of

the inscription could have said that Latavari is “the mother of the Bagratuniani and of Curopalates,” indicating that “the Bagratuniani and Curopalates [of Kartli] originate from Latavari.” This statement could not have been written before Ashot was granted the title of Curopalates because he is recognized as the first Curopalates in Georgian history. Furthermore, Ashot is also the first Bagratuni among the rulers of Kartli to be referred to by this name.

Finally, we have reached the last section of the chronicle concerning Juansher and his sister Shushana, which clarifies the period during which the narrated stories occurred:

“And as many years passed by, there arrived... the one who ruled Armenia, Kartli and Hereti, named Khuasrow. He rebuilt Tpilisi annihilated by Khazars” (*G. C.*, 1955, p. 251).

In the text, instead of an ellipsis, we find “emir of the Agarenes,” which is an insertion made by the chronicler. As for the chronicle, it informed us that after the end of the Khazar “annihilation” around the mid-630s (when Juansher returned from his seven-year captivity), it was not the “emir of the Agarenes” who arrived, but Khosrow, i.e., a Sassanian ruler “who ruled Armenia, Kartli and Hereti.” Khosrow undertook the reconstruction of Tbilisi, which had been destroyed by the Khazars. Naturally, all these events occurred before the Arabs appeared in Kartli (early 650s).

Considering the above, we must conclude that after returning all three chronicles discussed here to their correct historical time, light is shed on several crucial issues in the history of Georgia.

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## The Late-Hellenistic Burial from Samshvilde (Georgia, South Caucasus)

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*DOI: [HTTPS://DOI.ORG/10.62343/CJSS.2024.243](https://doi.org/10.62343/CJSS.2024.243)*

### ABSTRACT

This paper presents the results of a study of the Late Hellenistic burial (1st century BCE) discovered in Samshvilde (Georgia, South Caucasus) in 2023. Although Georgian traditional historiography associates the formation of Samshvilde as a political-economic center with the Hellenistic era, no archaeological evidence of this period has been identified here yet. In this regard, the discovery of the aforementioned burial is significant, as it may provide more answers to the studies of the past of the Samshvilde archaeological complex. It should be noted that the burial was damaged due to construction activities in the Middle Ages; however, despite this, the pottery, metal objects, beads, and the silver coin discovered there allow for at least an approximate dating of the burial. The scientific importance of this discovery is also enhanced by the fact that it represents a well-stratified archaeological context, which can be used to determine other archaeological contexts located in the same section of the settlement and to understand the stratigraphic sequence in general.

*Keywords:* Samshvilde, South caucasus, Hellenistic grave, Phraates IV, Parthian coin



## **INTRODUCTION**

Samshvilde archaeological complex is one of the significant sites in Kvemo Kartli, where cultural layers cover a broad chronological range (Chilashvili, 1970; Bakhtadze, 2007; Sanadze, 2019; Berikashvili & Pataridze, 2019; Narimanishvili, 2019–2021, 2023) (see Fig. 1). From a stratigraphic point of view, the earliest materials here belong to the final stage of the Stone Age (Grigolia & Berikashvili, 2018, p. 87), followed by archaeological contexts of the Kura-Araxes culture of the Early Bronze Age (Bakhtadze, 2007, p. 27; Narimanishvili, 2019, 2023), the Middle Bronze Age (Bakhtadze, 2007, p. 26; Berikashvili, Grigolia, Kvavadze, Müller-Bieniek, & Coupal, 2017, p. 9; Gabelaia, 2019, p. 55), and the Late Bronze Age (Bakhtadze, 2007, p. 25; Berikashvili & Coupal, 2019, p. 120; Narimanishvili, 2021, pp. 8–9). Strong fortification structures, household premises, hydrological structures of the medieval period, churches, and residential complexes built in various periods are located above these prehistoric layers.

Naturally, such intensive activities during the Middle Ages significantly damaged the early layers of the site and made their discovery particularly difficult. Despite this, recent archaeological surveys have provided significant information about the periodization and chronology of Samshvilde's former settlement. At the same time, the discovery of archaeological and numismatic (Berikashvili & Pataridze, 2019; Berikashvili, 2020, p. 120) materials, both local and imported (Berikashvili, 2016, p. 110), is significant for the correct determination of the site's character and its understanding in a broader historical context.

Although archaeological surveys have been conducted at the Samshvilde archaeological site for more than ten years, many questions about the site's prehistoric and historic periods remain unanswered. However, it is now possible to define significant components of the site, such as stratigraphy and periodization.

Before delving into the central issue of this paper, which is the review of the Late Hellenistic burial discovered in the vicinity of the main citadel, we will first present the stratigraphic and chronological sections of the site that are currently available to us.

## **METHODS**

The Molas methodology (Museum of London Archaeology) was used while working on the site. All the methods are appropriate for the excavation of archaeological contexts, burials, and graves. These include stratigraphy and single-context

planning methods, grave context recording methods, environmental archaeological sampling methods, and archaeological context photography and drawing methods (Museum of London Archaeology, 1994).

## **RESULTS**

### **Burial 1. Trench 45. Samshvilde Citadel.**

Burial no. 1 was discovered in trench no. 45, located to the east of Samshvilde citadel in 2023 (see fig 2). It was located at a depth of 60 cm from the ground surface and was partially damaged as a result of construction activities carried out in the Middle Ages (Berikashvili & Kvavadze, 2023, Part II, p. 9). The damage was evident on the southern part of the burial, which was cut by the foundation of the medieval wall and resulted in the loss of the tibiae and feet of the person buried there. As for the remaining section of the burial, the items located here were found almost undamaged in situ.

Detailing the burial's structural and stratigraphic aspects provides a comprehensive understanding of the burial site.

From a structural point of view, the burial was a 35–45 cm deep, oval trench cut into the brownish clay soil layer spread on the cliffy bedrock. From a stratigraphic point of view, no earlier contexts were discovered under the burial trench. The top was partially covered by a medieval wall and the cultural layer of the same period.

As a result of excavations, it was found that the deceased person was buried with the head to the north, lying on the right side, in a bent position. The individual was male, and his age was estimated to be between 35 and 45 years based on the rib ends and the auricular surface (Berikashvili & Kvavadze, 2023, p. 138)<sup>1</sup>. The cranium of the deceased person was fragmented, and the mandible was slightly damaged. The teeth of the right row of the maxilla – I2, C1, M1, and the tooth of the left row – M1 – were strongly worn out. Dental caries were also observed on the right teeth of the mandible - M2, M3 (according to N. Tavartkiladze). A bracelet and beads were discovered on the arm and neck of the person buried in the burial when the cranium and post-cranial remains were removed. Two pieces of small clayware were also discovered and are reviewed below (see fig. 3).

Exciting results were provided by the examination of soil samples obtained from the burial, specifically from the areas adjacent to the cranium and abdomen of the

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<sup>1</sup> Bioarchaeological materials discovered in the burial were studied and their age and gender were identified in advance by the anthropologist N. Tavartkiladze.

deceased person, as well as from the “khelada” (jug) and the “kochobi” (small pot) discovered in the burial. The discovery of ash particles near the cranium of the deceased was particularly noteworthy, which provides a basis for assuming the use of certain medications (Berikashvili & Kvavadze, 2023, p. 113). Medications made from ash obtained as a result of burning various organic remains, which had various pharmacological properties, including the treatment of skin diseases and wounds, are described in a scientific paper published in 2009 (Shaikh & Shaikh, 2009, pp. 77–78). According to Professor El. Kvavadze, it is not excluded that the person buried in burial no. 1 of Samshvilde trench no. 45 was trying to treat various diseases using such medications in the last period of his life.

In addition to bioarchaeological remains, archaeological items were discovered in the burial. These included a small “khelada” (jug), a small “kochobi,” two forehead rings, two iron bracelets, various colored beads, and a silver coin. This material proved decisive for determining the burial date, as its parallels are well documented in other burial complexes of the same region, and the silver coin defined the chronological period of the burial more precisely (see fig. 4).

“Khelada” (Jug) (see fig. 5), which was discovered in the vicinity of the deceased person’s head (height - 18 cm, bottom diameter - 9 cm, head diameter - 8 cm), was made of red clay, fired to a brownish color, and painted with red, scarlet paint. The neck of the “khelada” was surrounded by a low-relief rib. The handle with an oval cross-section was modeled below a rounded bandelet on the front side. It was evident from the beginning that this “khelada” resembled the materials of the Papigora and Shavsakdara burials studied in the same region, which date back to the second half of the 4th century BCE and the first half of the 3rd century BCE (Margishvili & Narimanishvili, 2004, p. 131, tab. XXVIII.5; tab. CLXVII.2). However, since it had a relief rib on the neck, it suggested being an item of a later period.

“Kochobi” (Small Pot) (see fig. 6) was discovered nearby, close to the head of the deceased person (height - 8.2 cm; bottom diameter - 6.5 cm; head diameter - 6 cm). It was also made of well-processed, reddish clay and was fired to a brownish color. The head of the “kochobi” was broad, the bandelet was rounded, the bottom was flat, the front side was rounded, and the surface was slightly polished. Similar to the “khelada,” such “kochobis” were discovered in Papigora (13 pieces) and Shavsakdara burials (14 pieces), where, considering other burial data, they date back to the Early Antique and Hellenistic periods (Margishvili & Narimanishvili, 2004, p. 131, tab. LIV.2; tab. LXV.6, 7, 9; tab. CXII.1; tab. CLXXII.3; tab. CLXXII.1, 3).

Two pieces of bronze forehead rings were discovered in the burial (diameter of

the first one – 1.8 cm; diameter of the second one – 1.6 cm) (see fig. 7). Both were found in the vicinity of the cranium. It appears that the deceased person wore them near the temples during the burial ceremony. Both rings have open ends. One of them, which is less covered by patina, has well-visible 1 mm diameter holes on flattened ends. Such types of rings are often found in burials of the Hellenistic period in East Georgia. They were gradually withdrawn from use during the Late Hellenistic epoch and are rarely seen in burial complexes of later periods.

Two iron bracelets (see fig. 8), strongly corroded and fragmented, were worn by the deceased person on the wrist of the right hand. Both bracelets were so damaged that they could only be removed from the burial in parts. Despite this, it was evident that both bracelets had open ends and flat sections, and formed circles resembling ellipses. Similar bracelets are known from East Georgian burials, particularly from the Early Antique and Hellenistic eras. The quantity of such items in the Papigora burial (Algeti Valley, Kvemo Kartli) reaches 23 pieces, including 16 bracelets made of bronze and seven bracelets made of iron (Margishvili & Narimanishvili, 2004, p. 24, tab. CXCIX; tab. CC).

Beads (see fig. 9) discovered in other burials of the Hellenistic period in East Georgia and the Samshvilde burial were made of various materials (canary stone, paste, glass, black amber, etc.). The beads were collected from the neck area of the deceased person, indicating that he wore them around the neck. In total, 24 pieces of round, flattened, biconical, barrel-like, and pipe-like beads were discovered in the burial, and their color range was very diverse. According to parallel materials, such beads date back to the Early Antique-Hellenistic period (Davlianidze, 1983, pp. 89–106, tab. LXXI.17–35, 37–39; tab. XI.32–35; tab. XIX.10–11; Margishvili & Narimanishvili, 2004, p. 28, tab. CXXI.2; tab. CXXVIII.4; tab. CCIII). The beads discovered in the Samshvilde burial are attributed to the same period.

However, the silver coin placed in the mouth of the deceased person appeared to be the most significant among the burial materials. It was discovered during the removal of earth from the bioarchaeological remains, specifically the maxilla, in the laboratory (see fig. 10). The well-preserved condition of the coin, as well as the image and inscription on the obverse and reverse, determined not only the origin and date of the coin but also the entire chronology of the burial complex.

It was established that the coin represented the silver drachma cut by the representative of the Arsacid dynasty of Parthia - Phraates IV, which was put into circulation from I century BC and was circulated for too long<sup>2</sup>. The king's profile is shown on

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<sup>2</sup> We express our gratitude to the numismatist Irakli Paghava for identification of the coin and pro-

the avers of the coin, with his face directed to the left, and his facial features, mustache, beard, and haircut depicted in detail and with deep relief (Rezakhani, 2013). Behind the head of the king, to the left, a bird's image is shown in relief, symbolizing the "royal bird," "royal power," or khvarenah (xwarra(h): Avestan: x<sup>ʋ</sup>arənah), which appears to be an indicator of the divine origin of the royal dynasty (Curtis, 2016, pp. 179–203).

As for the coin's reverse, the inscription and the image shown here are in relatively low relief and more worn out, making it difficult to read and decipher the images. However, parallel materials allow for the establishment of the content of the inscription. In particular, the royal title of Phraates IV is written here in Greek and is read as follows: "of the King of Kings Arsaces the Renowned/Manifest Benefactor Philhellene" (ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΝ ΑΡΣΑΚΟΥ ΕΥΕΡΓΕΤΟΥ ΕΠΙΦΑΝΟΥΣ ΦΙΛΕΛΛΗΝΟΣ) (Bigwood, 2004, pp. 35–70).

Phraates IV occupied the royal throne of the Arsacid dynasty of Parthia from 37 to 2 BCE (Bivar, 1983, pp. 21–99; Strugnell, 2006, pp. 239–252). He was succeeded by Phraates V in the 1st century BCE (Kia, 2016; Richardson, 2012). During the reign of Phraates V, the silver drachma minted by his predecessor remained in circulation. Therefore, it is complicated to precisely define the upper chronological limit of the coin's circulation. However, it is universally accepted that the emission of the aforementioned drachma must have started in the period close to the initial years of Phraates IV's reign (37 BCE). Therefore, the discovery of this coin in Samshvilde's burial dates the burial to the 1st century BCE, more precisely, to the second half of the 1st century BCE. This date is also supported by the artifacts discovered in the burial, which were reviewed above and are typical of burial sites of the same period in East Georgia.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Stratigraphy and Chronology of Samshvilde**

The stratigraphy and periodization of Samshvilde remained vague until recently. However, the new reality discovered as a result of archaeological excavations carried out in recent years provided us with significant data based on which the issues of chronology and stratigraphy of the site can be defined as follows<sup>3</sup>:

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viding a respective consultation.

3 When defining the stratigraphy-chronology model, we rely on the analysis, typology and analogy of archaeological materials, as well as identification of immovable cultural layers which were observed on various sections of the former settlement and the architectural monuments of various

The tools common to the early period of the Stone Age were discovered in Samshvilde in limited quantities and do not belong to the original, intact archaeological contexts. Despite this, the discovery of Mousterian pointers and rough flakes to the north of Samshvilde's former settlement, on the left embankment of the Chivchava River, suggests that early *Homo sapiens* resided in Samshvilde and its surroundings as early as the Mousterian period (Grigolia, 1963, pp. 121–122).

Clogged and so-called “beaky” sickle insertions made of flint, obsidian, argillite, and other stones discovered in trenches made on the eastern section of Samshvilde's former settlement resemble the materials of Kvemo Kartli's former settlements of the Early Agricultural Period (Grigolia & Berikashvili, 2018, p. 87; see fig. 12–14, tab. IV). These artifacts suggest that early agriculture spread in Samshvilde Cape during the 6th–5th millennia BCE and that the groups residing here were engaged in household and agricultural activities.

The Early Bronze Age layer and the residential structure of the Kura-Araxes culture, referred to as the “House,” were discovered on the eastern section of the former settlement in 2019–2020. Even though the middens of the high Middle Ages significantly damaged these contexts, it became possible to collect pottery fragments in sufficient quantities to date the Kura-Araxes contexts of Samshvilde's former settlement to the 18th–17th centuries BCE (Narimanishvili, 2023, p. 15; see tab. LXV).

Materials from the Middle Bronze Age are present in the eastern section of the former settlement in fragments. They are separated from the intact archaeological layers and represent the remains of ceramic products. Despite this, it is evident that materials of this period could not have appeared on the territory of Samshvilde Cape as a result of natural processes; their existence here must be associated with the activities of a group of individuals from this period. Based on analogous materials, fragments of ceramic products from the Middle Bronze Age discovered in Samshvilde's former settlement belong to the first half of the second millennium BCE (Gabelaia, 2019, p. 55).

Materials from the Late Bronze/Early Iron Age are represented by large amounts of ceramic fragments and middens. Intact archaeological layers containing these materials have been discovered in fragments so far, which can be explained by extensive construction and economic activities in the Middle Ages. Despite this, there are instances when immovable archaeological contexts of the same culture have been identified. For example, one of them is so called “cist burial,” discovered in Samshvilde citadel, which dates back to the 9th century BC and belongs to a male individual

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periods and designations preserved on the site territory.



(Berikashvili & Coupal, 2019, p. 120)<sup>4</sup>. It is supposed that the earliest cyclopean fortification wall of Samshvilde, whose remains have been preserved in fragments at the narrowest part of the cape, must have been built during the same period.

Archaeological contexts of the Antique Period are represented on Samshvilde Cape by single ceramic fragments and burial complexes. During fieldwork carried out as early as 1968–1969, academician L. Chilashvili mentioned that ceramic fragments from the Antique era were discovered in survey trenches made in the citadel (Chilashvili, 1970, p. 119). Similar ceramic materials were discovered later as well, as a result of archaeological excavations carried out in Samshvilde citadel and the adjacent territory from 2015 to 2023. It is certain that during this period, Samshvilde Cape represented a significant strategic unit throughout Kvemo Kartli and the South Caucasus. However, this epoch's most well-stratified and immovable archaeological complex was discovered during excavations carried out in 2023, when a 1st-century BCE burial was found to the east of the citadel in archaeological trench no. 45. The following part of this paper is dedicated to this burial; therefore, we will not focus on it here. It should also be noted that several fragments of painted ceramics from the Hellenistic period were discovered during excavation work carried out in the vicinity of Samshvilde Sioni.

The Early Middle Ages represented the stage in the history of Samshvilde when the city became a significant military, political, and economic center of the region. At the same time, this was the period when the expansion and influence of Sassanid Persia notably strengthened in the Caucasus, and the eastern part of Georgia was almost entirely under its influence (Sanadze, 2020, pp. 16, 22). The construction layer of Samshvilde citadel, built using the so-called isodomic masonry technique construction technique and clearly visible in the lower part of the citadel's western wall and also in the northwest abutment, belongs to this period. Based on archaeological and historical surveys, it can be stated that the rulers of Samshvilde had intensive and official connections with the high-level rulers of Persia during that period, which is confirmed by the discovery of a 5th–6th century bitumen bulla of Sassanid origin (Berikashvili, 2018, p. 128).

Samshvilde became the capital city of the Kingdom of Tashir-Dzoraget in the 970s when representatives of the Armenian Kiurikian dynasty managed to annex historic Kvemo Kartli and declared Samshvilde the capital city of the newly founded king-

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<sup>4</sup> In the article published in 2019, based on the analogues of the ceramic items discovered in the burial, the burial's period was identified in advance as the 2nd half of II millenium BC. However, in 2023, after dating the bioarchaeological remains discovered in the burial using a radiocarbon method (AMS Laboratory of Arizona University, USA), the date of the burial was defined as 9th century BC.

dom (Kutateladze, 2001, p. 83). However, their rule here lasted only until the 1060s, when Bagrat IV successfully seized Samshvilde in 1065 and again placed it under the rule of the Georgian Bagrationi dynasty (Kutateladze, 2001, p. 126). After their defeat in battles with the Seljuks and later with Bagrat IV, the Kiurikians moved the capital city of Tashir-Dzoraget from Samshvilde to Lore. However, they failed to maintain their power, and soon, in 1118, this kingdom ceased to exist (Japaridze, 1995, p. 55).

The High Middle Ages represent a period of significant revival in the history of Samshvilde and all of Georgia. After King David IV, the Builder, finally freed Samshvilde from the Seljuk Turks in 1110, extensive construction activities were carried out there. Samshvilde Hall Church must have been built during that period, specifically in 1119 (Gagoshidze, 2021, p. 63). Additionally, other significant buildings and structures in the city, whose artifacts, architectural details, and numismatic artifacts of that period were discovered in large quantities, date back to the 12th century.

The so-called “Royal Bath,” located in Samshvilde citadel, is a bath of Oriental style that belongs to the Late Middle Ages. Although archaeological excavations of this structure have not yet been carried out, the architectural elements suggest that it dates to the 16th–17th centuries. This is the period when East Georgia was under the influence of Qizilbash Iran and, later, the Ottomans. These processes would certainly have been reflected in the significant fortress city of Kvemo Kartli – Samshvilde. It is noteworthy that archaeological excavations carried out in the vicinity of Samshvilde Bath in recent years have already uncovered certain items analogous to Ottoman materials (Berikashvili et al., 2021, p. 5).

Furthermore, the period corresponding to the conflict between Erekle II and Abdulla Beg (Archil Bagrationi) in 1747–1748 is presented most clearly in the history of Samshvilde. The palace structure with a complicated layout discovered in the northern part of the citadel, where a large number of various items from the same period – including everyday utensils of fortress guards, household tools, combat weapons, missiles, and leftover bones from their daily food – were discovered as a result of excavations, belongs to this period (Berikashvili et al., 2023, Part I, pp. 9–19).

This is how the historic-archaeological periods of Samshvilde’s former settlement can be identified based on a combination of current data and written sources. Therefore, the burial of the Late Hellenistic period discovered in the vicinity of the citadel in 2023 adds clarity to the issues of chronology and periodization of the site and, as presented below, becomes particularly important.

## **CONCLUSION**

Thus, the burial discovered in trench no. 45, which contains archaeological materials from the Late Hellenistic period and a coin dated to the 1st century BCE, represents a new and significant complex for the history of Samshvilde's former settlement.

Given that intact archaeological contexts of this period have not yet been discovered on the site's territory, the scientific value and significance of this specific burial increase even more.

Moreover, the discovery of the 1st-century BCE burial near the citadel raises positive expectations that other burials from the same period will also be discovered in the adjacent territory. All of the above is extremely important for the study of a specific period in Samshvilde's long history.

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**Figure 1**  
*Location of Samshvilde*

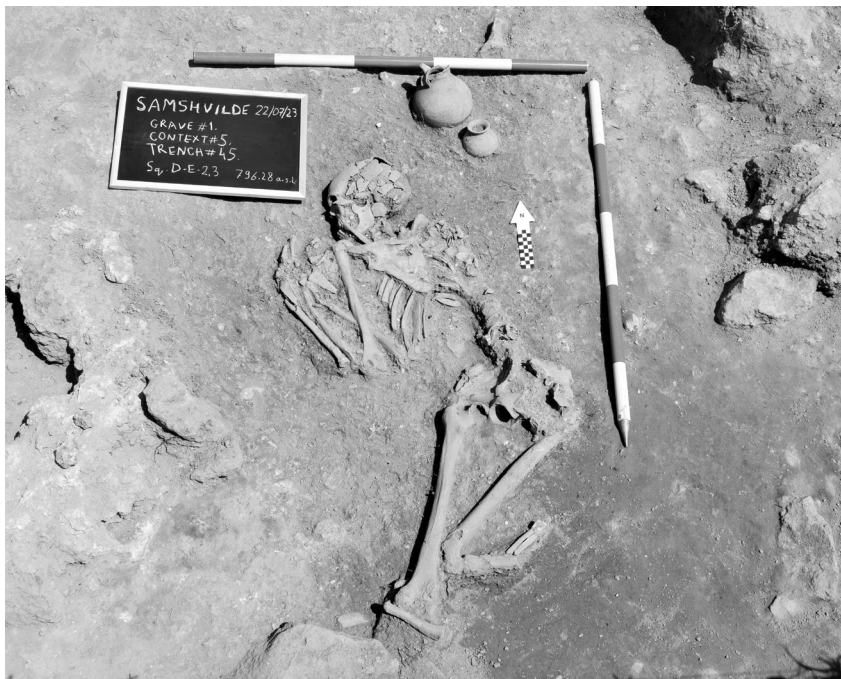




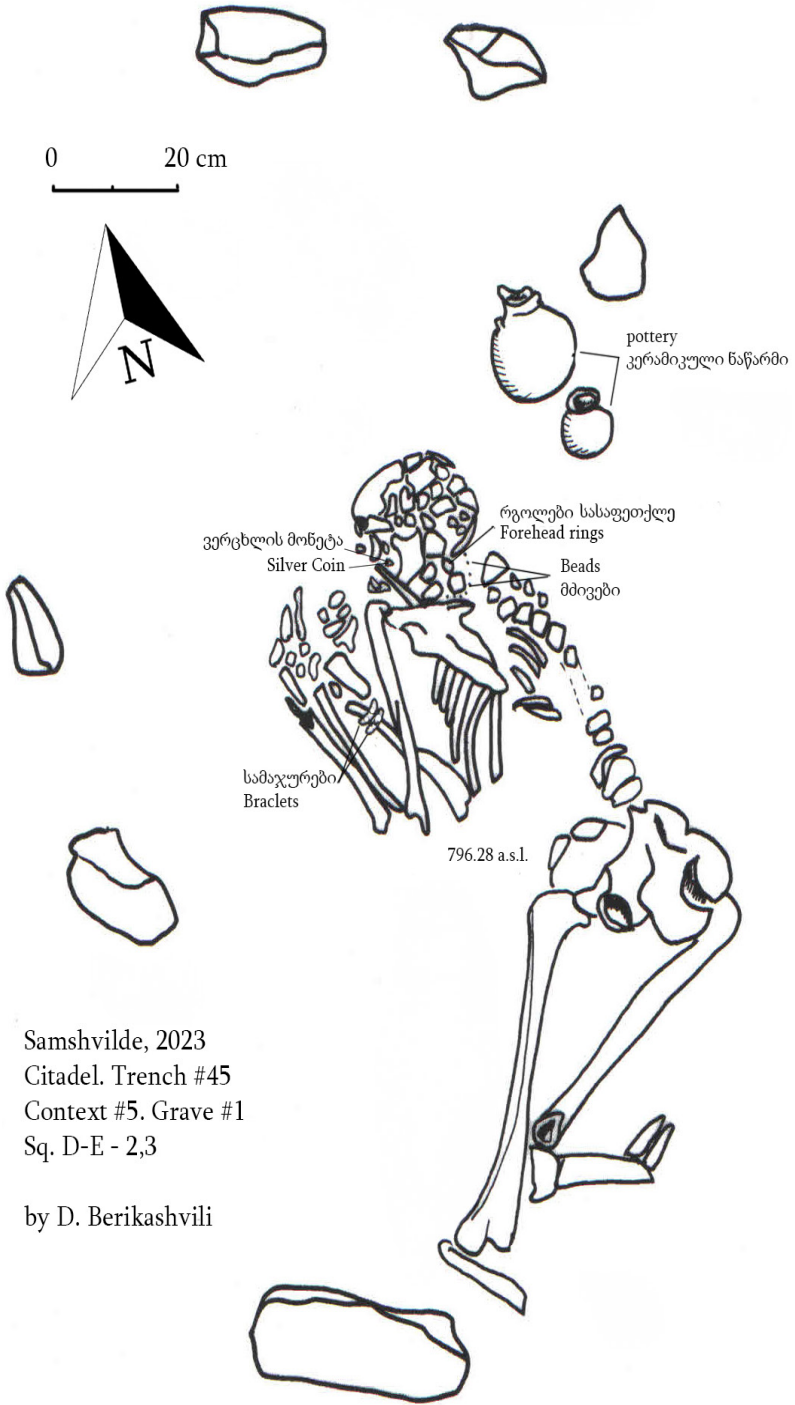
**Figure 2**  
*Thench 45. General View*



**Figure 3**  
*Burial 1. General View*



**Figure 4**  
*Burial 1 and Archaeological materials in the grave*



Samshilde, 2023  
Citadel. Trench #45  
Context #5. Grave #1  
Sq. D-E - 2,3

by D. Berikashvili

**Figure 5**  
*„Khelada” (Jug) from the burial 1*



**Figure 6**  
*„Kochopi” (Small pottery) from the burial 1*



**Figure 7**  
*The Bronze forehead rings from the burial 1*



**Figure 8**  
*Fragments of Iron bracelets from the burial 1*





**Figure 9**  
*Beads from the burial 1*



**Figure 10**  
*Silver Drachma of Phraates IV of Parthia from the burial 1*



# The Kura-Araxes Culture in Kakheti Region of Georgia

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DOI: [HTTPS://DOI.ORG/10.62343/CJSS.2024.244](https://doi.org/10.62343/CJSS.2024.244)

## ABSTRACT

The definition of the Kura-Araxes culture was established in the early 1940s. Despite the long history of studying the Kura-Araxes culture in Georgia, many aspects related to this culture are still under investigation. One of the significant issues is the distribution of the Kura-Araxes culture within the territory of Georgia. This article aims to examine the current state of the distribution of the Kura-Araxes culture in one of the regions of Georgia, Kakheti. It gathers and analyzes information about all known sites and accidental finds. In the territory of contemporary Kakheti, 18 Kura-Araxes period sites and four accidental finds from different locations have been identified to date. Even considering only the data from existing older research, it can be said that Kakheti is one of the critical regions for the distribution of the Kura-Araxes culture, with the potential to investigate the genesis of this culture further.

*Keywords:* The Kura-Araxes culture, Kakheti region, East Georgia



## **INTRODUCTION**

The archaeological findings of the Kura-Araxes culture in the South Caucasus have been known since the accidental discoveries of the 1860s. However, the definition of this culture was established only in the early 1940s by the renowned scientist Boris Kuftin. He studied the sites and archaeological finds in the South Caucasus known at that time, identifying characteristic features of this culture and naming it the “Kura-Araxes Eneolithic Culture” (Kuftin, 1943, pp. 85-127). This work was partly due to his studies of several sites from this period during excavations carried out in the historical region of Trialeti from 1936 to 1940 (Kuftin, 1941, pp. 106-108).

It is now known that this culture’s distribution area extends beyond the Kura and Araxes River basins. At a particular stage of development, the Kura-Araxes culture spread to Iran, Anatolia, and the Levant (Batiuk et al., 2022, pp. 237-241).

The study of Kura-Araxes culture sites in Georgia has a long history. In 1910, E. Takaishvili studied materials from this period, which was revealed in Sachkhere (Takaishvili, 1913, pp. 167-172). In 1920, a Kura-Araxes burial was excavated near the village of Kiketi (Pchelina, 1928, pp. 156-159). However, before Kuftin’s research, it was not yet known to which archaeological culture these discoveries belonged.

Despite the long history of studying the Kura-Araxes culture in Georgia, many aspects of this culture are still being examined. Each discovery raises new scientific questions. One of the significant issues is the distribution of the Kura-Araxes culture within the territory of Georgia. Sites and accidental finds of this culture are published in various monographs, scientific articles, and archaeological excavation reports. To date, there is no modern map that records all these discoveries. This article aims to study the current state of the distribution of the Kura-Araxes culture in one of the regions of Georgia, Kakheti. It gathers and analyzes information about all known sites and accidental finds.

Recent publications dedicated to the Kura-Araxes culture abroad have shown that data on the cultural sites of the Kakheti region are only partially accessible to foreign colleagues (Poulmarc’h et al., 2014, fig. 2; Batiuk, 2022, fig. 10). Several sites have not yet been introduced into scientific circulation, complicating further research on various issues related to the culture.

The Kura-Araxes culture in the Kakheti region is poorly studied. A long-term, purposeful study of this culture has not been conducted in this region. Notable sites in the region were mainly discovered during archaeological rescue work, along with the study of several burial sites in various parts of the region.

## ***METHODS***

An attempt was made to gather information about all Kura-Araxes sites in the Kakheti region. Sites and accidental finds associated with the Kura-Araxes culture are documented in various monographs, scholarly articles, and archaeological excavation reports. Efforts were made to determine the locations of these sites based on the published information. Unfortunately, the exact position of the discovery sites could be determined in only two cases. In other instances, the margin of error for locating the sites could reach 2–3 kilometers. Using the collected data, a GIS-based map was created to analyze the territorial distribution, topography, and other aspects of each site.

## ***RESULTS***

Therefore, to date, 18 Kura-Araxes period sites and four accidental finds have been identified in contemporary Kakheti. Additionally, at least three unpublished burials are presumed to belong to this period. The majority of these sites are burials, while settlements remain relatively poorly studied. However, most of the discovered sites belong to the early stages of this culture. Collective burial customs have been confirmed in most of the burials, with approximately 200 human remains discovered in total. The burial inventories in this region are not particularly distinguished by variety; metal artifacts, in particular, are exceedingly scarce. This scarcity is likely since most of the complexes date back to the early stages of the Kura-Araxes culture.

It is noteworthy that the majority of Kura-Araxes sites in Kakheti have only been published in a limited manner, mostly within low-quality archaeological excavation reports. Descriptions of the burials, burial rituals, and accompanying photographic and graphic documentation are often incomplete. In most cases, anthropological and other natural science studies have not been conducted, leaving significant gaps in the understanding of these sites. However, these deficiencies can still be partially remedied through further research and re-examining the available materials.

## ***DISCUSSION***

The Georgian National Museum and various regional museums in Kakheti house several artefacts from this period. These include one clay vessel from Gurjaani (Koridze, 1955, pp. 44-45); another from the village of Gulgula in the Telavi district (Pitskhelauri, 1965, p. 31); one more from Zemo Kachreti; and a metal pin from

the village of Kvemo Magharo (Dedabrishvili, 1969, pp. 36-37). The pottery found in Gulgula parallels the materials from Didube (Pitskhelauri, 1965, p. 31), dated to the Early Kura-Araxes period (Djafaridze, 1991, p. 105). For instance, the pottery found in Gurjaani is similar to that known from Zilicha's No. 4 mound burial (Asatiani & Maisuradze, 1992, Pl. VI-2) and Chaliankhevi's No. 1 mound burial (Varazashvili, 2010, Pl. V-1), both complexes belonging to the Late Kura-Araxes period. Meanwhile, the pottery found in Zemo Kachreti has numerous parallels and occurs at various stages of this culture. Such pottery is known, for example, from Dalis Mta No. II.10 (Asatiani & Maisuradze, 1992, Pl. VIII-12) and Kachreti's No. 3 mound burials (Varazashvili, 2010, Pl. II). The pin found in Kvemo Magharo is similar to those primarily known from the Sachkhere area, dating to the mid-3rd millennium BC (Gambashidze et al., 2010, p. 182, Pl. 016c).

Kura-Araxes settlements in Kakheti are known in smaller numbers compared to other regions of Georgia. These include the settlements of Gremi, Zemo Bodbe, Alaverdi, Ilto, and Cheremi.

**Gremi Temporary Settlement:** It was discovered accidentally in 1964, and small-scale rescue work was carried out in 1965. It is located northwest of the village of Gremi, at the beginning of a narrow valley at the foothills. The cultural layers were identified in the valley profile. One agricultural pit and a fragment of a clay earthen floor were studied. It is considered to have been a temporary settlement rather than a long-term habitation site (Dedabrishvili, 1969, pp. 67-72).

**Zemo Bodbe Temporary Settlement:** Discovered in 1964 near the village of Zemo Bodbe in the so-called "Protected Forest," small-scale rescue work was also performed here. The archaeological site consisted of a hill protected by artificial ditches. It was situated at an elevation of about 880 meters above sea level. Several agricultural pits with Kura-Araxes material were studied. The site was used as a temporary shelter for shepherds during the Soviet era. Archaeologist Sh. Dedabrishvili considered that it might have also served the same function in the Early Bronze Age (Dedabrishvili, 1969, pp. 72-75). The material from both Zemo Bodbe and Gremi sites dates back to the Early Kura-Araxes period.

**Alaverdi Settlement:** Sparse data is known. Located northeast of the village of Alaverdi in the Alazani valley, it was discovered at a depth of three meters, with cultural layers identified in the water channel profile, where material dating to the Early Bronze Age was gathered (Dedabrishvili, 1969, pp. 66-67).

**Ilto Settlement:** Comparatively better studied, this site constitutes a multi-layer settlement. It was studied during rescue works carried out from 1965 to 1967. They studied both the settlement structures – residential buildings and agricultural pits –

as well as several pit burials of the settlement. Archaeological discoveries date back to the Late Kura-Araxes period (Dedabrishvili, 1969, pp. 39-66).

**Cheremi Settlements (Saghandzile and Kvirias Gora):** In 1983, approximately one kilometer northwest of the village of Cheremi, an Early Bronze Age settlement was discovered at the site of Saghandzile, which was studied only through small-scale excavations during rescue operations. A total of two trenches with an area of 12 square meters were excavated. Despite the small scale of the excavations, significant discoveries were made, confirming a building with a clay earthen floor and one hearth. The archaeological materials were dated to the Early Kura-Araxes period based on parallel materials (Varazashvili, 2006, pp. 62–65). About a hundred meters south of this site, materials from the same period were found (Varazashvili, 2012, p. 51). This concerns the Kvirias Gora settlement, discovered at the end of the 1980s. It was also studied only during rescue operations. Fragments of several stone-built walls and agricultural pits were revealed here (Pitskhelauri et al., 2004, p. 22). To date, it is not entirely clear whether we are dealing with two independent contemporary settlements or two districts of one site. Existing data support the latter assumption.

Notably, an even earlier accidental find from the same area is known – a stone insignia (scepter) attributed to the Uruk culture circle (Pitskhelauri, 2012, p. 156).

Regarding the settlements, it is noteworthy to consider the geographical environment and landscape in which the Kura-Araxes settlements in Kakheti are located and whether they differ from the settlements of the same period in other regions of Georgia. The Ilto settlement was situated on a riverside terrace on the mountain slope, where the Ilto River emerges from a narrow gorge and joins the Alazani valley. The settlement was spread over several terraces at an elevation of approximately 620-640 meters above sea level.

The temporary settlement of Gremi resembles the Ilto settlement in its location. It was situated in the foothill zone at the beginning of the gorge, where the narrow gorge joins the Alazani valley at an elevation of approximately 480 meters above sea level.

The temporary settlement of Zemo Bodbe was located approximately 880 meters above sea level, in the highest part of the Iori Plateau, on a hilly and ravine-dissected terrain.

The Cheremi settlements are located in the valley of the Chermiskhevi River at an elevation of approximately 1050 meters above sea level. The exact location of the Saghandzile settlement is known (Varazashvili, 2012, p. 51). It was situated

on the high, well-protected left cape of the Chermiskhevi River, with an elevation difference of 130 meters between the southern part of the settlement and the riverbed. Additionally, the settlement was protected by dry ravines from the east and west. In contrast, from the north, the cape and, consequently, the settlement were separated from the adjacent mountain by an area lowered by approximately 20-30 meters. Thus, the settlement was located in a naturally well-protected place (Pl. III). In terms of topography, it is very similar to the Kura-Araxes settlements in Shida Kartli; for example, it can be compared to the Kvatskhela settlement (Javakhishvili & Ghlonti, 1962, Pl. II).

In contrast to the sites mentioned above, the Alaverdi settlement has a different topography. It was located in the Alazani valley, at an elevation of approximately 440 meters above sea level, near the contemporary riverbed. However, only a few finds have been published from this site, complicating its cultural identification.

The first Kura-Araxes burial in the Kakheti region was excavated near the village of Khirsa in 1962 (Pitskhelauri, 1965, pp. 32-35). Before that, it was known that two mound burials near the village of Mashnaari had been destroyed during groundworks (Pitskhelauri, 1965, pp. 31-32). Both of these sites were located in the Alazani Valley. In the Alazani Valley, mound burial No. 1 at Enamta (Asatiani & Maisuradze, 1992, pp. 158-159, 162) and a pit burial near the Naomari Gora settlement were also studied (Mindiashvili, 1977, pp. 19-23). In the Iori Plateau, burials at Dalis Mta No. II.10 (Asatiani & Maisuradze, 1992, pp. 161-162), Zilicha No. 4 (Asatiani & Maisuradze, 1992, p. 160), Ole (Pitskhelauri et al., 1995, p. 76), Didiserebi No. 2 near the village of Nukriani (Pitskhelauri et al., 1979, p. 19), Zeiani No. 2 (Kapanadze, 1986, pp. 12-28), Kachreti No. 3 (Pitskhelauri et al., 1982, p. 30), Tetri-Kvebi No. 2 (Pitskhelauri et al., 2004, p. 22), and Chaliankhevi No. 1 (Varazashvili, 2008, pp. 7-8) were studied. Another looted mound burial, No. 14 at the Dalis Mta cemetery, likely belonging to the Kura-Araxes culture, has also been studied (Maisuradze & Rusishvili, 2004, p. 35). Information about another Kura-Araxes burial is known from archaeological excavation reports. This concerns the site excavated in 1965 at Meligele, which is considered contemporaneous with the Didiserebi No. 2 burial (Pitskhelauri et al., 1979, p. 19). The still-unpublished catacombs discovered at the Fevrebi cemetery are dated to the early phase of the Early Bronze Age (Pitskhelauri et al., 1980, p. 86). The latest discovery in the region to date is the mound burial Taribana No. 1, excavated in 2002 (Varazashvili, 2010, pp. 8-9).

Additionally, several burials were studied at the Ilto settlement.

Out of the burials listed above, the exact location is known for only one case (Tarib-

ana No. 1) (Varazashvili & Pitskhelauri, 2011, p. 76). For the Ilto settlement and the burials situated there, the location can be determined with an accuracy of several tens of meters. In other cases, the margin of error for determining the location can reach up to 2-3 km (Pl. I, II).

Thus, to date, 13 Kura-Araxes burials are known from the Kakheti region. Additionally, three more burials likely belong to the same period (Dalis Mta No. 14, Fevrebi, and the Meligele burial). As we have seen, most of the burials are found on the Iori Plateau, with a relatively smaller number in the Alazani Valley. Almost all these burials are found in different locations, with the exception, of course, of several burials at the Ilto settlement. Thus, to date, no Kura-Araxes cemetery is known in the region.

Most of the burials are small mound burials. In the case of the burial at Naomari Gora, it is presumed to be a small pit burial. The largest mound (40 meters in diameter, 2 meters in height) was the Taribana No. 1 mound burial. In other cases, the mound diameters range from 5 to 30 meters, with heights of less than 2 meters. The Taribana No. 1 mound burial is also notable for having approximately twenty stone stelae erected on its mound, ranging in size from 0.4 to 1.2 meters. The information about the structure of the mounds is inadequately presented in publications. In four cases (Didiserebi No. 2, Kachreti No. 3, Khirsa, Mashnaari), it is indicated that they were stone mounds. In two instances (Enamta, Ole), it is indicated that they were stone-earth mounds. In individual cases, it is noted that the mound had a stone circle (e.g., Mashnaari mound burial). The Mashnaari mound burial lacked a burial chamber; the deceased were buried on the ground surface. Kachreti No. 3 and Didiserebi No. 2 mound burials were constructed similarly. Most of the burials, however, had burial chambers dug into the ground. The data on the sizes and orientations of the burial chambers are incomplete. Burial chamber orientations include both east-west and south-north directions. The volume of the burial chamber ranges from 1.4 m<sup>2</sup> to 10 m<sup>2</sup>. The Enamta No. 1 mound burial (16 m<sup>2</sup>) had a relatively large burial chamber. The depth of the burial pit reaches a maximum of 2 meters (Tetri Kvebi No. 2). One construction detail is noted in the Khirsa mound burial: the bottom of the burial pit was covered and compacted with small river stones, while the walls of the burial pit were built with dry-laid river stones. Dromoi were present in the Zilicha No. 4, Taribana No. 1, and Zeiani No. 2 mound burials. The Chaliankhevi No. 1 mound burial is notable for being a catacomb-type burial (Varazashvili, 2008, pp. 7-8, Pl. II).

In these burials, we typically encounter inhumation burials. In the cases of the Khirsa, Naomari Gora, and Tetri Kvebi No. 2 burials, only one deceased was recorded per burial. All other burials are collective, with six or more deceased buried in them. The most significant number of deceased (63) was recorded in the Taribana No. 1



mound burial, which is also the largest by proportion. In the Kura-Araxes burials in the Kakheti region, a total of approximately 200 deceased individuals have been recorded. Based on existing data, it is quite challenging to draw conclusions about the burial position and head orientation or whether the sex and age of the deceased played any role. Publications sometimes indicate that in collective burials, the bones of the deceased were mixed together (Dalis Mta No. II.10). The orientation of the deceased's heads varies, with some facing north and others facing south. The use of fire in burial rituals is rare but confirmed. In Zilicha No. 4 mound burial, skulls and other bones of seven deceased were found. In the western part of the burial pit and along the southwest wall, the heavily burned bones of the deceased were recorded. A similar ritual was encountered in the Zeiani No. 2 burial. Fifteen deceased were buried here, seven in the dromos and eight in the burial chamber. Six of the deceased in the burial chamber showed signs of heavy fire damage.

The burial inventory is not abundant. Twenty and 29 ceramic vessels were found in the Dalis Mta No. II.10 and Taribana No. 1 burials, respectively. In other burials, the number of ceramic vessels ranges from 1 to 20. A single flint arrowhead was found in the Khirsa burial, while one obsidian arrowhead was found in the Taribana No. 1 mound burial. Among the bone artifacts, bone spindle whorls were discovered in the Ole and Taribana No. 1 mound burials, with seven and two whorls, respectively. One spindle whorl (presumably bone) was found in the Tetri Kvebi No. 2 burial. A fragment of a hand grinder stone was found among the pebbles that had fallen into the pit at the Khirsa burial.

Kura-Araxes burials in the Kakheti region do not feature numerous metal or stone artifacts. A relatively larger inventory was recorded in the Enamta No. 1 mound burial, where items such as a gold wire-made ring, a bronze arrowhead, a bronze pin, carnelian beads, triangular bone beads, and paste beads were found. This inventory makes the complex more similar to early Kurgan period sites and distinct from Kura-Araxes sites. Aside from Enamta No. 1, paste beads were found only in the Kachreti No. 3 burial.

Regarding faunal remains, two bull skulls with horns but without lower jaws were found in the Khirsa burial. Five small cattle skulls were found in the Kachreti No. 3 burial, and one skull was found in the Taribana No. 1 mound burial. A sheep skull and limb bones were found in the Khirsa burial, and sheep bones were found in the Naomari Gora burial.

As mentioned above, several burials were also studied within the Kura-Araxes layers of the Ilto settlement. Establishing burials in prehistoric settlement layers is characteristic of the Kura-Araxes culture, as seen at the Chobareti settlement

(Kakhiani et al., 2013, pp. 14-17), as well as in many other regions during various periods (Müller-Scheeßel, 2013).

## CONCLUSION

The collection and analysis of existing published data alone have significantly altered the current understanding of the distribution intensity of Kura-Araxes culture in Kakheti. Considering the above, it can be stated that despite the non-systematic nature of the research on sites from this period in the Kakheti region, very important archaeological sites and finds have been discovered. The re-publication of museum collections according to modern standards, the application of natural science methods to old finds, reconnaissance work to identify new sites, and new archaeological excavations will provide significant new data for studying the scientific problems of the Kura-Araxes culture.

Even when considering only the data from older research, it is evident that Kakheti is one of the key regions for the distribution of the Kura-Araxes culture, with substantial potential for research on its genesis.

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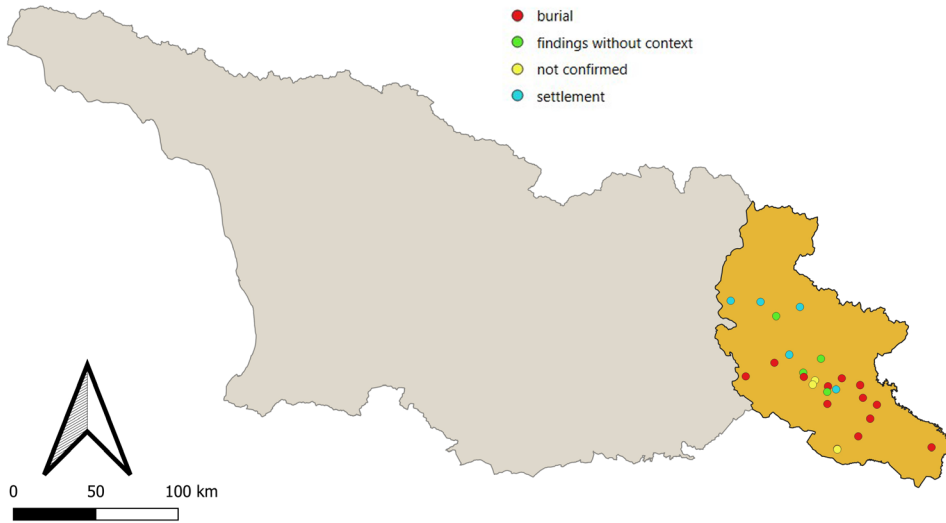
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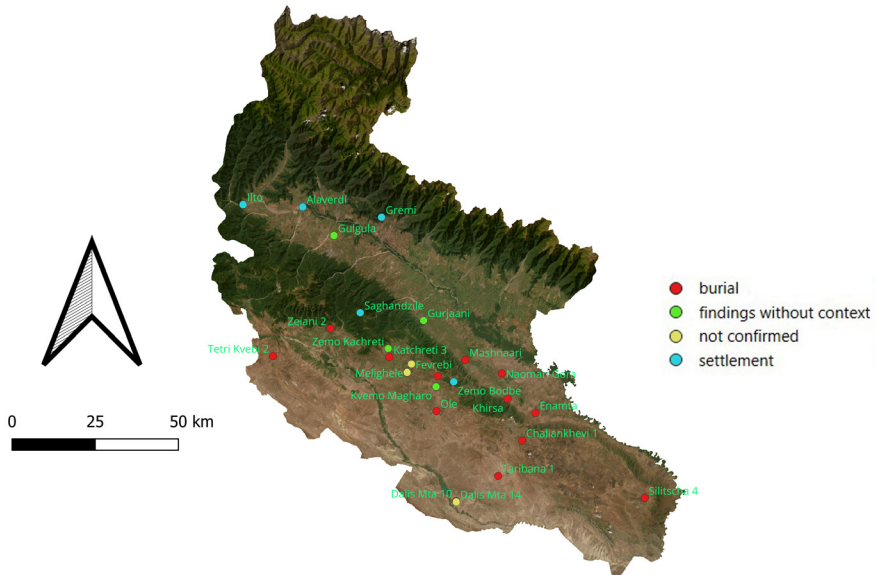
Pl. I.

*The Distribution of the Kura-Araxes culture in Kakheti region. Map of Georgia*



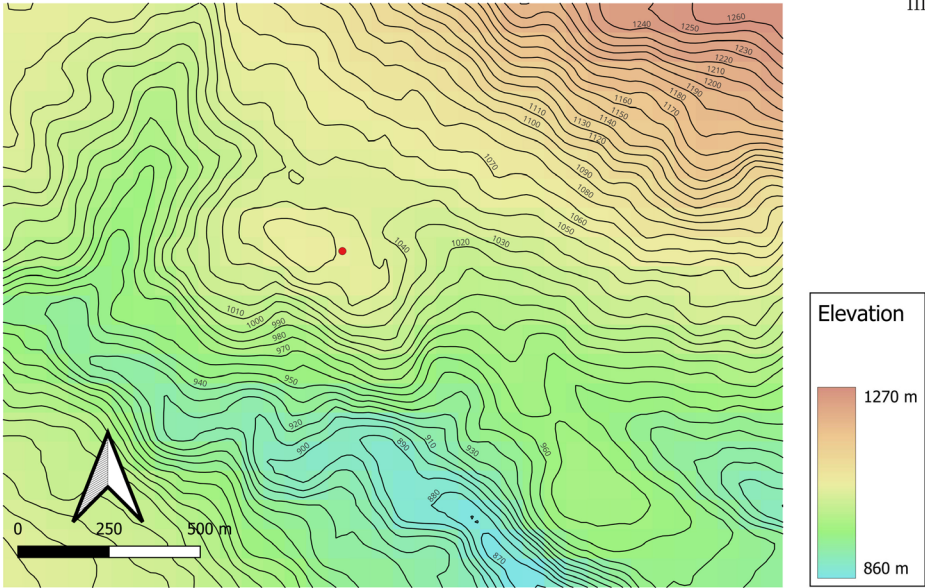
Pl. II.

*The Distribution of the Kura-Araxes culture in Kakheti region. Map of Kakheti*



Pl. III.

Digital elevation model of the Saghandzile settlement



III



## Enhancement Possibilities for the Georgian National Corpus

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### ABSTRACT

The aim of this paper is to make suggestions for improving the Georgian National Corpus based on selected linguistic processes. The Georgian National Corpus is currently the most developed and detailed corpus of the Georgian language. One of the reasons for this is the included annotation of the texts, the variety of text genres, and the size of the corpus. While the morphosyntactic analysis of the texts is great, there is room for improvement in the semantic-pragmatic analysis, especially as far as the semantic-pragmatic analysis of functional elements is concerned. Many factors make this issue very interesting, such as grammaticalisation processes or the fundamental development of language. Implementing this type of analysis is essential, especially when it comes to adequate translations by machine translations. The paper contains an approach for analysing functional elements using the example of the particle *xom*.

*Keywords:* Corpus linguistics, Annotation, Modern Georgian, GNC

## **INTRODUCTION**

The 21st century, along with the rapid development of information technologies, brought significant changes to any scientific field and, of course, also to linguistics. The classical grouping of languages established in linguistics has been replaced by a new paradigm of classification. If the traditional classification paradigm included genetic (classification of languages into families according to their genetic relationship), typological (classification of languages according to their morphological structure) and relational classification (classification of languages according to their relational type into, e.g. nominative-accusative, ergative-absolutive and active-stative alignment), today the paradigm of language classification has changed and the focus of language classification added to the quality of the languages' digital representation. What is meant here is the existence of big data both from a quantitative point of view (textbases and speech data of hundreds of millions of tokens) and from a qualitative point of view (high level of annotation quality, electronic dictionaries, grammar resources such as bases of grammatical morphemes and rules, sentiment analysis, treebank, etc.). Thus, according to the approach of language classification, languages are grouped into High Resource Languages (HRL) and Low Resource Languages (LRL). Of the alleged 7,000 languages in the world, only 20 languages have sufficient resources to perform the tasks of Natural Language Processing (NLP). Despite the fact that a large number of monolingual and bilingual digital resources have been created for the Georgian language (GNC, 2024; Georgian Dialect Corpus, 2024; Rustaveli Goes Digital - Parallelkorpus, 2024), it is still classified as a low-resource language (see RichardLitt, 2024). To change this status of the Georgian language, a number of tasks need to be solved, such as the enhancement and further development of the Georgian National Corpus (GNC) – some of the proposals will be presented below.

In general, during the construction of a corpus, the general principles of corpus construction (corpus structure) should be considered, on the one hand, and on the other hand, the structural and grammatical features of the language of the resource embedded in the corpus, which will be considered when creating the corpus search system - the corpus manager. For the efficient use of the corpus, the methodological aspect is also important, in particular, the relationship between data and theory (theoretical qualification of data), the so-called 3A perspective (Wallis & Nelson, 2001: 311ff), namely annotation, abstraction and analysis:

- “Annotation consists of the application of a scheme to texts. Annotations may include structural markup, part-of-speech tagging, parsing, and nu-

merous other representations.

- Abstraction consists of the translation (mapping) of terms in the scheme in a theoretically motivated model or dataset. Abstraction typically includes linguist-directed search but may include rule-learning for parsers, for example.
- Analysis consists of statistically probing, manipulating and generalising from the dataset. Analysis might include statistical evaluations, optimisation of rule-bases or knowledge discovery methods” (Agapova, 2014, p. 282).<sup>1</sup>

The advantage of an annotated corpus is that users can use it for a wider range of research issues and conduct experiments using the corpus manager.

The higher the degree of annotation in the corpus, that is, the more annotation levels are provided in the corpus, the more useful the given corpus is for interdisciplinary research, on the one hand. On the other hand, annotated corpora are needed to implement natural language processing (NLP) and to train artificial intelligence (AI) for a given language.

## ***METHODS***

Two extensive databases have to be mentioned when discussing the Georgian language, namely Thesaurus Indogermanischer Text- und Sprachmaterialien (TITUS) (University of Frankfurt, n.d.) and Georgian National Corpus (GNC) (Georgian National Communications Commission, n.d.). The former comprises corpora of ancient Indo-European languages (such as Avestan, Vedic Sanskrit, Phrygian, or Umbrian) and also materials in more recent Indo-European as well as neighbouring languages, among them the South Caucasian languages (such as Georgian, Megrelian, Svan and Laz) but TITUS does not contain as many textual resources for Modern Georgian as GNC. The National Corpus of the Georgian Language (GNC) is the largest corpus created for the Georgian language (more than 202 million tokens), which is the reason. GNC belongs to the type of diachronic corpora, which com-

<sup>1</sup> Wallis, S. (n.d.). Annotation takes a set of texts and adds linguistic information to it, enriching it and identifying instances of linguistically meaningful entities and relations. At this point, the resulting enriched dataset (‘corpus’) is usually distributed to the research community. Abstraction is the researcher’s exploratory process of establishing a mapping between concepts they wish to research, and representations found in the corpus (text + annotation). It also maps the structured corpus to a regular dataset that can be analysed by conventional statistical methods. The key linking element in abstraction is a corpus query. Analysis is the process of applying statistical and other methods to data that has been abstracted in this way. Retrieved from <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/english-usage/staff/sean/>

bines Old, Middle, and Modern Georgian language resources. The corpus includes both resources of the written Georgian language from ancient monuments (inscriptions, handwritten sources) to the present day, and samples of oral speech - the Georgian dialect corpus is integrated into the corpus. When it comes to text genres, GNC is a balanced corpus containing religious, historical, juridical and political texts. The latter two genres are also represented as separate sub-corpora. Nevertheless, the corpus requires further development both in terms of genre and quantity.

## Figure 1

### *The sub-corpora of the GNC*

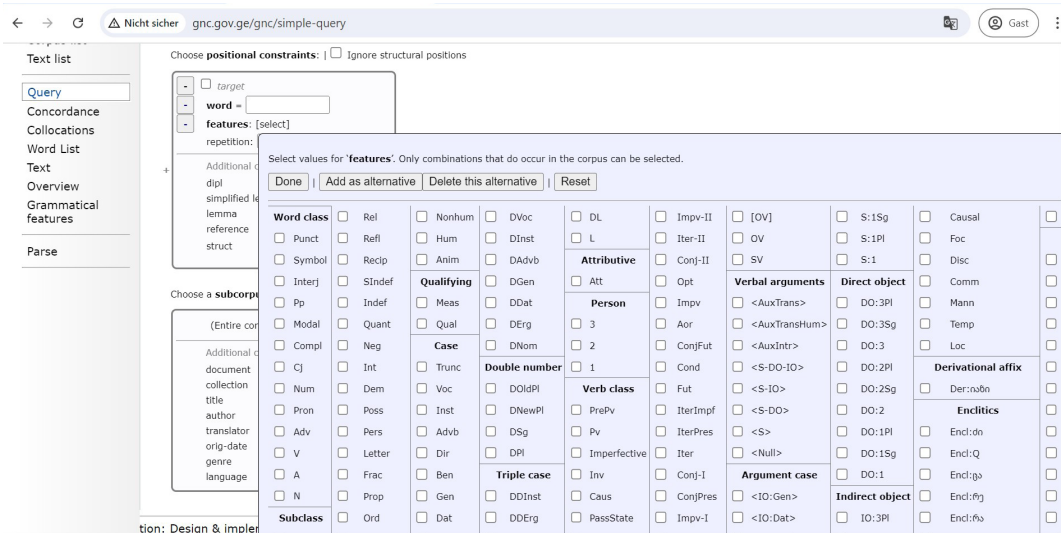
The screenshot shows the GNC website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the GNC logo and the text 'ქართული ენის ეროვნული კორპუსი' and 'The Georgian National Corpus'. Below this, there is a sidebar with a menu containing items like 'GNC Home', 'About the project', 'Using the GNC', 'Documentation', 'Publications', 'Corpus list', 'Text list', 'Query', 'Concordance', 'Collocations', 'Word List', 'Text', 'Overview', 'Grammatical features', and 'Parse'. The main content area is titled 'Corpus list' and contains a table with the following data:

Corpus	Size (words & punctuation)	Updated	Description
<b>GNC Old Georgian</b>	7 101 021	2022-12-31	Georgian National Corpus, Old Georgian
<b>GNC Middle Georgian</b>	1 432 262	2019-06-25	Georgian National Corpus, Middle Georgian
<b>GNC Modern Georgian</b>	1 993 022	2023-01-01	Georgian National Corpus, Modern Georgian
<b>GRC</b>	202 728 329	2016-12-05	Georgian Reference Corpus
<b>GDC</b>	1 694 362	2015-09-14	Georgian dialect corpus
<b>GNC Political texts</b>	1 436 075	2019-08-06	Georgian National Corpus, Political texts
<b>GNC Law texts</b>	1 495 985	2019-04-15	Georgian National Corpus, Old and Middle Georgian, Law texts
<b>GNC Megrelian</b>	89 404	2015-09-14	Georgian National Corpus, Megrelian
<b>GNC Svan</b>	473 180	2015-09-14	Georgian National Corpus, Svan

In addition to the Georgian language, the GNC includes resources for other South-Caucasian languages - Megrelian and Svan. Both the textual material published in these languages and the modern oral resources (which only represent a fraction of what TITUS has to offer) were obtained and processed within the framework of the international scientific projects implemented at the University of Frankfurt (TITUS, ECLinG, SSGG), are presented here. A large Georgian reference corpus (GRC) is included, which contains less thoroughly processed texts from various fictional and non-fictional domains.

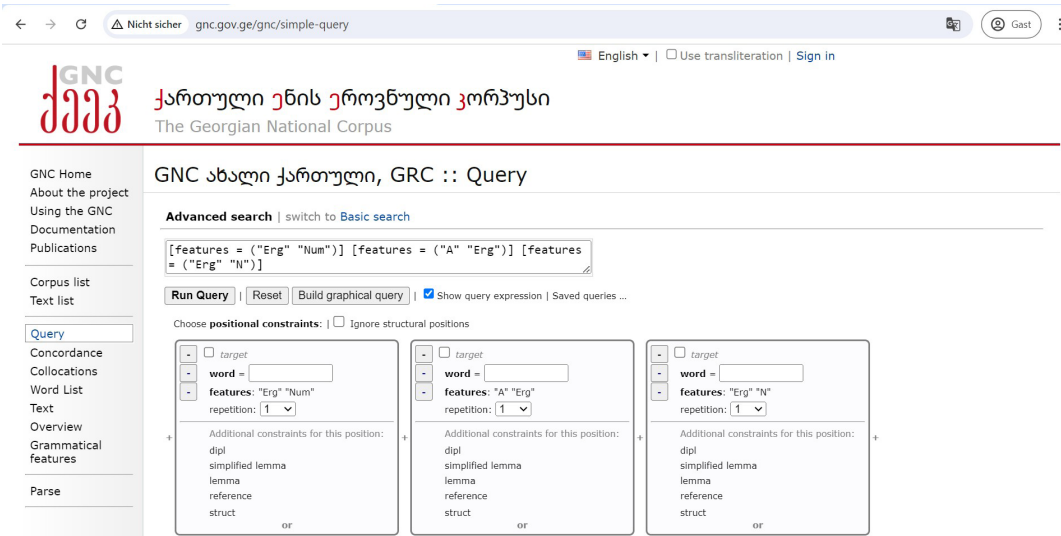
GNC is an annotated corpus - the corpus manager allows for both simple and complex searches in the corpus. In the case of a complex search, it is possible to find a word form according to one or several grammatical features combined.

**Figure 2**  
*Example of a complex search in the GNC*



The corpus search engine also allows you to search the corpus for phrasal constructions:

**Figure 3**  
*Searching interface for phrasal constructions in the GNC (a phrase containing a numeral, an adjective and a noun in the ergative)*



The results of the search are then displayed in the corresponding concordance:

## Figure 4

### Results of the search

Advanced search | switch to Basic search | Query history ...

[features = ("Erg" "Num")] [features = ("A" "Erg")] [features = ("Erg" "N")]

Run Query | Refine | window: document | Stop | Saved queries ...

Done. Running time: 21.42 sec. (4.87 CPU sec.)

Type: [kwic] | Att: [word] | Show line filter | Attributes ... | Structures ... (show in match) | Page size: | Context size: [500px]

HIT 1 - 30 of 5068 | Previous | Next | Go to: | Download (Excel mode) | Copy query URL

corpus	cpos	match \.
gnc-kat	1329646	უც და ახლა წელსვეთი მიშველი დავჯეკი, წვიძის ათსმა, ათი ათსმა, ასი ათსმა, ასი ათსმა, მხამაღ! მხამაღ! </p><p> </b> თეიმურაზს ერთ წუთში თვალწინ
gnc-kat	1433750	სახარება </b> ვაჰარი გიორგი ერისთავმა, ცაგარელმა, ანტიონოვმა </b> და
gnc-kat	1406893	ერთმა დამწყებმა კრიტიკოსმა
gnc-kat	1318913	ერთმა დროულმა მეურმემ
gnc-kat	611206	ერთმა თამაშმა მოწაფემ
gnc-kat	418303	ერთმა თქვერისთანა გლეხმა
gnc-kat	1086533	ერთმა კეთილმა დისახლისმა
gnc-kat	670550	ერთმა მოზა ქალმა
gnc-kat	906857	ერთმა მისხველიმა ყმაწვილ-კავამ
gnc-kat	609849	ერთმა მოხუცებულმა სოფელელმა
gnc-kat	406999	ერთმა მსუკანმა ქალმა
gnc-kat	2044127	ერთმა მშვენიერმა დედმ
gnc-kat	976205	ერთმა მშვენიერმა დედმ
gnc-kat	976197	ერთმა მშვენიერმა ქართველმა
gnc-kat	2100699	ერთმა სახარეო მანქანამ
gnc-kat	1211444	ერთმა უბრალო მშობვევამ
gnc-kat	568491	ერთმა უბრალო მშობვევამ
gnc-kat	433965	</head> </b> დამურა </head>
gnc-kat	1026825	ერთმა უბრალო მშობვევამ

The high degree of annotation in the corpus allows for morphosyntactic and syntactic analysis:

## Figure 5

### Parsing of a sentence

Parse

Here you can parse sentences with the morphological analysers that are being used to analyze the texts of the GNC. Write a sentence or shorter text and click the 'Parse' button. You can click on the morphosyntactic features of the analyzed text to have them explained.

Language variety: [Modern Georgian]

მე ძლიერ მიყვარს ისევერ თოვლის ქალწულბივითი ხიდიდან ფენა.

Parse | Reload | Show all readings | Show used rules | Show dependencies | UD features

მე	3	მე	Pron Pers 1 Dat Sg
ძლიერ	4	ძლიერ	Adv Deg
მიყვარს	1	სიყვარულ-ი/ყვარ	V MedPass Inv Pres OV <S:DO> <S:Dat> <DO:Nom> S:1Sg DO:3
ისევერ	6	ისევე[ერ]ი	A Gen Att <OldPl>
თოვლის	1	თოვლ-ი	N Gen Sg
ქალწულბივითი	1	ქალწულ-ი	N Hum Nom Pl NewPl PP PP:3nom
ხიდიდან	3	ხიდი-ი	N Inst Sg PP PP:დან
ფენა	6	ფენა/ა/ფენ	N VN Nom Sg
.	1	.	Punct Period

GNC was created within the framework of international scientific cooperation in the years 2012-2019. Both European (Frankfurt University, University of Bergen) and Georgian scientific and educational institutions (Georgian National Communications Commission, n.d.) participated in its creation.



The quality of big data annotation is crucial for AI tasks. The quality of data annotation refers to the accuracy and consistency of data labelling for machine learning models. It is crucial to ensure that the algorithms learn effectively from the annotated data provided. High-quality data annotation leads to more accurate predictions and better model performance. It also implies a multi-level system of analysis, which includes morphological, morphosyntactic, syntactic, pragmatic, and semantic levels. In the case of speech data, in addition to text, audio and video resources, suprasegmental analysis is also provided. Suprasegmental features help to convey meaning, structure and emotional undertones in oral communication. They affect the way syllables, words and sentences are pronounced and influence the meaning and perception of spoken language at a higher level.

The GNC is characterised by a relatively high level of token annotation, which includes both the lemma and grammatical features of the token, as well as other relevant information (source, author, title, date of the text, suprasegmental annotations, etc.). Below, an example from the nominal morphology is provided:

**Figure 6**  
Search result of the noun *მაღაზიებში* “in the stores”

corpus	cpos	match
gnc-kat	696932	მაღაზიებში უმეტედაც რომ დაიქვხნ თურქუ საფურას ვიზებ ქალს.
gnc-kat	778242	მაღაზიებში შექყიჭა, გადაამკურველისთვის რაღაც დავუკლებინა,
gnc-kat	1379888	მაღაზიებში
gnc-kat	1379934	მაღაზიებში
gnc-kat	1380097	მაღაზიებში
gnc-kat	1380205	მაღაზიებში
gnc-kat	1787449	მაღაზიებში
gnc-kat	1787474	მაღაზიებში
gnc-kat	1788332	მაღაზიებში
gnc-kat	1821612	მაღაზიებში
gnc-kat	1971398	მაღაზიებში
gnc	63787	მაღაზიებში
gnc	537720	მაღაზიებში
gnc	537758	მაღაზიებში
gnc	537906	მაღაზიებში
gnc	537991	მაღაზიებში
gnc	1654143	მაღაზიებში
gnc	1670044	მაღაზიებში

**მაღაზიებში**

simplified lemma: მაღაზია

lemma: მაღაზი[ა]

features: N Dat Pl NewPI PP PP;8n

document: NG/chiladze-o/chiladze-o+godori

title: გოდორი

reference: გოდორი პირველი მაწილი I 35

author: გოდორე, ოთარ

genre: /fiction/

language: kat

The same applies to search results from the verbal morphology and uninflectable words:

**Figure 7**  
*Search result of the verb ტრიალებდა “[(s)he] was spinning”*

The screenshot shows the GNC concordance search interface. The search term is 'ტრიალებდა'. The interface includes a sidebar with navigation options like 'Concordance', 'Collocations', and 'Text'. The main area displays a list of search results with columns for 'corpus', 'cpos', and 'match'. The 'match' column shows the word 'ტრიალებდა' and its grammatical features: 'word: ტრიალებდა', 'dipl: ტრიალებდა', 'simplified lemma: ტრიალი', 'lemma: ტრიალ/ტრიალ', 'features: V MedAct Impf <S> <S:Nom> S:3Sg', 'document: NG/amiredzhibi-ch/amiredzhibi-ch+data-tutashxia', 'title: დათა თეთაშხია', 'reference: 8', 'author: ამირჯიხი, ჭახუა', 'orig-date: 1974', 'genre: /fiction/', 'language: kat'.

**Figure 8**  
*Search result of the affirmative particle xom (ხომ)*

The screenshot shows the GNC concordance search interface with the search term 'ხომ'. The 'match' column displays the word 'ხომ' and its grammatical features: 'word: ხომ', 'dipl: ხომ', 'simplified lemma: ხომ', 'lemma: ხომ', 'features: Adv Disc', 'document: NG/mishveladze-r/mishveladze-r+tom1-04', 'title: რჩეული თხზულებანი IV - მოველები', 'reference: ქველი 169', 'author: მიშველაძე, რევაზ', 'genre: /fiction/', 'language: kat'.

In the case of uninflectable words, as shown in Fig. 8, the syntactic-pragmatic function is indicated: *xom* - Adv Disc (discourse adverb). However, a certain part of the tokens in GNC is not annotated, which is due to the fact that the issues of the functional grammar of the Georgian language are still theoretically unresearched and have only been studied in fragments. Accordingly, the grammatical character-

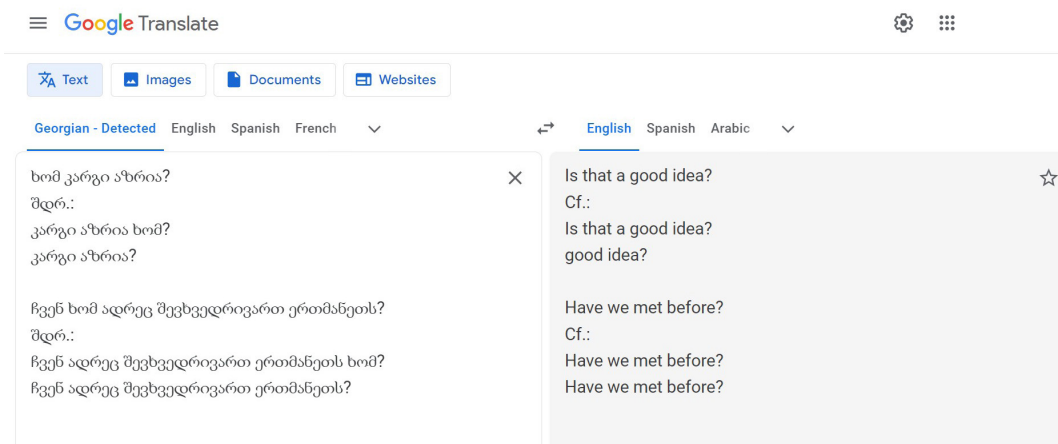
sation of some words in the corpus is either inaccurate or the grammatical features are not defined at all - in such a case, only “unknown” is indicated. Below, we discuss several works related to GNC annotation system improvement and corpus development proposals and present my proposal regarding the annotation of invariant words in the corpus.

## RESULTS

The functional-semantic analysis of uninflectable elements is utterly significant not only for refining the theoretical model and for creating a functional grammar of the Georgian language, but it also has practical significance for the development of language technologies, especially for the improvement of automatic translation. None of the currently available translation programs can adequately convey the semantic difference in Georgian sentences from a functional-semantic point of view:

### Figure 10

*How Google translates sentences with and without the particle *xom**



As shown in Fig. 10, Google Translate does not differentiate between the meaning of sentences with or without the particle *xom*, which makes the significance of such an analysis all the more necessary.

## DISCUSSION

In order to achieve a high-quality annotation, specific phenomena of any given language must be considered - structural features, grammatical processes in the language, functional-semantic and pragmatic meaning of linguistic elements, and

other specific features. This applies not only to simple elements of the corpus, such as word forms, but also to complex structural units, such as phrasal structures. In my opinion, further development of GNC requires the refinement of the specific phenomena of the Georgian language. Below, I will present suggestions for improving the annotation of the Georgian National Corpus, using examples of simple elements and complex constructions.

One of the linguistic phenomena of the Georgian language is approximative verbs; these elements represent a symbiosis of the nominal and verbal domain, as the marker used for approximateness originates from the nominal domain and is suffixed to a fully inflected verb. The suffix *-vit* ('like, as'), which is typically suffixed to a noun in the nominative or the dative case (the former applies to nouns with consonantal stems, the latter to nouns with vocalic stems), can also be found suffixed to nouns in the genitive case, which is the rarest among the cases in combination with the suffix (Kamarauli, 2023, p.52).

## Figure 9

Example of an approximative verb, classified as “unknown”

The screenshot shows the GNC Concordance interface. The search query is 'მომიბოღმასავით'. The search results table shows a hit with the word 'მომიბოღმასავით' and its grammatical features listed as 'Unknown'. The interface includes a search bar, navigation buttons, and a sidebar with various options like 'Concordance', 'Collocations', and 'Text list'.

corpus	cpos	match
grc	16856225	მომიბოღმასავით
grc	100499152	მომიბოღმასავით
grc	180292888	მომიბოღმასავით
grc	182374743	მომიბოღმასავით

Grammatical features: Unknown

source: lib.ge

author: ბიზო ჯიბლაძე

title: სიყვარული ამერყამი

The GNC has not yet provided a classification for such constructions, so these are labelled as “unknown”. What I propose is the following: when verbs are analysed as usual according to the grammatical markers such as person, number, tense, etc., another feature must be added, namely verbal approximateness (AppV). The morpheme expressing approximateness (APP: სავით) should be added at the end of the grammatical features:

Cf.:

EXAMPLE	GRAMMATICAL FEATURES
მეცადინეობდა	V MedAct Impf <S> <S:Nom> S:3Sg
vs.	
მეცადინეობდასავით	AppV MedAct Impf <S> <S:Nom> S:3Sg APP: სავით

One of the important challenges in the analysis of the Georgian language is the issue of annotation of uninflectable elements - particles, conjunctions, adverbs, conjunctions. The correct annotation of functional elements is indispensable for solving both semantic analysis and treebank tasks.

Below, I present my annotation approach of functional elements on the example of the functional-semantic analysis of the particle *xom*.

The particle *xom* is analysed as an interrogative particle in scientific literature, in particular as:

- An interrogative particle, which 1. is used in interrogative clauses and denotes confirmation, and 2. is used together with a negative word (არ, ვერ, არავინ...) and indicates doubt (Explanatory Dictionary n.d);
- An interrogative particle-morphemoid, which a) expresses confirmation in interrogative clauses, b) expresses doubt with negative morphemoids (no, can, nobody), c) is used in negative constructions to express the function of a request (Jorbenadze, K'obakhidze & Beridze, 1988: 474-475);
- It is used when asking a question and wanting to have the answer confirmed (Georgian Dictionary n.d);
- It is annotated as a discourse adverb in the National Corpus of the Georgian language (Georgian National Corpus n.d.).

In the reference sub-corpus of GRC, *xom* is statistically one of the most frequently used particles. Table 1 (see next page)

The functional-semantic analysis of the particle *xom*, which is presented below, relies on the resources provided by the GNC. Both classic research methods and corpus linguistic research methods are used to analyse the examples. Additionally, substitution, elimination, permutation and paraphrasing tests were also used in the research. The corpus linguistic analysis showed that the particle can convey more functional semantics than in the definitions presented above. In addition, the conducted analysis showed that the following parameters are crucial for determining the functional semantics of the particle *xom*, which will be introduced below:

Cf.:

**Table 1***Frequency of particles in the GNC*

PARTICLE	FUNCTION	HITS
<i>ar</i>	negation (neutral)	1821586
<i>ki</i>	affirmation	784365
<i>tu</i>	condition	738435
<i>ver</i>	negation (potential)	350503
<i>xom</i>	affirmation	128056
<i>nu</i>	negation (prohibitive)	37945
<i>gana</i>	elicitation	14520
<i>ho</i>	affirmation	10984
<i>nutu</i>	elicitation	8778
<i>aki</i>	evidentiality	4025

- Clause type (declarative, interrogative, imperative, etc.),
- Its position in the sentence (initial, midfield, final position),
- Ability to transpose and the resulting scope effects,
- Ability to combine with other uninflectable words in a sentence.

The particle *xom* usually appears in interrogative clauses and is used with an interrogative-affirmative function. It can be placed as sentence-initial, mid-sentence, or sentence-final. Below, every mentioned instance is shown.

- Initial position:

(1a) *xom*                                      *qarg-i*                                      *azr-i-a?*  
 AFF    good-NOM.SG                                      idea-NOM.SG-COP  
 ‘It is a good idea, right?’

(1b) *qarg-i*                                      *azr-i-a*                                      *xom?*  
 good-NOM.SG                                      idea-NOM.SG-COP                                      AFF  
 ‘It is a good idea, right?’

(1c) *qarg-i*                                      *azr-i-a?*  
 good-NOM.SG                                      idea-NOM.SG-COP  
 ‘Is it a good idea?’



As the examples above show, it is possible to transpose the particle *xom* in (1a-b) and even omit (1c) from the sentence. In the case of transposition, the sentence maintains the semantics of confirmation (affirmativeness). Therefore, the probable answer is ‘yes’. In the case of omission, affirmativeness is lost, and the sentence becomes a ‘yes/no’ question - the answer can be either positive or negative.

Both sentences (1a) and (1b) require a positive answer. The difference between them is the speaker’s attitude: in (1a), the speaker offers his opinion to the listener, which is affirmative and conveys the speaker’s position; as a result of the transposition of the particle in (1b), the speaker expects the listener to confirm the opinion expressed by him.

The following example confirms that the particle *xom* placed in the final position expresses the expectation of confirmation from the listener:

(2a)	<i>ramden-ze</i>	<i>gagvarige</i>	<i>me</i>	<i>da</i>	<i>besarion-i?</i>
	how much.DAT.SG-on	settle.S2SG.O1PL.AOR	I.NOM.SG	and	Besarion-NOM.SG
	<i>otxas-i</i>	<i>manet-i</i>	<i>unda</i>	<i>moeca</i>	<i>xom?</i>
	fourhundred-NOM.SG	Mane-ti-NOM.SG	MPTCL	give.S3SG.PLUPERF	AFF

‘How much money did me and Besarion agree on thanks your help? He should have given me 400 Manetis, right?’ (Davit kldiašvili, *Soloman Morbelaze*)

When the particle *xom* is placed in the initial position, the speaker expects the listener to confirm the amount of money:

(2b)	<i>ramden-ze</i>	<i>gagvarige</i>	<i>me</i>	<i>da</i>	<i>besarion-i?</i>
	how much.DAT.SG-on	settle.S2SG.O1PL.AOR	I.NOM.SG	and	Besarion-NOM.SG
	<i>xom</i>	<i>otxas-i</i>	<i>manet-i</i>	<i>unda</i>	<i>moeca?</i>
	AFF	fourhundred-NOM.SG	Maneti-NOM.SG	MPTCL	give.S3SG.PLUPERF

‘How much money did me and Besarion agree on thanks your help? He should have given me 400 Manetis, right?’

Example (2a) is an interrogative clause, and the answer requires specifying the amount. In the following example, (2b), the speaker states the amount himself and waits for the addressee to confirm it. Both sentences are affirmative sentences, but



In this context, the particle *xom* is a pragmatic element, namely a presupposition marker. If we omit the adversative conjunction *magram* ‘but’ in the last sentence, we get the following expression: *tkven xom geograpi xart?* ‘You are a geographer, **right?**’. Here, the presupposition is clearly readable, and it is marked in the sentence with the particle *xom*. By eliminating it, the presupposition in the sentence is lost - the sentence turns into a simple ‘yes/no’ question: *tkven geograpi xart?* ‘Are you a geographer?’. The adversative conjunction *magram* ‘but’ makes the speaker’s position even stronger: the geographer’s answers in the discourse (lack of geographical knowledge) surprise the speaker since he expects the geographer to have this knowledge. The opinion of the speaker in the last sentence is critical, which is marked by the adversative conjunction *magram* in the initial position, and to convey his position, the speaker uses an affirmative sentence with the particle *xom*.

- Final position and scope effects

The possibility to transpose elements also brings some changes in scope and, therefore, semantics. The following examples have been constructed to demonstrate the functionality and the resulting scope effects of the particle *xom* when transposed:

(4a) *xom*            *luḡa-m*            *dalia*            *sam-i*            *lud-i?*  
 AFF            Luka-ERG.SG    drink.S3SG.AOR    three-NOM.SG    beer-NOM.SG

‘Luka drank three beers, right?’

(4b) *luḡa-m*            *xom*            *dalia*            *sam-i*            *lud-i?*  
 Luka-ERG.SG    AFF            drink.S3SG.AOR    three-NOM.SG    beer-NOM.SG

‘Luka drank three beers, right?’

(4c) *luḡa-m*            *dalia*            *xom*            *sam-i*            *lud-i?*  
 Luka-ERG.SG    drink.S3SG.AOR    AFF            three-NOM.SG    beer-NOM.SG

‘Luka drank three beers, right?’

\*(4d) *luḡa-m*            *dalia*            *sam-i*            *xom*            *lud-i?*  
 Luka-ERG.SG    drink.S3SG.AOR    three-NOM.SG    AFF            beer-NOM.SG

‘Luka drank three beers, right?’

(4e) *luḡa-m*            *dalia*            *sam-i*            *lud-i*            *xom?*  
 Luka-ERG.SG    drink.S3SG.AOR    three-NOM.SG    beer-NOM.SG    AFF

‘Luka drank three beers, right?’

In (4a), the proper name ‘Luka’ is inside the scope of the particle *xom*; the speaker wants to ensure that the mentioned person drinking three beers is Luka and not another person. In (4b), the process of drinking is inside of the scope of the particle *xom*; the speaker wants to make sure that the three beers were drunk and not poured away. In (4c), the numeral *sami* ‘three’ and the modified head element *ludi* ‘beer’ are within the scope of the particle *xom*; the speaker wants to make sure that it was three beers that were drunk by the protagonist and not, e.g. four cocktails. At this point, the following conclusion can be made: the particle refers to phrases and not individual elements of the phrase, which is the reason why (4d) is incorrect as *xom* cannot split the phrase, transform it into a discontinuous one and still be grammatically correct. As for the last example (4e), where the particle is placed sentence-final: the protagonist, the act of drinking and also the beverages are all within the scope of *xom*. Additionally, with the sentence-final positioning of *xom*, the speaker asks for confirmation from the hearer.

The particle *xom* can also be used in declarative clauses, but in such cases, it does not function as an interrogative particle anymore but only expresses the semantics of confirmation (affirmativeness):

- (5) *qvela* *did-i* *xom* *bavšv-i* *iqo* *odesgac*  
 every.NOM.SG big-NOM. AFF child-NOM. be.S3SG. at some time  
 SG SG SG AOR

‘After all, all adults were children once.’ (Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, *The Little Prince*)

- (6) *paṭivmoq̄vare* *kač-is* *tval-ši* *xom* *q̄vela*  
 va inglorious. man-GEN.SG eye.DAT.SG- AFF every.NOM.  
 GEN.SG in SG

*adamian-i* *mis-i* *taq̄vanismcemel-i-a*  
 human-NOM.SG his-NOM.SG worshipper-NOM.SG-COP

‘In the eyes of a respectful man, every human is his worshipper.’ (Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, *The Little Prince*)

Declarative clauses with the particle *xom* are often used as an argument that reinforces/justifies the statement expressed in the discourse. These sentences show an unmarked argumentative structure since they do not contain argumentation markers. These types of sentences mainly use the verb *qopna* ‘to be’ - they are copula sentences and convey conventional or conversational implications.

The opinion that such sentences serve as argumentations is methodologically difficult to justify in the case of simple sentences, but in case of more complex syntactic constructions, we can the method of paraphrasing:

- (7a) *çarmodgena-c ara akvs mosalodnel saprtxe-ze,*  
 idea.NOM.SG-FOC NEG have.S3SG.PRES expecting.DAT.SG danger.DAT.SG-on
- gavipikre me. mas xom arasodes gamoucdia*  
 think.S3SG. I.NOM.SG he.NOM. AFF never experience.S3SG.PERF  
 AOR SG
- šimšil-i da çqurvil-i*  
 hun- and thirst-NOM.SG  
 ger-NOM.SG

‘He has no idea about the impending danger, I thought. - He has never experienced hunger and thirst.’ (Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, *The Little Prince*)

→ Paraphrasing the second sentence

- (7b) *vinaidan mas araso- gamoucdia šimšil-i*  
 as he.NOM.SG never experience.S3SG.PERF hunger-NOM.  
 SG
- da çqurvil-i*  
 and thirst-NOM.SG

‘As he has never experienced hunger and thirst.’

- (8a) *me unda vizruno mas-ze. igi xom*  
 I.NOM.SG M P T- care.S1SG.OPT ( s ) h e . ( s ) h e . N O M . S G AFF  
 CL DAT.SG
- iset-i sust-i da iset-i gulubrçqvil-a*  
 such-NOM.SG weak-NOM.SG and such-NOM.SG naïve.NOM.  
 SG-COP

‘I have to care about her/him. He is so weak and so naïve.’ (Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, *The Little Prince*)

→ Paraphrasing the second sentence

- (8b) *vinaidan igi iset-i sust-i da*  
 as (s)he.NOM.SG such-NOM.SG weak-NOM.SG and
- iset-i gulubrçqvil-a*  
 such-NOM. naïve.NOM.  
 SG SG-COP

‘As he is so weak and so naïve.’

As shown in the examples (7a-b) and (8a-b), we can consider that the particle *xom* is used as an argumentation marker when it is realised in the midfield of declarative sentences.

In interrogative sentences, the particle can be realised in combination with the modal word *šeizleba* ‘can’ (1635 such cases are confirmed in the GNC) and conveys possibility, permission or assumption in all three positions:

- (9) [...] ***xom*** *šeizleba* *tan* *rağac* *gkitxot?*  
 [...] AFF can at the something.NOM.SG ask.S1SG.O2PL.OPT  
 same time

‘[...] I can ask you something at the same time, right?’ (Journal *Liṭeraṭuruli p̄aliṭra*, 2008)

- (10) *magram kac-i-c* ***xom*** *šeizleba* *iqos* *meçq̄vile!*  
 but man-NOM.SG-FOC AFF can be.S3SG. partner.NOM.SG  
 OPT

‘But a man can also be a partner, can’t he!’ (Tariel Čanṭuria, *Orni kuṭeši*)

- (11) *šen-tan* *ertad* *rom ṭraier-it* *vimgzavro*, ***xom*** *šeizleba?*  
 you.DAT.SG- together that trailer-INST. travel.S1SG. AFF can  
 WITH SG OPT

‘Is it possible for me to travel with you in a trailer?’ (Aḳaḳi Gegenava, *Mogzauris d̄giurebi*)

The combination *xom šeizleba* can also be used in declarative clauses:

- (12a) *magram zogžer* *vpikrob:* ***xom*** *šeizleba* *rom*  
 but sometimes think.S1SG.PRES AFF can that  
  
*adamian-s sakme daavicq̄des.*  
 human-DAT. business. forget.S3SG.O3SG.OPT  
 SG NOM.SG

‘But sometimes I think: a human can forget about the business, can’t he.’ (Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, *The Little Prince*)

- (12b) *magram zogžer* *vpikrob:* *šeizleba* ***xom*** *rom*  
 but sometimes think.S1SG.PRES can AFF that  
  
*adamian-s sakme daavicq̄des?*  
 human-DAT. business. forget.S3SG.O3SG.OPT  
 SG NOM.SG

‘But sometimes I think: a human can forget about the business, right?’



(12c)	<i>magram</i>	<i>zogžer</i>	<i>vpikrob:</i>	<i>šeižleba</i>	<i>rom</i>	<i>adamian-s</i>
	but	sometimes	think.S1SG.PRES	can	that	human-DAT.SG
	<i>sakme</i>	<i>daavicqdes</i>				
	business.	forget.S3SG.O3SG.OPT				
	NOM.SG					

‘But sometimes I think: can a human forget about the business?’

In the case of elimination of the particle *xom* as shown in (12c), the dependent clause requires a transformation into an interrogative clause, which can function as a rhetorical question. The paraphrase of this sentence would be: “A man cannot forget his work.” In the case of the transposition of the particle *xom* in the second position in (12b), the affirmative sentence with the semantics of possibility is preserved, but the perspective changes: the speaker expects to receive confirmation from the listener.

The combination *xom šeižleba* can also be in the second position as in the next example, and here too the particle *xom* conveys the expectation of the speaker to receive confirmation:

(13)	<i>ese-c</i>	<b><i>xom</i></b>	<i>šeižleba</i>	<i>iqos</i>	<i>liṭeraṭura?</i>
	this.NOM.SG-FOC	AFF	can	be.S3SG.OPT	literature.NOM.SG
	<i>aman-a-c</i>	<b><i>xom</i></b>	<i>šeižleba</i>	<i>bestseler-is</i>	<i>saxel-i</i>
	this.ERG.SG-EMPH.V-FOC	AFF	can	bestseller-GEN.SG	name-NOM.SG
	<i>moixvečos?</i>				
	gain.S3SG.O3SG.OPT				

‘This can also be literature, right? This can also gain the title of a bestseller?’ (Nene Kviniṭaṣe, *Iaguarebis tekno*)

Declarative clauses with the particle *xom* are characterised by more intensity, the persuasive power of the opinion expressed by the speaker is greater, which is strengthened by the repetition method used in this case. Accordingly, these types of sentences are often found in the speeches of politicians.

In interrogative sentences, the particle *xom* is often found in combination with the negation particle *ar*, although the negation particle itself is not desemanticised (also called semantic bleaching), but the meaning of the sentence does not convey negation on a pragmatic level. In such sentences, both particles *xom* and *ar* should be considered as one functional element ‘*xom+ar*’. In case of transposition and elim-

ination, they are moved or eliminated together. The combination of *xom* and *ar* is used in the initial position during a polite question:

- (14a) *xom ar gciva?* vs. (14b) *gciva?*  
 AFF NEG being cold.S2SG.PRES being cold.S2SG.PRES  
 ‘You are not feeling cold, are you?’ ‘Are you cold?’
- (15a) *xom ar dagaviçqdeba?* vs. (15b) *dagaviçqdeba?*  
 AFF NEG forget.S2SG.O3SG.FUT forget.S2SG.O3SG.FUT  
 ‘You won’t forget, will you?’ ‘Will you forget?’
- (16a) *xom ar geçqineba?* vs. (16b) *geçqineba?*  
 AFF NEG being offended.S2SG.O3SG.FUT being offended.S2SG.O3SG.FUT  
 ‘You won’t feel offended, will you?’ ‘Will you feel offended?’

The combination *xom+ar* is mostly found in the second position, and depending on which verb it is combined with, it conveys different semantics:

- Questions with propositional semantics:

- (17a) *rame xom ar ginda?*  
 something.NOM.SG AFF NEG want.S2SG.O3SG.PRES  
 ‘Do you want anything?’ (Akaçi Gegenava, *Mogzauris dği-urebi*) → offering to bring/buy
- vs.
- (17b) *rame ginda?*  
 something.NOM.SG want.S2SG.O3SG.PRES  
 ‘Do you want something?’ → yes/no question

- Question with the semantics of doubt:

- (18a) *brma xom ar aris?*  
 blind.NOM.SG AFF NEG be.S3SG.PRES  
 ‘(S)he isn’t blind, is (s)he?’ (Niço Lomouri, *Paçia megobrebi*) → expressing doubt
- vs.
- (18b) *brma aris?*  
 blind.NOM.SG be.S3SG.PRES  
 ‘Is (s)he blind?’ → yes/no question

- Question with clarification/inquiring semantics:

(18a) *Pikria*                    *xom*                    *ar*    *ginaxavs?*  
 Pikria.NOM.SG    AFF                    NEG    see.S3SG.O2SG.PRES  
 ‘You haven’t seen Pikria, have you?’ (Mixeil Žavaxišvili,                    → inquiring  
*Arsena marabdeli*)

vs.

(18b) *Pikria*                    *ginaxavs?*  
 Pikria.NOM.SG    see.S3SG.O2SG.PRES  
 ‘Have you seen Pikria?’    → yes/no question

- Rhetorical question:

(19a) *umizezo-d*                    *xom*                    *ar*    *gaqares?*  
 groundless-ADV.SG    AFF                    NEG    expell.S3PL.O3PL.AOR  
 ‘They weren’t expelled without reason, were they?’                    → rhetorical  
 (Radio *Tavisupleba*, 18.02.2004)

vs.

(19b) *umizezo-d*                    *gaqares?*  
 groundless-ADV.SG    expell.S3PL.O3PL.AOR  
 ‘Were they expelled without reason?’    → yes/no question

Undoubtedly, there are more combination possibilities and more semantic classifications, which will be dealt with in an upcoming work, as it would go beyond the scope of this paper.

## CONCLUSIONS

The analysis and the variety of examples in the present paper have shown that the particle *xom*, even though invariant, can trigger different readings depending on the position and combination of other elements. Several relevant factors such as clause type (declarative, interrogative), the position of the particle in the sentence (initial, midfield, final position), the ability to transpose and the resulting scope effects or the combination ability with other uninflectable words in a sentence, determine the functionality and the semantics of the particle in relation to the sentence.

From the presented analysis in this paper leaves, I can conclude as follows:

- In initial or final position, the particle *xom* refers to the whole sentence but triggers different readings:
  - a. In initial position, the affirmation requires confirmation from the perspective of the listener;
  - b. In final position, the affirmation is given from the perspective of the speaker;
- The particle *xom* refers to entire phrases and not to single elements of phrases;
- When combined with the negation particle *ar*, the combination *xom+ar* has to be considered one functional element;
- Depending on the position *xom+ar*, the sentence can have different semantics:
  - a. In initial position, the sentence can convey politeness;
  - b. In midfield position, the following semantics can be conveyed:
    - i. Propositional semantics,
    - ii. Semantics of doubt,
    - iii. Clarification/inquiring semantics,
    - iv. Rhetorical question.

The analysis of the particle *xom* showed that in order to accurately understand and translate Georgian, not only a morphosyntactic but additionally a semantic-pragmatic analysis should be implemented. Of course, there are still many relevant aspects left to research; this paper served to present a first approach and to open the topic for future research.

**ABBREVIATIONS**

ADV	adverbial case	MPTCL	modal particle
AFF	affirmative	NEG	negation
AOR	aorist tense/aspect	NOM	nominative case
COP	copula	O	object
DAT	dative case	OPT	optative
EMPH.V	emphatic vowel	PERF	perfect tense/aspect
ERG	ergative case	PLUPERF	plusquamperfect
EXT.V	extensional vowel	PRES	present tense
FOC	focus	PL	plural
FUT	future tense	S	subject
GEN	genitive case	SG	singular
INST	instrumental case	1/2/3	1 <sup>st</sup> /2 <sup>nd</sup> /3 <sup>rd</sup> person

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# Statistics in Empirical Translation Studies (Challenges of Rustvelology in the Digital Age)

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DOI: [HTTPS://DOI.ORG/10.62343/CJSS.2024.246](https://doi.org/10.62343/CJSS.2024.246)

## ABSTRACT

The present paper addresses the problem of data processing in multilingual parallel corpora. It focuses on the difficulties that can arise in the statistical processing of linguistic data in a multilingual parallel corpus, such as Rustaveli Goes Digital and the solutions that may be useful for overcoming the challenges of empirical translation research. During the statistical analysis of the corpus *Rustaveli Goes Digital*, we encountered certain problems that we will discuss in this article, namely the reliability of the statistical analysis in creating the index. Although many different ready-made tools are successfully used in linguistics for statistical analysis, the data processing of texts can still be very inaccurate without considering the grammatical characteristics of the languages. As empirical material, the text of the epic *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* was chosen in three languages: Georgian, Abkhazian, and Megrelian. The paper will show why ready-made tools such as KWIC and Voyant are not suitable for Caucasian languages and what problems the use of such tools can lead to.

*Keywords:* Caucasian languages, digital Rustvelology, translation studies, data processing

## **INTRODUCTION**

The origins of Quantitative Linguistics date back to ancient Greece and India. One strand of tradition consists of the application of combinatorics to linguistic objects (Biggs, 1979); another is based on elementary statistical surveys, which are referred to under the keywords colometry and stichometry (Pawłowski, 2008). A thematically broader and more continuous development of quantitative linguistics (QL) began in the 19th century. Among other things, this involved sound and letter statistics as preparatory work for the development of stenographic systems and as a basis for language comparisons, the different forms of verse and the duration of sounds in relation to word length, and even the exact dating of an author's works. The studies on sound length and ideas on the interaction of other linguistic characteristics presented the first concepts that led to the development of language laws in the 20th century, most famously Zipf's Law. In the 20th century, several other topics were added: identification of anonymous authors, action quotient, language structure, language change law, type-token relation, development of children's language skills, dynamic aspects of text structure, etc. The objective of QL in the 21st century is more demanding – the formulation of language laws and, ultimately, of a general theory of language in the sense of a set of interrelated language laws. The present paper focuses on the questions of what kind of difficulties can arise in the statistical processing of linguistic data in a multilingual parallel corpus such as Rustaveli Goes Digital, and what solutions can help overcome the challenges of empirical translation research.

### **Parallel corpus '*Rustaveli goes digital*'**

**Shota Rustavelis Epos *The Knight in the Panther's Skin*.** The Epos by Shota Rustaveli is the most significant literary work on Georgian intangible cultural heritage. The Epos was created in the 12th century and has been handed down in over 160 different manuscripts. Its significance has gone far beyond Georgia's borders and now has a prominent place in the history of world literature: the collection of manuscripts of the Epos is included in the UNESCO World Intangible Cultural Heritage Register. The Knight in the Panther's Skin is an excellent literary work and one of the most crucial components of defining the identity of the Georgian nation. The research of this unique literary work with modern methods is not only a challenge for the Kartvelology of the 21st century. However, it will also contribute to the scientific research of Georgian intangible cultural heritage and the internationalization of modern Kartvelology. The creation of a parallel corpus of the Epos' translations is

an important step for conducting interdisciplinary research. In addition, the multilingual parallel corpus can be successfully used in bilingual/multilingual education.

**Research the history of the epos and modern challenges.** Scientific research on the epos began in the 18th century when King Vakhtang VI added a scientific analysis to the first printed book from 1712. This formed the basis for further research on the epos, which gradually developed into a separate field of Kartvelology – into **Rustvelology**.

The history of the Rustvelology covers more than three centuries and can be divided into several stages:

1. Textological research;
2. Textological-lexicological research;
3. The Soviet stage of Rustvelologian studies;
4. Interdisciplinary research;
5. Internationalization of Rustvelologian studies;
6. Digitization of Rustvelology.

The digitalisation of Rustavelology began in 2018 at the University of Frankfurt with the project *Rustaveli goes digital*, led by Prof. Manana Tandashvili, since 2023 by Dr. Mariam Kamarauli. The project aimed to create a **big data** in Rustvelology - a multilingual parallel corpus of translations of Shota Rustaveli's epic in 58 languages. This goal required the solution of the following tasks (Tandaschwili, 2022, p.53):

I. Technical tasks:

- conceptualization of the structure and design of the corpus and preparation of a technical framework;
- digitization of the original text and its translations in 58 languages (including the digitization of several translations that co-exist in one language);
- structural preparation of the texts for their inclusion in the parallel corpus;
- connecting the digitized and structured texts with each other in accordance with chapters and stanzas;

II. Methodological tasks:

- conceptualization of the methodological framework for the study of translation strategies in the corpus;
- development of a methodological framework for creating a basic concept of automatic processing of a poetic parallel corpus;

III. Theoretical tasks:

- aligning the multilingual parallel corpus and preparing the texts for interdisciplinary research (philosophical, religious, sociological, cultural-specific, astrological, etc. terms);
- verification of capabilities of automated translation strategies research.

## **METHODS**

### **Statistical processing of the corpus**

The multilingual parallel corpus *Rustaveli Goes Digital* (Beta version led by Dr. Mariam Kamarauli) currently contains 32 parallel translations of the full text of the epic in 20 languages (Georgian, German, English, Spanish, French, Italian, Turkish, Azerbaijani, Kyrgyz, Russian, Belarusian, Ukrainian, Greek, Arabic, Persian, Armenian, Ossetian, Lithuanian, Mingrelian, Svan).

We have already used statistical processing to analyze address formulas in the parallel corpus to determine and compare the strategies used by the translators. The analysis of the address formula in the translations revealed the following structures (Tandashvili & Kamarauli, 2023, pp. 99-101):

1. The addressee of the communication is lexically given in the address formula (sun); it acts as a vector of the communication channel and ensures the accuracy of the reference. The addressee of communication is often named directly before direct speech, in the initial position of the sentence.
2. An interjection in the address formula (o, sun) serves to open the communication channel and ensures its activation.
3. Using the second-person pronoun or possessive pronoun in the address formula (you, sun; my sun) expresses the speaker's status in the communication act.
4. Using both indicators of expressiveness (an interjection and a second-person pronoun or possessive pronoun) at the same time, "O, my sun," increases the degree of expressiveness and gives more power to the information following in the direct speech.

We compared in 20 translations the statistics of equivalence degree of "sun" (as a denotative or connotative equivalence) and the address formulas in terms of the level of expressiveness. As it turned out, the frequency of use of denotative equivalents of "sun" is directly proportional to the degree of expressiveness (Tandashvili & Kamarauli, 2023, p. 101):

1. Those translators who have systematically chosen the denotative equivalent for “sun” in the address formulas are rendering them with a higher degree of expressiveness. This correlation is confirmed by a lower number in the “difference” column (especially in the case of Wardrop, de la Torre, Barea, and Martinez).
2. The correlation, established as the result of statistical analysis, is relevant from the point of view of a complex evaluation of the quality of a given translation because it clearly shows the translators’ efforts to preserve as much as possible of the original – not only the artistic language of the author but also his philosophical-religious and aesthetic worldview.
3. The results obtained using the corpus linguistic method indicate that the quality of the translation can be “measured” empirically. This, in turn, allows us to determine the strategies selected by the translator and the expediency and appropriateness of their application in the target text.

During the statistical analysis of the corpus *Rustaveli Goes Digital*, we encountered certain problems that we would like to discuss in this article, namely the reliability of the statistical analysis in the creation of the index.

### **Tokenization and accuracy of the statistical processing**

In linguistics, a frequency class is a statistical measure of the frequency of use of a word in a natural language. Frequency classes can be considered on two linguistic levels: a single word form (token) or an entire lexeme with various grammatical forms. The most common statistical analysis is carried out by the type-token relation (TTR), used in quantitative linguistics and quantitative stylistics to measure linguistic diversity in a text. It is defined as the relation of unique tokens divided by the total number of tokens. When tokenizing a text, a list of tokens is created without considering its grammatical representation. In the case of inflected languages, an annotation is required not only to statistically record individual forms of the word but also to assign the various forms to the corresponding lexeme. The accuracy of the frequency of lexemes in a corpus depends heavily on how precisely the grammar of this language is mapped in the annotation system. Compare the frequency of words and lexemes in Vefxistqaosani in GNC.

**Table 1**  
*Frequency of word forms*

← → ↻ Nicht sicher http://gnc.gov.ge/gnc/overview ☆

☰ | 🌐 Transkription 🇧🇪 für K1 🇨🇱 Sprachtypologie un... 🇸🇪 Index of /~gjaeger/... 🇷🇺 Pragmatik\_13\_Satza... 🇩🇪 Texte und Materiale... 🇬🇧 "Übungen zur

ტექსტების სია

ძიება

კონკორდანსი

კოლოკაციები

სიტყვათა სია

ტექსტი

მიმოხილვა

გრამატიკული მახასიათებლები

გაანალიზება

**word** [იტყვა], distinct values: 209 036, ტიპი: string, scope: cpos

Mean length: 4.97; max length: 117

This table shows all values of the attribute, together with their corpus counts.

Sorted  by frequency  alphabetically

გვერდი 1 , მთლიანად: 747. Previous Next | Go to page:

220491 .	3199 არის	1607 სულ	1122 თვალი	839 ხან	685 ყველაზე	563 არაბედ
118471 .	3000 კიდევ	1606 შეიძლება	1118 აბას	837 კაცს	682 ყოველი	563 მარა
76361 და	2987 რაც	1605 ყველაფერი	1060 ერთად	834 რამე	681 ღებრომა	562 ვინც
52003 –	2979 თავი	1580 რადგან	1056 იცოდა	831 მისა	678 გამო	562 სახლში
25280 არ	2837 ისევ	1564 ჩემს	1050 ისიც	830 თავზე	678 იმა	560 პირველი
19811 რომ	2793 კაცი	1547 ორი	1040 თუმცა	828 რამ	673 თურმე	559 იქნებოდა
16874 ?	2702 თავის	1538 მარტო	1017 გინდა	828 ყველას	673 იყვნენ	559 ყველაფერს
15786	2629 ადარ	1532 წინ	1011 კარგად	821 თავდაპირველად	654 მიხდა	558 რასაც
10772 :	2589 თქვა	1512 ერთ	1007 კარგი	819 ვერც	649 მართალია	555 ბიჭი
9618 მაგრამ	2526 ჯერ	1491 ბოლოს	995 იმას	814 ვეღარ	645 რომელსაც	555 თუკი
9599 ...	2408 მუხი	1478 ყველა	985 ]	814 ისინი	644 სადღაც	550 ზედა
9321 თუ	2360 როგორ	1473 ჩუენი	984 აი	814 ყოველ	638 მე	548 რალა
9237 ჟ	2299 როცა	1460 იყოს	977 უახან	811 თორემ	633 რასაკვირველია	539 საქმეს
9213 მი	2294 (	1456 ხოლმე	970 მინა	809 მაქვს	630 კაციც	534 ყოველთვის
9102 რა	2294 )	1448 დროს	956 რომელიც	809 მორის	629 ღედა	533 როდის
8885 ,	2285 თითქოს	1447 მთელი	954 თქვები	806 გაასწორა	628 კანდა	528 ცანა
8806 იყო	2273 ხული	1432 აბა	951 უთხრა	803 ჩვენს	628 მართლაც	528 თითქმის
8287 "	2251 რას	1426 ალბათ	949 ხმა	802 მუხს	627 ახალი	527 კაგო
7588 უნდა	2214 სხვა	1418 მთორე	944 საერთოდ	799 ერთმანეთს	625 თითხში	526 ყოფილია
6780 ეს	2206 მხოლოდ	1410 მას	939 იმიტომ	797 ვითომ	623 უნდადა	525 ძლივს
6680 ამ	2156 ან	1408 გოტა	939 ხელში	797 თვალუბი	619 ოდნებ	522 ფული
6179 არა	2092 იმის	1383 იქნება	938 ხოლო	789 დათა	607 არიან	521 აღარც

**Table 2**  
*Frequency of lexemes*

← → ↻ Nicht sicher http://gnc.gov.ge/gnc/overview ☆

☰ | 🌐 Transkription 🇧🇪 für K1 🇨🇱 Sprachtypologie un... 🇸🇪 Index of /~gjaeger/... 🇷🇺 Pragmatik\_13\_Satza... 🇩🇪 Texte und Materiale... 🇬🇧 "Übungen zur

ძიება

კონკორდანსი

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სიტყვათა სია

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გრამატიკული მახასიათებლები

გაანალიზება

**slemma** [მარტივი ლემა], distinct values: 39 592, ტიპი: string, multi-valued, scope: cpos, abbreviated syntax: /.../

This table shows all values of the attribute, together with their corpus counts.

Sorted  by frequency  alphabetically

გვერდი 1 , მთლიანად: 140. Previous Next | Go to page:

220397 ,	3896 ვინ	2302 როცა	1684 თქვენი	1203 თუთაშხია	989 აი	804 მიში
118450 .	3886 თავისი	2294 (	1683 დანება	1198 საერთარი	985 ]	803 დაპირება
76706 და	3867 ნიღმა	2294 )	1673 სახლი	1196 მევე	962 სიკვდილი	803 ვითომ
51936 –	3856 მაინც	2294 ცხოვრება	1657 მარტო	1193 მიწა	954 ხოლო	801 ქმარი
44886 ??	3710 შეძლება	2285 თითქოს	1620 ნახვა	1191 ვიდრე	940 სტუმარი	794 მოყვლა
33338 არ	3698 არა	2270 მეტი	1606 წინ	1187 მართალი	936 კიდევ	784 ცანა
26263 ყოფნა	3661 საქმე	2230 სად	1580 პირი	1182 დაბრუნება	931 -	783 უე
21458 ის	3621 მუხი	2219 მხოლოდ	1580 რადგან	1175 სწორედ	921 მოხლობა	782 მოყოლა
19925 რომ	3617 ისე	2156 ან	1563 გრძობა	1168 ძმა	921 ყურება	778 ხე
17735 ეს	3454 ტული	2148 ფენი	1563 გოტა	1160 თითხი	921 ჯდობა	772 დაღება
16866 ?	3320 ხომ	2124 ხმა	1546 ამავე	1154 ჯაყო	919 *	771 იქნება
16216 რა	3290 უფრო	2115 ბატონი	1538 ადგილი	1150 თან	910 რაც	771 მიღება
15730	3277 კითხვა	2078 შემდეგ	1507 ბოლოს	1148 ბუერი	909 მიწება	768 ძალი
12642 მე	3266 დღე	2064 უკვე	1494 ადამიანი	1142 დამე	905 შემთხვევა	766 სისხლი
12224 თქმა	3254 რომელი	2056 ხალხი	1489 ერთმანეთი	1138 გასვლა	899 ბოლო	766 ქუჩა
10771 :	3225 როგორც	2055 მთორე	1481 სახე	1127 ცხენი	898 გიორგი	765 მუხე
9569 ...	3199 ;	2012 ჯერ	1459 ხოლმე	1122 ვიღაც	898 ყური	763 გამო
9521 მაგრამ	3092 მუხი	1979 სიყვარული	1457 ყოლა	1120 ფული	895 მინ	759 მთავარი
9348 თუ	3082 დრო	1913 მთელი	1442 აბა	1119 ახალი	892 მხარი	748 უხე
8965 კი	3052 არაფერი	1911 სიტყვა	1436 გოლი	1114 გასწორება	879 საერთოდ	739 უფროსი
8873 "	3027 კე	1886 ხანი	1435 ალბათ	1113 კალაქი	876 ცოგო	736 საუბარი
8286 "	2937 მოსვლა	1835 მი-ეება	1424 ატეება	1096 ლოდინი	873 სახამ	730 მამიხე
8270 თაი	2872 ჩიარ	1828 არა	1418 უარა	1093 თარაზი	872 ზიარა	729 ზიარა



The most frequentative ten word forms (tokens) in GNC: *da* და *and*, *ra* რა *what*, *ar* არ *not*, *me* მე *I*, *tu* თუ *if*, *mas* მას *he/she/it (Dat.)*, *iqo* იყო *was*, *rom* რომ *that*, *ese* ეს *this (also as an definite article)*, *igi* იგი *he/she/it*.

vs.

The most frequentative ten lexemes in GNC: *da* და *and*, *gopna* ყოფნა *to be, is* ის *he/she/it*, *ra* რა *an*, *ar* არ *not*, *es* ეს *this*, *misi* მისი *his/her/its*, *me* მე *I*, *kaci* კაცი *man*, *čemi* ჩემი *my*.

GNC can output statistics according to word class (noun, adjective..), semantical roles (subject, object), functionality (focus), as well as the grammatical features: case, person, TAM, genus verbi and so on.

**Table 3**  
*Frequency of grammatical features*

features [მასსიათებლები], distinct values: 18 419 (distinct atomic values: 318), ტიპი: set, multi-valued, scope: cpos, abbreviated syntax

This table shows all values of the attribute, together with their corpus counts.

Sorted  by frequency  alphabetically

გვერდი 1 , მთლიანად: 2.   | Go to page:

4164200	81804	Pass	30094	SV	11432	LV	4718	Area	1756	Ext	400	<Der:გლ>	
524864	N	77770	Rel:გ	29007	Poss	11311	Refl	4663	DSg	1746	DDat	365	ConjPerf
468669	Punct	71564	NewPl	28119	Dialect	11234	Poss3Sg	4588	IntMark	1728	Encl:მდა	352	Range
447467	Foc	71100	Pres	27747	Loc	11135	Root	4522	DNom	1724	Dir	327	Sent
387645	Pl	70563	Prop	27582	S:1Pl	10868	Impv	4445	PP:შუა	1565	Recip	315	Zoon
354959	Sg	69433	Advb	27459	S:1Sg	10853	Trunc	4429	DoldPl	1486	<IO:Gen>	309	Distr
336545	V	67281	MedPass	27194	Num	10533	Cond	4415	Ord	1479	<AuxTransHum>	304	Encl:მგ
303677	PP	62704	PP:დაბ	26648	PP:კეშ	10442	Meas	4398	PP:მდის	1298	Foreign	297	<Der:უელ>
296610	Encl:IndSp3	61130	DO:2Sg	26251	Ben	10422	PP:თან	4274	IO:2	1267	[Excl]	294	<Dat/Gen>
294686	Nom	60406	Erg	25531	Fut	10292	IO:1Sg	4106	PP:მდის	1180	<Der:ან>	282	>??
291979	Encl:გ	55751	Pers	25405	PP:ბელ	10033	2	4054	NegPart	1173	Imperfective	278	DAdvb
277112	OldPl	54191	Comma	25147	SIndef	9927	Rel	3891	Poss2Sg	1106	Causal	273	Disc
270078	>P	52950	<S:Dat>	25019	Alpha	9863	Perf	3753	Dist	1073	PP:წინ	268	<Gen>
228539	Pv	52659	PP:კეშ	24979	<Der:ური>	9686	Pp	3749	<Der:თური>	1047	Deg	261	DL
218144	Colon	52651	<DO:Dat>	24957	Encl:კე	9603	Encl:IndSp1	3326	Abs	1016	DDSg	259	PP:მეზრ
216995	Old	51235	<S-IO>	24886	<AuxIntr>	9569	Dash	3199	Quote	1005	Coll	253	>ADV
189314	L	50583	Anthr	24520	Nonhum	9115	PP:თის	3188	PP:ზე	977	PP:პირ	232	Letter
187906	A	49558	<S-DO-IO>	24025	Neg	8989	Place	3181	Org	973	PP:კე	223	IO:1
182855	Adv	49260	Part	21940	Opt	8528	DO:3Sg	3034	IO:3Pl	946	DDVoc	194	PP:და
181804	<S:Nom>	48688	Temp	20800	Card	8435	LastName	3009	Med	929	<OldPl>	177	Anim
179102	Dat	48569	Encl:კე	20281	PP:მე	8219	PP:გან	2960	DO:1Pl	920	Symbol	166	DO:1
153897	Pron	47562	IO:2Sg	18877	<Name>	7816	Encl:IndSp2	2944	PassState	880	PP:მდის	141	Conj-II
142552	<S-DO>	45517	MedAct	18375	Dem	7796	Encl:გა	2937	Encl:მე	822	LAT	132	Frac
139287	<DO:Nom>	44369	VN	17422	Quant	7780	FutPart	2914	Approx	977	Iter-II	130	Compl
136700	Act	43094	Impf	17401	Encl:Q	7601	Indef	2818	Poss1Pl	792	[OV]	127	>OBJ

The higher the annotation quality of a corpus, the more accurate and precise the results of the statistical processing of the linguistic data are.

### DISCUSSION

For valuable evaluation of the statistical data, the specific characteristics of the respective languages should be taken into account; otherwise, the results of the statistical processing of the linguistic data will be inaccurate. This is particularly important for statistical analyses in parallel corpora. Below, we will present this on

the example of the multilingual parallel corpus Rustaveli Goes Digital in the case of Abkhazian and Megrelian translations of the epic *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* by Shota Rustaveli.

### Tokenization in Abkhazian

In computational linguistics, tokenization refers to the segmentation of a text into word-level units. A token is a character string that is assigned a type by a formal grammar. The token forms the basic lexical unit for the parser. As mentioned above, the accuracy of the frequency of lexemes in a corpus depends heavily on how closely the grammar of that language is mapped in the annotation system. We will show here what happens when tokenization a non-annotated corpus of Abkhazian. As a sample text, we take two Abkhazian translations of Rustaveli's epic, which are by Dimitri Gulia and by Mushni Lasuria.

### Frequency of pronouns

The frequency of use of pronouns is one of the central common statistical indicators during the automatic processing of texts. The first and second person pronouns are generally characterized by the highest frequency among the personal pronouns. The word frequency via KWIC of the Abkhazian translations is given in the table 4 below:

**Table 4**

*Comperison of the word frequency in both Abkhasian transitions by Gulia and Lasuria*

Dimitri Gulia		Mushni Lasuria	
Frequency	Token	Frequency	Token
9937	,	11829	,
1999	.	1564	!
1666	;	1447	—
1537	и	1281	.
1075	сара	888	и
967	са	810	:
940	ус	762	»
822	убри	757	«
768	«	703	сә
687	:	541	...
680	»	395	?
644	ya	370	зетъ
591	урт	316	сара
580	уара	303	ус
390	!	289	ya
360	абра	249	урт
348	убра	228	уара
317	уака	192	иара
308	иара	187	автандил
297	нас	172	;
294	хаа	157	ха
285	абни	153	нас

The frequency of the personal pronouns (1st, 2nd and 3rd person in singular and plural) is listed individually in the corpus:

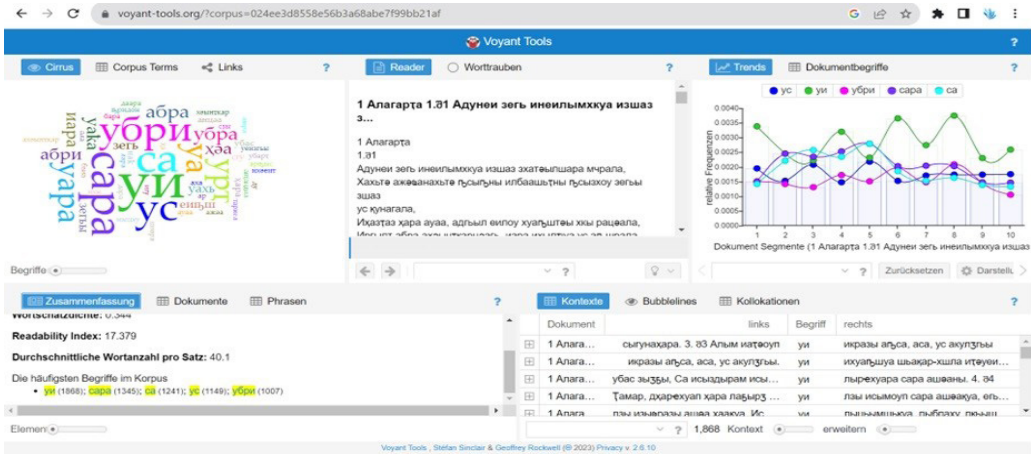
<i>Gulia</i>	<i>Lasuria</i>
сапа 1075	са 703
са 967	сапа 317
ya 644	ya 289
уара 580	уара 228
иара 308	иара 192
ха 176	ха 157

and so on...

The statistical processing of the texts via Voyant tools (<https://voyant-tools.org/>) can be visualized by five most frequently occurring words.

Figure 1

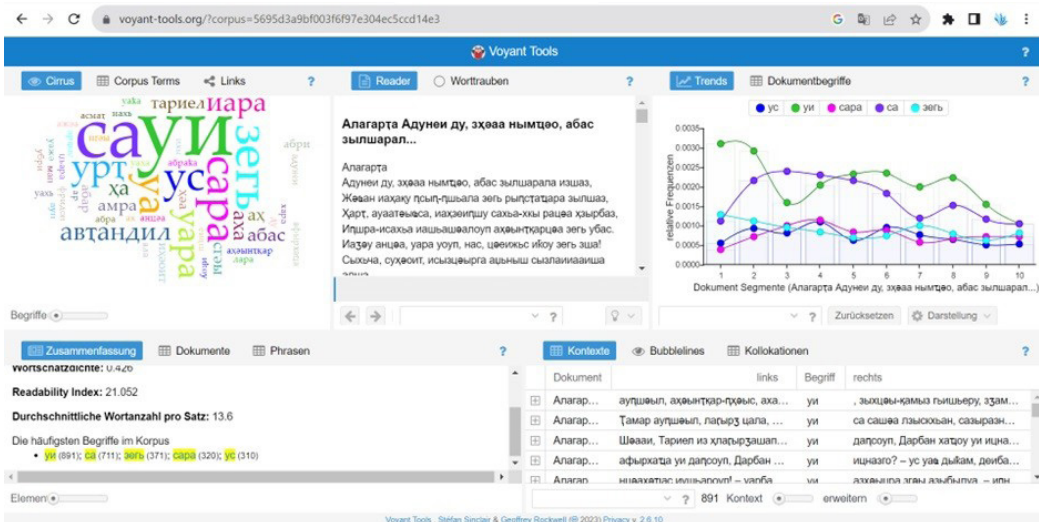
Visualization of the statistical processing of Dimitri Gulia's Abkhazian translation



The frequency of personal pronouns in the Georgian-Abkhazian parallel corpus of „Vefkhistqaosani“ shows much more grammatical varieties in the Abkhazian translations than in the source text itself. This is due to the differentiation of personal pronouns according to form and semantic class in Abkhazian. There are two forms of personal pronouns in the Abkhazian language: long forms such as *саpa* (1pers.), *уаpa*, *баpa* (2. pers.) (marked with -pa) and short forms - *са*, *уа/ба* (without marking). The second personal pronouns in singular are additionally marked according to genus (*уаpa* M and *баpa* F) and the third personal pronouns in singular also (*иаpa* M, *лаpa* F, *иаpa* N).

Figure 2

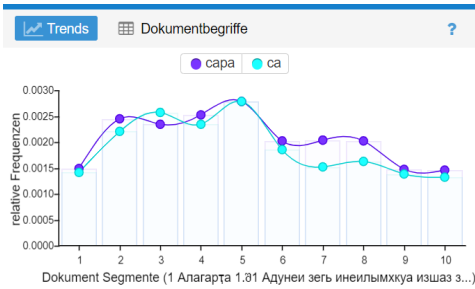
Visualization of the statistical processing of Mushni Lasuria's Abkhazian translation



The comparison of the frequency between the long and short forms of the personal pronouns is shown in the following diagrams:

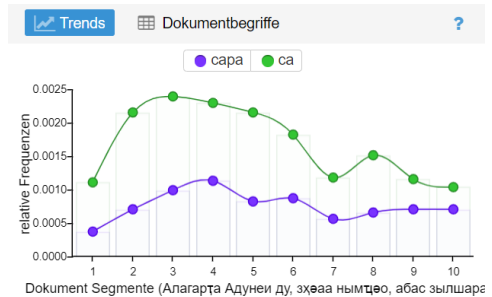
*Translation by Gulia*

**Figure 3**

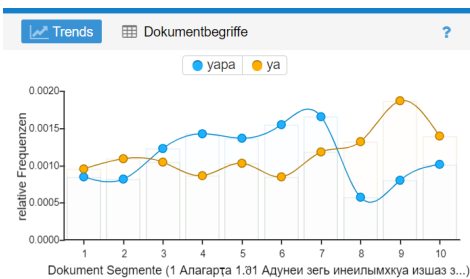


*Translation by Lasuria*

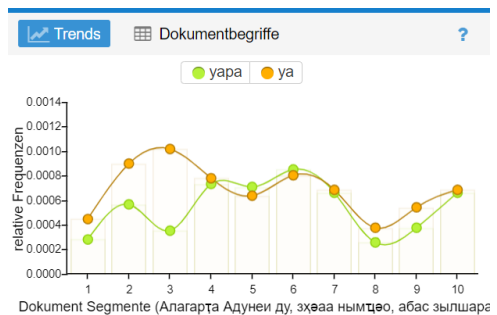
**Figure 4**



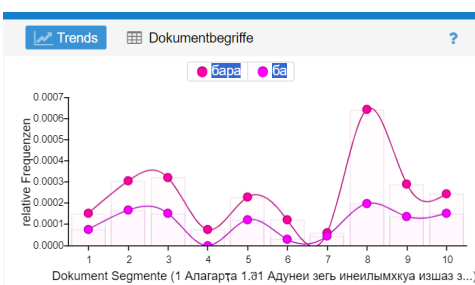
**Figure 5**



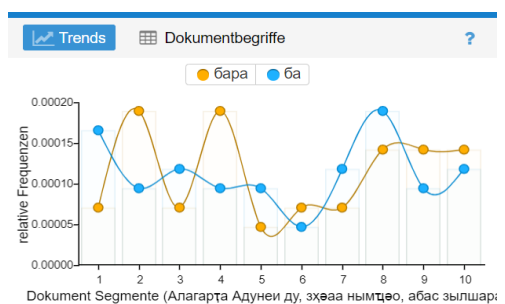
**Figure 6**



**Figure 7**



**Figure 8**



The more precise statistics in both translations show the differences in the use of long and short forms of personal pronouns according to the genus. As the comparison of personal pronouns differentiated by gender shows, the masculine personal pronoun occurs more frequently than the feminine personal pronoun:

2. Pers. Pron. M - 1224 (**yapa** 580 / **ya** 644), 3. Pers. Pron. M – 310 (**иара** 308/ **иа** 2)

cf.:

2. Pers. Pron. F - 200 (**бара** 138 / **ба** 62), 3. Pers. Pron. F – 183 (**лара** 140/ **ла** 43)

**Table 5**

*Comparison of long and short forms of personal pronouns in the Abkhazian Translations*

<i>Personal pronoun</i>	<i>Genus</i>	<i>Gulias Translation</i>	<i>Lasurias Translation</i>
I person	-	саpa 1075	са 703
		са 967	саpa 316
II person	M	ya 644	ya 289
		yapa 580	yapa 228
	F	бapa 138	бapa 48
		ба 62	ба 48
III person	M	иapa 308	иapa 192
		иа 2	иа 1
	F	лаpa 140	лаpa 90
		ла 43	ла 56
I person, pl.	-	ҳapa 201	ҳa 157
		ҳa 176	ҳapa 58
II person, pl.	-	шәapa 95	шәapa 33
		шәa 53	шәa 15
III person, pl.	-	дapa 90	дapa 59

Regarding the frequency of use of long and short forms of personal pronouns, Gulia clearly favors the longer forms (except the 2nd personal pronoun masculine). However, Lasuria presents a different picture: the longer forms are favored only for the first personal pronoun in singular and plural, as well as for the second personal pronoun feminine. The question of what causes the high frequency of long or short forms in Lasuria and Gulia's translations requires additional corpus-linguistic and contextual analysis. This is a separate research topic, and we will not address this issue here.

This statistical analysis confirms the need to account for the grammatical features of the language when annotating the corpus in order to capture both the general (part-of-speech) features and the specific characteristics. For instance, these words

in Abkhazian should be annotated as personal pronouns, but also according to gender and form (long or short). We did this manually in our case, but in an annotated corpus, this should occur automatically.

### Frequency of nouns in Abkhazian

The nominal morphology of Abkhazian differs from Kartvelian and the East Caucasian languages: Abkhazian has no declension, only the category of number, definiteness and possessiveness. This phenomenon is illustrated by the nouns in Abkhazian: the nouns are often marked by definiteness or possessive markers, which appear as prefixes to the nouns. The lexeme *ძზე* *sun*, which occurs 309 times in the original text, corresponds to several inflected forms in the Abkhazian translations, which are marked by possessiveness differentiated by gender and thus result in the content of a noun phrase.

**Table 6**

*Comparison of the “sun” in source language and target language*

	<i>Rustaveli</i>	<i>Gulia</i>	<i>Lasuria</i>	<i>Grammatical category</i>	<i>Content</i>
<i>Word</i>	ძზე „sun“	ამრა 134	ამრა 111	Definiteness	<i>the sun</i>
		რჲმრა 3	რჲმრა 4	Possessiveness, number (3.Pl)	<i>their sun</i>
		სჲმრა 17	სჲმრა 11	possessiveness (1. Sg)	<i>my sun</i>
		უმრა 5	უმრა 10	Possessiveness, genus (2.Sg.M)	<i>your (M) sun</i>
		ჲამრა 3	ჲამრა 10	Possessiveness, number (1.Pl)	<i>our sun</i>
		იმრა 6	იმრა 9	Possessiveness, genus (3.Sg.M)	<i>his sun</i>
<i>Frequency</i>	309	169	176		

For clarity, we will cite some examples from the source text of the epos and the Abkhazian translation by Gulia:

1.51. *ჲინაჲინგჲყი ამრა იაჲყილგან, იაჲჲახჲყინ ამრა ჲინაჲინზარც!*  
*Tinatin was more beautiful than **the sun**, **the sun** wanted to be Tinatin.*

Cf.

თინატიბი **ძზესა** სჲწუნობდა, მაგრა **ძზე** თინატიბინებდა.  
*Tinatin resented the **sun**, but the **sun** was shining.*

38.920 *ავჲანდილგჲყი დიგჲალაშჲეიტ იმრა* ჲაშა, დჲყბჲყილჲა,  
*Avtandil also remembered **his** bright **sun**, which burns him.*



Cf.

ავთანდილსცა მოეგონა მისი მზე და საყვარელი.

*Avtandil also remembered his sun and lover.*

34.820 Аҟәынтқар: „Иаҟцәызма **ҟамра**, имзахама, нарха змам?“

*King: „Do we have lost our sun, it has become a moon without life?“*

Cf.

მეფემან ჰკითხა: „წასრულა მზე დაუდგომლად, მთვარულად?“

*The king asked: „Has gone, quietly disappeared like the moon?“*

The Georgian does not have a grammatical category of definiteness. In the case of the lexical item „sun“, however, the reference is clearly definite (on the semantic level). This is morphologically marked in the Abkhazian translation by the **a-**prefix: **a-mpa** (1.51).

**Table 7**

*Expression of definiteness in Abkhazian*

<i>Language</i>	<i>Lexem</i>	<i>form of language expression</i>	<i>Level</i>
Georgian	მზე	Implicative expression of reference	Semantic level
Abkhasian	a-mpa	explicative expression of reference	Morphologic level

The following example demonstrates the ability of the Abkhazian language to indicate the category of possession in nouns by means of prefix morphemes, which are additionally differentiated by gender in the 2nd and 3rd person singular. In our case, it is the noun „sun“, to which the masculine possessive prefix of the 3rd person **h-** is added: **h-mpa** (38.920). This noun in Abkhasian corresponds to the noun phrase **მისი მზე** „his sun“ in the source text:

**Table 8**

*Comparison by expression of the possessiveness in Georgian and Abkhazian*

<i>Language</i>	<i>Lexeme</i>	<i>Structure</i>	<i>Form of language expression</i>	<i>Level</i>
Georgian	<b>მისი მზე</b>	NP	Explicative reference expression (with person and deixis specification)	Morphosyntaktic level
Abkhasian	<b>h-mpa</b>	N	Explicative reference expression (with the specification of person and genus)	Morphologic level

Unlike the previous example, in this case, the reference is explicitly expressed in both languages, however, in addition to the difference in grammatical categories, they also differ from a structural point of view, which is both from the point of view of quantitative processing of the text (statistical analysis, e.g. during tokenization) and from the qualitative point of view (in translation studies, when parallelizing the text in establishing equivalence purpose) creates certain problems:

<i>Avtandil also</i>	<i>remembered</i>	<i>his sun</i>	<i>bright</i>	<i>which burns him</i>
Автандил-ггы	дигәалашәеит	и-мра	лаша	дызбылуа



ავთანდილსცა	მოგონა	მისი	მზე	და	საყვარელი
<i>Avtandil also</i>	<i>remembered</i>	<i>his</i>	<i>Sun</i>	<i>and</i>	<i>lover</i>

The third example differs significantly from the two previous cases:

34.820 Ахәынтқар: „Иахцәызма **хамра**, имзахама, нарха змам?“

King: „Do we have lost **our sun**, it has become a moon without life?“

Cf.

მეფემან ჰკითხა: „წასრულა **მზე** დაუდგომლად, მთვარულად?“

The king asked: „Has **the sun** gone [from us], quietly disappeared like the moon?“

In the Abkhazian translation, the noun sun **хамра** (34.820) is accompanied by the **x-** prefix of the 1st person plural. A two-person verb renders the predicate in the Abkhazian sentence:

иа - х - цәызма

vs

წასულ-ა

DO<sub>3Sg.</sub> - S<sub>1pl.</sub> -V<sub>tr.</sub>

V<sub>Int.</sub> -S<sub>3Sg.</sub>

The grammatical and pragmatical modification of the Georgian verb in the Abkhazian translation (V<sub>Int.</sub> -S<sub>3Sg.</sub> > DO<sub>3Sg.</sub> - A<sub>1pl.</sub> -V<sub>tr.</sub>) is conditioned by the context: the departure of Avtandil causes the regret of the king Rostevan and also the royal court of Arabia. Accordingly, in the Abkhazian translation, the translator changes the perspective of king Rostevan's statement: Avtandil's departure is told from the

perspective of the king, which causes a grammatical change in the predicate of the Abkhazian sentence: an additional actant enters the verb ია-ჩ-ცაყჷჷმა (1st person plural), which is also reflected in the noun through the possessive marker: ჩ-ამრა.

**Table 9**

Language	Lexeme	Syntaktische Funktion	Structure	Features
Georgian	მზე	Subject	N	N <sub>Nom.Sg.</sub>
Abkhazian	ჩ-ამრა	Direct object	PossPron+N	N <sub>Sg.</sub> +PossPron <sub>3Pl.</sub>

This strategy used by the translator creates certain problems when parallelizing the text (in order to establish equivalence):

<i>King</i>	<i>Do we have lost</i>	<i>our sun</i>	<i>it has become a moon</i>	<i>life</i>	<i>having without</i>
ა-ჩაყინტყარ	იაჩცაყჷჷმა	ჩამრა	იმზაჰამა	ნარჰა	ჷმამ

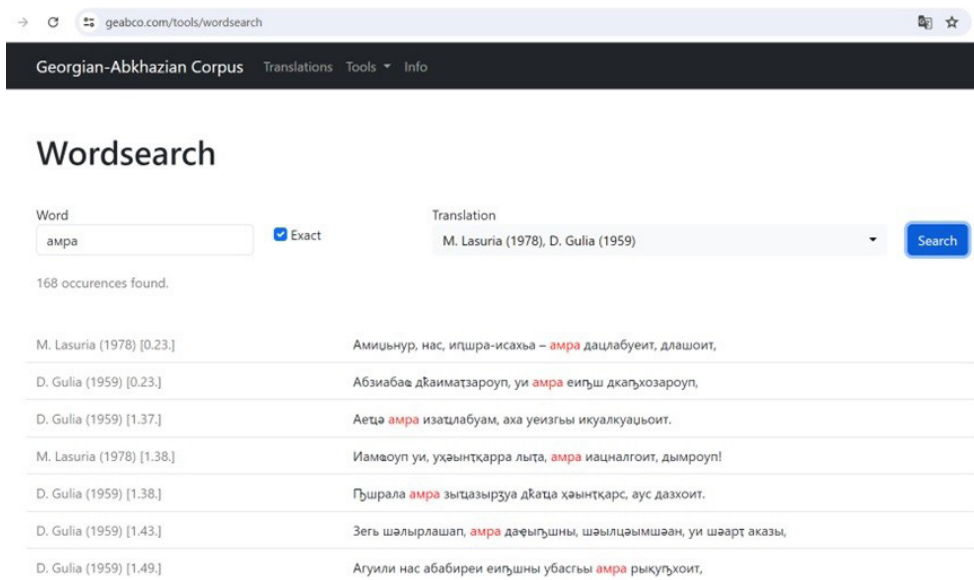
მეფემან	ჰკითხა	წასრულა	მზე	დაუდგომლად	მთვარულად
<i>The king</i>	<i>asked</i>	<i>to have gone</i>	<i>sun</i>	<i>disappeared</i>	<i>like the moon</i>

A few examples given here are only a hint of the problems that can arise during the statistical processing of the Georgian-Abkhazian parallel corpus via simple statistical analyses due the texts are not annotated. Today, only a simple search in the corpus is possible:(See Figure 9)

The above problem was solved by Paul Meurer in Abkhazian National Corpus (*The Abkhaz National Corpus*, n.d.) The AbNC was developed in the years 2016–2018 in a project financed by USAID, with participants from Sukhumi, Tbilisi, Frankfurt and Bergen. It comprises more than 10 million tokens of texts from various genres and is morphologically annotated. The corpus is hosted in the Corpuscle corpus management tool, which has advanced possibilities for searching and viewing the corpus texts. Simple search allows the search to word forms, but the advanced search allows you to search by word, lemma, slemma, stlemma or grammatical features.

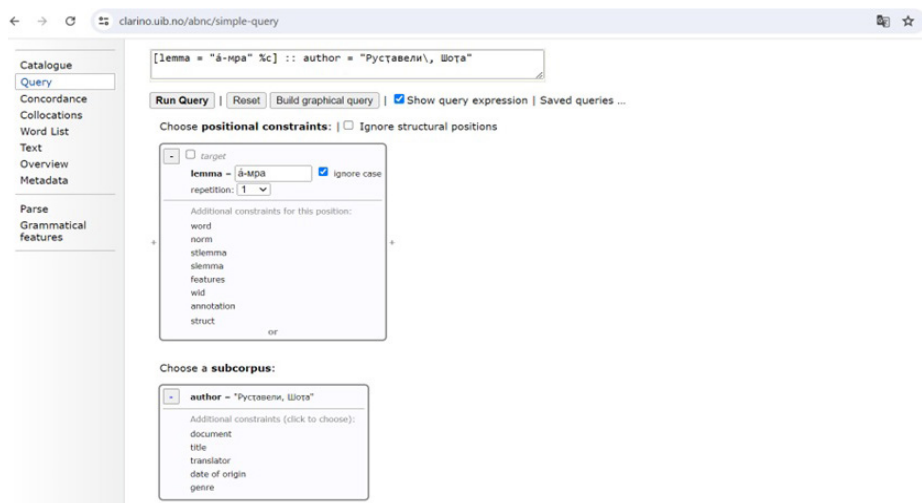
The search can be limited to certain subcorpus or text, as in the given case: word form is searched only in the Abkhazian translation of Shota Rustaveli’s epic.

**Figure 9**  
*Search result in Georgian-Abkhazian corpus*

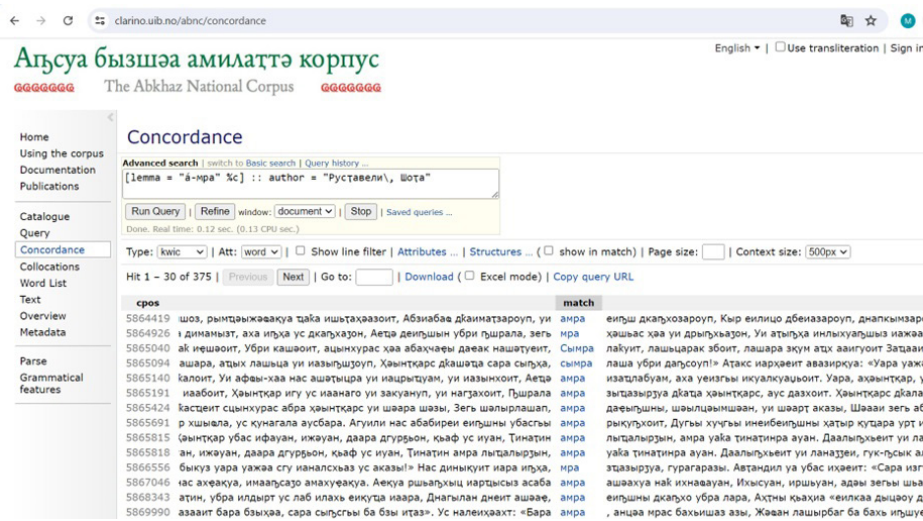


The difference between statistical analysis of raw texts and annotated texts is enormous. Precise statistical processing of the data in the parallel corpus Rustaveli goes digital requires a high quality of annotation for all languages integrated into the parallel corpus so that the parallel corpus can be used efficiently for statistical data processing.

**Figure 10**  
*Advanced search of lemma *а́-мра* in Abkhazian National Corpus*



**Figure 11**  
 Concordance of lemma *ა-მრა* „the sun“



### Special features of the rendering of negation in Megrelian

In this section of the paper, I will further discuss the problematic aspects of statistical data processing in the multilingual parallel corpus *Rustaveli goes digital* using the example of the Megrelian translations of the epic. In particular, I will address the issue of how the category of negation is rendered in Georgian and Megrelian and the challenges of tokenization in the Georgian-Megrelian parallel corpus.

In Georgian, the category of negation is conveyed through both verb and noun morphology. The particles used in verb morphology form a three-member system: *არ* (not), *ვერ* (can't), and *ბე* (don't). According to scientific literature, their functional-semantic distribution is as follows: *არ* expresses categorical negation, *ვერ* indicates the negation of possibility, and *ბე* denotes prohibition. However, the intensity of the semantic function of these negation particles can be modified by combining them with verbs in different screeves. For example, in the screeves of the third series of the tense-aspect-mood (TAM) system, the particle *არ* loses its categorical nature and conveys a neutral negation (Kurdadze et al., 2022, p. 208). In some TAMs, the particle *ბე* expresses a threat (usually in combination with the particle *აბა aba*) or a wish; it is also used in curse formulas. (See Table 10)

Functional semantics of the negation particles become much more complicated when considering semantic groups of verbs or syntactic constructions which they can build:

- a) The particle *არ* does not express categorical negation in verbs that cannot combine with the particle *ვერ*. Cf.: *არ მწყურია I'm not thirsty*, *არ შემიძლია I can not*,

**Table 10***Distribution of negation particles in Georgian*

	<i>Categorical Negation</i>	<i>Negation of Possibility</i>	<i>Prohibition</i>	<i>Neutral Negation</i>
I Series	არ	ვერ	ნუ	-
II Series	არ	ვერ	-	-
III Series	-	-	(ნუ)	არ

არ მესმის *I don't hear* in contrast to \*ვერ მწყურია, \*ვერ შემოიძლია, \*ვერ მესმის (Djorbenadze 1984: 141).

- b) In addition, the negation particle ვერ is not used with statical verbs არ აწერია *it is not written on it*, არ ახატია *it is not painted on it* in contrast to \*ვერ აწერია, \*ვერ ახატია, and inversive verbs (verbs with a dative construction in the present tense): არ მშია *I'm not hungry*, არ მიყვარს *I don't love it* in contrast to \*ვერ მშია, \*ვერ მიყვარს (Chumburidze, 1970, p. 42), with potential: არ იჭმევა *not edible*, არ ისმევა *not drinkable* in contrast to \*ვერ იჭმევა, \*ვერ ისმევა (Machavariani, 2002, p. 100) and with verbs that express not having or lacking a property: არ გააჩნია/არ მოეპოვება *he/she/it does not possess/does not own* in contrast to \*ვერ გააჩნია, \*ვერ მოეპოვება (Chumburidze, 1970, pp. 42-43).

**Table 11***Distribution of negation particles in Georgian by different verb types*

<i>Type of verb</i>	<i>Categorical Negation</i>	<i>Negation of Possibility</i>	<i>Neutral Negation</i>
Inversive verbs	-	ვერ	არ
Statical verbs	-	ვერ	არ
Verbs with potentialis		ვერ არ	-
Verbs of existence	-	ვერ	არ

The distribution of negation particles gives an interesting picture in different grammatical moods, in particular, the particle ვერ cannot be confirmed with imperative. It is usually used with indicative and conjunctive. The particle ნუ, on the contrary, is used with imperative and optative forms (Chumburidze, 1970, p. 42). (See Table 12)

The use of the particles ნუ and არ on a pragmatic level shows an interesting picture: these particles can convey identical functional content by combining with different TAM forms of the verb. For example, the negative verb form in the conjunctive II with ნუ particle - ნუ დაწერდა - has the same pragmatic content as the negative verb form in the perfect II with არ particle - არ დაეწერა.



**Table 12***Distribution of negation particles in different moods*

Mood	არ	ვერ	ნუ
Indicative	+	+	(+)
Imperative	+	=	+
Conjunctive	+	+	(-)

The semantic function of the particles არ and ვერ concerning the act of communication is also interesting: Although ვერსად(აც) ვერ წახვალ (*you cannot go anywhere*), formally should convey the negation of possibility: in a particular context it is used to convey the semantics of a categorical prohibition: არ წახვალ (*you will not go anywhere*).

Furthermore, this semantics can be seen more clearly in the idiomatic expression ფეხსაც ვერ მოიცვლი, which, despite the presence of the particle ვერ, expresses a clear prohibitive - „You will not change your foot under any circumstances“ = I forbid you to move from the spot. So, the particle ნუ can express a categorical negation in the present tense if the action has already begun. In such a case, არ გააკეთო (NegPart არ +Imperative) and ნუ აკეთებ (NegPart ნუ+Present) convey the same thing functionally and semantically *don't do it*.

The three-part system of negative particles (არ *ar*, ვერ *ver*, ნუ *nu*) presented in the Georgian language corresponds to the two-part system in Megrelian: ვა(რ) and ნუ. The particle ვა(რ) in Megrelian conveys both functions of არ and ვერ particles in Georgian. ვა is not an independent element and is not written separately, it is attached to the verbal form and creates synthetic morphological forms of the negative verb. Writing the negation particle ვა together with the verb is also facilitated by the fact that it is included as an infix in verb forms which has a complex preverbs: დოთ-ვა-დო-ხოღუ *dot-va-do-doxu* (დოთუ-ვა-დო-ხოღუნ *dote-va-do-doxun*) *he/she/it does not sit down* „არ ჯღება“ (Khubua, 1942, p. 744).

With the forms of potentialis, the ვა particle corresponds to the Georgian ვერ particle in its function and conveys the negation of the possibility. The fact that Megrelian does not and cannot differentiate between არ and ვერ particles is compensated for in the verb form (Kiria et al., 2015, p. 623).

Cf.:

ვა-ჭარუნს *he/she/it does not write* (Pres., Act.) vs ვე-ეჭარუ<ვა-იჭარ *it cannot be written* (Fut., Pass.), ვა-აჭარუ *he/she/it cannot write* (Fut., Act.)

For the statistical analysis of Megrelian texts, the negation particle ნუ is irrelevant, as it is always written separately. Therefore, we will not discuss it here and will

instead return to the main issue: the problem that arises during tokenization due to the negation particle ჰა being written with the verb.

As is known, functional elements stand out with the highest frequency in the statistical processing of data. Among them is the negation particle არ. The table shows the highest frequency words in the Georgian National Corpus diachronically:

**Table 13**

*Tokens with the highest frequency in comparison*

Old Georgian	Middle Georgian	Modern Georgian	GRC
და	და	და	და
იგი	ყოფნა	არ	ეს
ყოფ(ნ)ა	ის	ყოფნა	ის
რომელი	რა	ის	რომ
ის	არ	რომ	არ
არ	ეს	ეს	ყოფნა
რამეთუ	მისი	რა	რომელი
ყოველი	მე	მე	რა

As the statistical analysis of parallel texts of Georgian and Megrelian proverbs revealed, the Georgian negation particle არ takes the second place in terms of frequency, and in the statistical analysis of Megrelian texts, the particle conveying the category of negation is not found separately at all (Jgharkava, 2024, p. 25). (See Table 14)

The same issue arises with the **Rustaveli corpus**: it is impossible to accurately measure the statistics of the negation particle ჰა in the Megrelian translation of the epic. Unlike in Georgian, the Megrelian negation particle ჰა forms a token only when combined with the verb, resulting in an inaccurate count from the perspective of statistical processing of negation.

We present the mentioned problem on the example of the stanza 3.90:

რა ჰასუხი არა გასცა, მონა გარე შემობრუნდა,  
 როსტანს ჰკადრა: „შემიტყვია, იმას თქვენი არა უნდა;  
 თვალნი მზეებრ გამირეტდეს, გული მეტად შემიდრწუნდა,  
 ვერ ვასმინე საუბარი, მით დავყოვნე ხანი მუნ, და-“.

*Since he did not answer, the slave went back,  
 He said to Rosten: „I understood that he will listen to nothing more from you;  
 My eyes were dazzled as by the sun; my heart was sorely troubled.*

**Table 14**

*Comparison of frequency of the Georgian and Megrelian proverbs*

Word	Count
და	19
არ	17
ერთი	7
კაცი	6
ვერ	4
აქსო	3
დროზე	3
ერთხელ	3
რომ	3
უნდა	3
ღობეს	3
აკლდეზოდესო	2
ან	2
არც	2
გამოსაშვები	2
გამოშვავო	2
ბატყდება	2
ბაჭირვება	2
ბინდ	2
ბული	2

Total Token: 503      TTR: 0.8170974  
Total Type: 411

Word	Count
დო	22
კოჩი	6
რენია	6
ართი	5
ოვო	5
უჯგუნია	5
ჩხომი	4
ხილო	4
ჯგირი	4
ართმაზ	3
დიდი	3
ვაულუნია	3
მუმი	3
ულუნია	3
მარა	3
მხვამი	3
წყარი	3
გეშუანი	2
დიდა	2
დროს	2

Total Token: 485      TTR: 0.8061855  
Total Type: 391

*I could not make him the conversation to hear, so I stayed there for a long time.*

Translation by Kaka Jvania (3.92):

მონას მუთუნქ ვაგურთუნი : ღირთ დო უწუ ხენწიფეს  
 თამ შევატყვი ი კოს თქვანი : მუთუნ ვაკო მხვას წუხენსღ  
 გურქ შემეწუხ თოლქ მიდამირთ : ვაბხვალამუქ მა თენერსღ  
 ომ უწუენ ართ ვარჩქილე : შურო პასუხის ვერზენსღ.

*When the slave **could do nothing**, he returned and said to the king.*

*I understand it this way, he **doesn't want anything** from you, something else was worrying him.*

*My heart was troubled, my eyes darkened: I've **never experienced** anything like it.*

*If you've told him a hundred times, he **doesn't even understand: he doesn't give** any answer at all.*

Translation by Gedevan Shanava (3.90):

მონას მუთუნქ ვაგმაღინუ მუკირთ დო თეში ქმორთუა,  
 ხენწფე თქვანი ის ვარჩქილე მონაქ ენა თამი თქუა,  
 თოლქ ქამისკიდ თიშ ჯინამა, გურქუ დახე წამირთუა,  
 ვაგმაგონუ ნარაგაღქ აღრეთ თიშენი ვამმართუა.

*The slave could not find out anything, turned out and came back.*

*King, he does not understand you - The slave said it like this.*

*I could not take my eyes off, my heart was almost broken.*

*I couldn't make him listen to what was said, and that's why I couldn't come back in time.*

The statistics of the 10 most frequently occurring words in comparison are listed in the Table 14:

**Table 15**

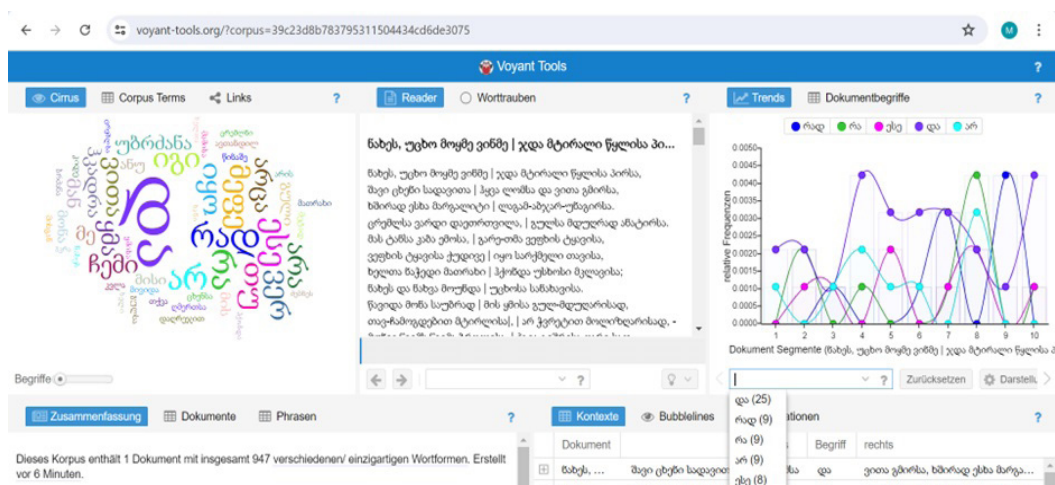
*Most frequently occurring words in comparison*

Source text	Translation by Jvania	Translation by Shanava
და (25)	დო (23)	დო (23)
რად (9)	თემი (8)	მაფაქ (9)
რა (9)	ჩქიმი (7)	მუს (7)
არ (9)	მუმი (7)	რდუ (6)
ესე (8)	ხენწიფექ (6)	მა (6)
მეფე (7)	მა (6)	ჩქიმ (5)
იყო (7)	ის (6)	უწუ (5)
იგი (7)	ვარ (6)	რე (5)
თუ (7)	გური (6)	მუთუნ (5)
ვერ (7)	აფუ (6)	კოჩი (5)

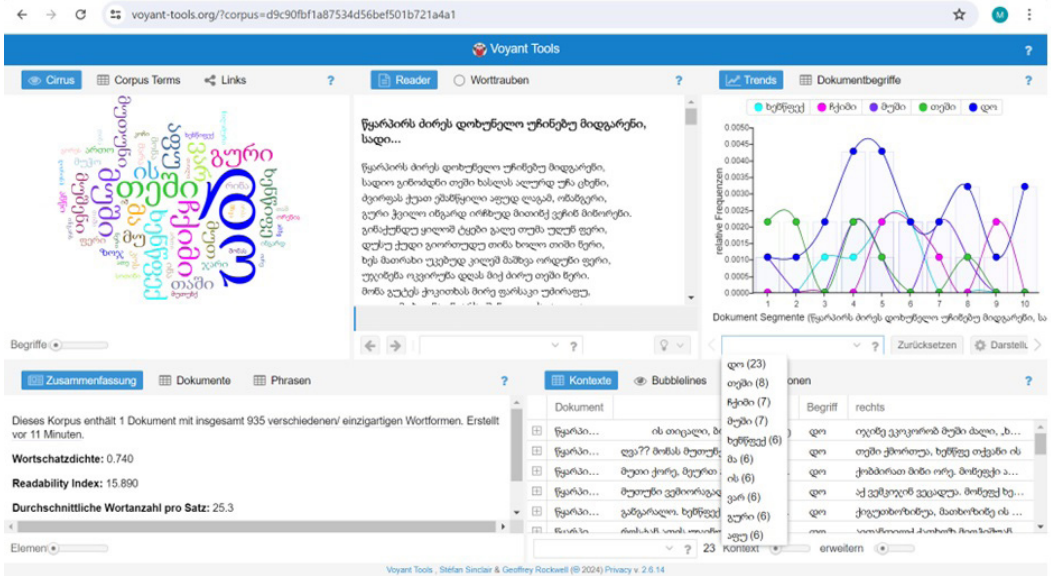
Cf.: Mapping the statistical processing of the chapter III in Voyant:

**Figure 12**

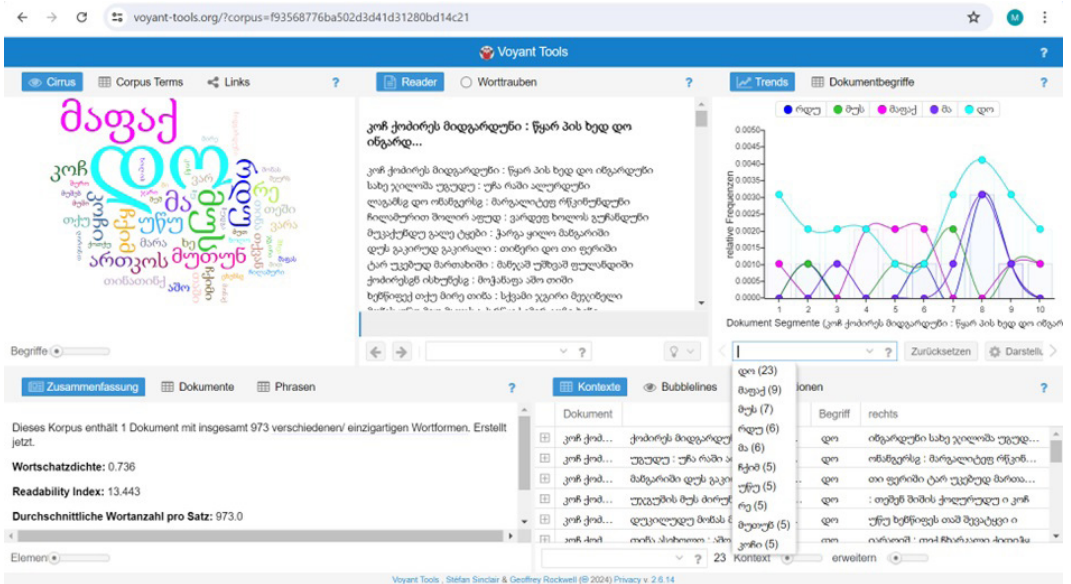
*Georgian Text in Voyant*



**Figure 13**  
*Megrelian translation by Jvania in Voyant*



**Figuer 14**  
*Megrelian translation by Shanava in Voyant*



Comparison of word frequency in source and target text of the epic:

Figure 15

Comparison of word frequency in source and target text in KWIC

<i>Rustaveli</i>	<i>Jvanias translation</i>	<i>Shanavas translation</i>																																																																																																																																																												
<p>WordList - VEPXU.TXT</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Word</th> <th>Count</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>და</td><td>902</td></tr> <tr><td>არ</td><td>784</td></tr> <tr><td>ვითა</td><td>237</td></tr> <tr><td>ვარ</td><td>214</td></tr> <tr><td>აწ</td><td>197</td></tr> <tr><td>არა</td><td>179</td></tr> <tr><td>ესე</td><td>155</td></tr> <tr><td>ვით</td><td>129</td></tr> <tr><td>ვინ</td><td>129</td></tr> <tr><td>ავთანდილ</td><td>117</td></tr> <tr><td>გული</td><td>114</td></tr> <tr><td>ვარ</td><td>106</td></tr> <tr><td>გულსა</td><td>101</td></tr> <tr><td>ანუ</td><td>79</td></tr> <tr><td>ამბავი</td><td>78</td></tr> <tr><td>ვარა</td><td>77</td></tr> <tr><td>ასრე</td><td>71</td></tr> <tr><td>ამას</td><td>69</td></tr> <tr><td>არცა</td><td>69</td></tr> <tr><td>არის</td><td>61</td></tr> <tr><td>ერთი</td><td>58</td></tr> <tr><td>ვარდი</td><td>56</td></tr> <tr><td>დძე</td><td>55</td></tr> <tr><td>ამა</td><td>50</td></tr> <tr><td>ამათ</td><td>49</td></tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Total Token: 48280      TTR: 0.3084921 Total Type: 14894</p>	Word	Count	და	902	არ	784	ვითა	237	ვარ	214	აწ	197	არა	179	ესე	155	ვით	129	ვინ	129	ავთანდილ	117	გული	114	ვარ	106	გულსა	101	ანუ	79	ამბავი	78	ვარა	77	ასრე	71	ამას	69	არცა	69	არის	61	ერთი	58	ვარდი	56	დძე	55	ამა	50	ამათ	49	<p>WordList - გვაგაა.txt</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Word</th> <th>Count</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>დომ</td><td>1051</td></tr> <tr><td>მა</td><td>391</td></tr> <tr><td>რე</td><td>346</td></tr> <tr><td>მე</td><td>262</td></tr> <tr><td>მარა</td><td>218</td></tr> <tr><td>მეთ</td><td>216</td></tr> <tr><td>ჩქიმ</td><td>205</td></tr> <tr><td>ჩქიმბ</td><td>203</td></tr> <tr><td>მუჭო</td><td>186</td></tr> <tr><td>ოკო</td><td>186</td></tr> <tr><td>სი</td><td>175</td></tr> <tr><td>თქუ</td><td>157</td></tr> <tr><td>რენი</td><td>137</td></tr> <tr><td>უწე</td><td>136</td></tr> <tr><td>თუმი</td><td>132</td></tr> <tr><td>უწულ</td><td>132</td></tr> <tr><td>თიმ</td><td>129</td></tr> <tr><td>გური</td><td>119</td></tr> <tr><td>მუჭოთ</td><td>116</td></tr> <tr><td>მეს</td><td>115</td></tr> <tr><td>თი</td><td>113</td></tr> <tr><td>ასე</td><td>108</td></tr> <tr><td>ხოლო</td><td>102</td></tr> <tr><td>სკან</td><td>101</td></tr> <tr><td>ანბი</td><td>98</td></tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Total Token: 42040      TTR: 0.355471 Total Type: 14944</p>	Word	Count	დომ	1051	მა	391	რე	346	მე	262	მარა	218	მეთ	216	ჩქიმ	205	ჩქიმბ	203	მუჭო	186	ოკო	186	სი	175	თქუ	157	რენი	137	უწე	136	თუმი	132	უწულ	132	თიმ	129	გური	119	მუჭოთ	116	მეს	115	თი	113	ასე	108	ხოლო	102	სკან	101	ანბი	98	<p>WordList - შანავა.txt</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Word</th> <th>Count</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>დომ</td><td>810</td></tr> <tr><td>მა</td><td>450</td></tr> <tr><td>ჩქიმბ</td><td>423</td></tr> <tr><td>თუმბი</td><td>290</td></tr> <tr><td>მე</td><td>247</td></tr> <tr><td>სი</td><td>247</td></tr> <tr><td>მუჭო</td><td>242</td></tr> <tr><td>მუმბი</td><td>221</td></tr> <tr><td>გური</td><td>180</td></tr> <tr><td>თუმ</td><td>175</td></tr> <tr><td>თამბი</td><td>173</td></tr> <tr><td>სკან</td><td>162</td></tr> <tr><td>თიმბი</td><td>137</td></tr> <tr><td>ათე</td><td>131</td></tr> <tr><td>ვართო</td><td>125</td></tr> <tr><td>ათე</td><td>124</td></tr> <tr><td>თქუ</td><td>121</td></tr> <tr><td>ორე</td><td>121</td></tr> <tr><td>ართი</td><td>116</td></tr> <tr><td>ვართ</td><td>113</td></tr> <tr><td>თიმ</td><td>112</td></tr> <tr><td>ართო</td><td>110</td></tr> <tr><td>მეთ</td><td>108</td></tr> <tr><td>ანწი</td><td>107</td></tr> <tr><td>მარა</td><td>106</td></tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Total Token: 43330      TTR: 0.3396723 Total Type: 14718</p>	Word	Count	დომ	810	მა	450	ჩქიმბ	423	თუმბი	290	მე	247	სი	247	მუჭო	242	მუმბი	221	გური	180	თუმ	175	თამბი	173	სკან	162	თიმბი	137	ათე	131	ვართო	125	ათე	124	თქუ	121	ორე	121	ართი	116	ვართ	113	თიმ	112	ართო	110	მეთ	108	ანწი	107	მარა	106
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In these examples, it is also interesting that the particle **ვა** *va-* sometimes preceded by the indefinite pronoun **მუთუნ** *mutun* 'someone'. In combination with the negative verb (verb with the negative particle), the indefinite pronoun **მუთუნ** becomes a negative pronoun. The negative pronouns are present in Megrelian and Laz (**მიტა** *mita* 'nobody', **მუტა** *muta* 'nothing'), but they are less productive. It is also interesting to note that the verb in combination with the negative pronouns **მიტა** *mita* and **მუტა** *muta* is always formed in the positive form (e.g. **mita murtumu** 'no one came' and not **mitas vamurthumu**). From the point of view of these two different ways of conveying the negation, it will be interesting to check statistically which translator chooses which strategy. This requires an annotated corpus of Megrelian, so that a precise statistical processing of negative verbs would be possible despite the peculiarity of the negation category in Megrelian.

## RESULTS

The multilingual parallel corpus *Rustaveli goes digital*, which currently contains 32 parallel translations of the full text of the epic in 20 languages (Georgian, Ger-



man, English, Spanish, French, Italian, Turkish, Azerbaijani, Kyrgyz, Russian, Belarusian, Ukrainian, Greek, Arabic, Persian, Armenian, Ossetian, Lithuanian, Mingrelian, Svan) is an important digital resource for translation studies. Although nowadays, there are many different ready-made tools that are successfully used in linguistics for statistical analysis, the data processing of texts can still be very inaccurate without considering the grammatical characteristics of the languages. As shown in the article, it is necessary to develop a suitable tool for each language to be able to carry out a cross-linguistic analysis in a parallel corpus such as *Rustaveli goes digital*.

To use the multilingual parallel corpus for multidisciplinary research, it is necessary to incorporate a two-level statistical data processing: at the low level, statistical processing of the text must consider the linguistic features because inaccurate statistical results can lead to wrong statistics, and thus to wrong conclusions. In this way, we will get the accurate statistical data obtained at the low level of the statistical data processing respective languages as a result, which we can compare at the second level with the statistical results of the other languages that were also statistically processed at the low level.

#### ABBREVIATIONS:

AbNC	Abkhazian National Corpus	Nom	nominative
Act.	active	Pass.	passive
DO	direct object	Pers.	person
GNC	Georgian National Corpus	Pl	plural
F	feminine	PossPron	possessive pronoun
Fut.	future	Pres.	present
KWIC	Key Word in Context	S	subject
M	masculine	Sg	singular
N	neuter	TAM	tempus, aspect, mood
NP	nominal phrase	Vtr.	transitive verb
N	noun	Vint.	intransitive verb

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# Understanding Nikoloz Baratashvili's National and Political Vision (“The Tomb of King Erekle”)

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DOI: [HTTPS://DOI.ORG/10.62343/CJSS.2024.247](https://doi.org/10.62343/CJSS.2024.247)

## ABSTRACT

*Tomb of King Irakli* is not an expression of Nikoloz Baratashvili's political and national beliefs; it is the point of view of the man to whom the poet dedicated this poem and entered it into the album upon his request. In dedicated poems, the poet always conveyed the words of the person or object to whom they were dedicated. This was his literary method. Therefore, this poem cannot be used as a definition of Baratashvili's national-political beliefs; moreover, during the period of writing this poem, the poet had a completely different point of view in his poetry and personal letters.

*Keywords:* Nikoloz Baratashvili; “Tomb of King Irakli”; Dedicated poems; National-political beliefs

## **INTRODUCTION**

Nikoloz Baratashvili is not only one of the greatest poets but also a distinguished figure of 19th-century Georgia, whose national and political vision has long been studied and appreciated by both Georgian and foreign scholars.

Nikoloz Baratashvili's ideas of national liberation are connected to the national liberation movement of 1832 and to the progressive thinkers led by Solomon Dodashvili. The influence of Solomon Dodashvili – Nikoloz Baratashvili's teacher and spiritual friend – on the poet's life was described in the works of his contemporaries as well as in the works of later figures (Tchitchinadze, n.d., p. 15).

Solomon Dodashvili was courageous enough to share his bold ideas with his students. For example, on June 6, 1828, he delivered a speech at the Gymnasium for Nobles during a public exam, in which he criticized the monarchy and expressed his preference for a republican order (Gatsserelia, 1965, p. 115).

The fact that Solomon Dodashvili, brutally punished by the Empire, died in exile at the age of 31 must have influenced the poet.

## **METHODS**

In addition to the poems and letters of Nikoloz Baratashvili, this work references the letters of Zakaria Chichinadze, Pavle Ingorokva, Ion Meunargia, Guram Asatiani, Akaki Gatsserelia, Giorgi Leonidze, Mikheil Chikovani, Akaki Bakradze, Nestan Sulava, Merab Ghaganidze, and other authors concerning the creative works of Nikoloz Baratashvili. The research also utilizes Shalva Gozalishvili's monograph on the 19th-century Georgian numismatist Mikheil Baratashvili, to whom Nikoloz Baratashvili dedicated his poem.

## **RESULTS**

The article employs historical-comparative, scientific analysis and synthesis, and a pragmatic methodology to determine the relationship between events and facts within a specific historical period. We studied the artistic method of Nikoloz Baratashvili, according to which, in poems dedicated to people or inanimate objects, the poet speaks on behalf of the person or thing to whom the poem is dedicated. During the period of writing the mentioned poem, the poet created texts imbued with the spirit of freedom. He consistently condemns the oppression and conquest of one nation by another, directly opposing the Russian Empire. Great thinkers like Baratashvili do not change their opinions in a short time. This analytical and methodical ap-

proach, along with familiarity with the life views of the poem's addressee, enabled us to reveal the erroneous perception of his poem *Tomb of Tsar Irakli* by Georgian literary scholars.

## **DISCUSSION**

Many scholars (Ingorokva, Gatsserelia, Asatiani, Sulava, etc.) focus on the metaphor and allusion to the evil King who appears in Nikoloz Baratashvili's poem "Meditations by the River Mtkvari" and identify the King with an emperor of Russia (Sulava, 2006, p. 61).

According to studies in the history of Georgian literature, Nikoloz Baratashvili's political orientation is believed to lean towards Russia because of his poem "The Tomb of King Erekle." The poem was written in 1842, the same year that Nikoloz Baratashvili composed two of his poetic masterpieces: "Merani" and "Hyacinth and a Bit," both imbued with the idea of freedom. In that same year, he finished working on his historical poem "The Fate of Kartli," in which he appears to be a strong advocate of freedom and state independence. The fact that the poems "Merani" and "Hyacinth and a Bit," as well as the ideologically contradictory poem "The Tomb of King Erekle," were all created in 1842 was interpreted as the creative technique of a bifurcated Romanticist. However, this interpretation was mistaken from the outset.

A proper national ideology, commitment to the ideas of freedom and independence, and disapproval of Russian influence and, in general, of slavery and colonialism are distinct characteristics of Nikoloz Baratashvili's poetry. These qualities gave rise to a significant notion in 19th-century Georgian literature. One of the most distinguished Georgian scholars, Pavle Ingorokva, expressed a similar view (Ingorokva, 2003, p. 178). According to Akaki Gatsserelia, Nikoloz Baratashvili's epic poem "The Fate of Kartli," as well as his poems "Merani" and "Hyacinth and a Bit," demonstrate that freedom was the supreme form of existence for the poet (Gatsserelia, 1965, p. 142).

Gatsserelia argued that the poems "The Tomb of King Erekle" and "The War of Georgian Noblemen and Peasants" do not fit into the sequence of ideas promoting national freedom. The former seems to preach reconciliation with captivity, and the latter appears to justify militaristic monarchy. However, Gatsserelia was aware of the Caucasian War and the nationalist fervor that motivated Georgians to participate in it. Despite this, he viewed Baratashvili's poem as a call for militarism, which I believe was a mistaken conclusion.

Guram Asatiani noted that the poet's oeuvre did not develop in a linear manner; it showed evolutionary advancement and ultimately appeared to justify King Erekle's

decision and support Russian orientation. According to Guram Asatiani, this is how real historical developments should be described (Asatiani, 1998, p. 209).

We believe that Nikoloz Baratashvili was unwavering in his commitment to the idea of liberty. His poetry does not reflect the dual nature often associated with Romanticism. After all, geniuses do not fit into the narrow confines of literature or era. Nikoloz Baratashvili was sincerely committed to the idea of liberty. However, how can we explain the presence of the poem “The Tomb of King Erekle” – which seems to be a complete anachronism – and the political stance and pathos expressed in it? Why is the poem unanimously considered by almost all analysts, including the most attentive ones (Asatiani, 1998, pp. 200–209), to demonstrate the poet’s Russian orientation and support for King Erekle’s “will”?

Nikoloz Baratashvili dedicated his poem “The Tomb of King Erekle” to a Russified Georgian – Mikhail Barataev – who was born and raised in Russia. In poems dedicated to different people, the lyrical character is not the poet himself but the person (or thing) to whom the poem is dedicated. Mikhail Barataev had asked the poet to write a poem in his notebook along with another poem, “Knyaz Barataev’s Azarphesha.” In the latter poem, the poet expresses the feelings of Azarphesha: “If you fill me up with wine, I’ll fill you with joy; if you have drunk it, may it do you good!” This principle is also evident in the poem “Merani,” where Ilia Orbeliani – Shamil’s hostage – is the poem’s narrator. (Nikoloz Baratashvili explained this in his letter enclosed with the poem and sent to Grigol Orbeliani, noting that women cried while reading it because it was not him speaking in the poem but Ilia Orbeliani).

The expressive style used by the poet in his poems dedicated to different persons or objects suggests that in “The Tomb of King Erekle,” the poet expresses Mikhail Barataev’s ideological and political views. The lyrical character of the poem – “The Tomb of King Erekle” – is Mikhail Barataev.

Who was Mikhail Barataev?

Mikhail Barataev was a Russian bureaucrat of Georgian origin, a descendant of Georgian prince Melkisedek Baratashvili, who had served in King Vakhtang VI’s army and later migrated to Russia. Mikhail Barataev was a Russified scholar who, like other descendants of Georgian emigrants, was a fervent advocate of Russian policy in Georgia.

A Russian statesman, historian, and numismatist, Mikhail Barataev was born on January 25, 1784, in Simbirsk. His father was the Simbirsk governor, and his mother was Aleksandra Choglokova, the daughter of Nikolai Choglovski. Mikhail Barataev’s mother came from a Russified Georgian family who considered themselves heirs of



the Russian Empress Elizabeth (matrilineally). Moreover, during the period of Totleben, one of Mikhail Barataev's relatives participated in a plot against King Erekle with the intention of overthrowing him and conquering the kingdom (Tskhviloei, 1891. #11). Almost all of Mikhail Barataev's ancestors held high positions in Russia at various times.

Mikhail Barataev was an acting State Councillor in Russia and a leader of the Simbirsk nobility. He held several military ranks and was an amateur numismatist, the first to study Georgian coinage. On February 17, 1826, he was arrested in Simbirsk for his alleged ties with the Decembrists. However, he was promptly acquitted and released. The same year, he became a State Councillor. In 1835, he started working at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and in 1838, he became an acting State Councillor. The following year, he was transferred to the Ministry of Finance and later to the Caucasus Customs District, whose head office was situated in Tbilisi. While in Tbilisi, Mikhail Barataev began studying Georgian numismatic artifacts, compiled a unique collection of Georgian coins, and wrote a paper on "Georgian Royal Numismatic Artefacts" in Russian and French.

During his stay in Tbilisi, Mikhail Barataev established close relations with Meliton Baratashvili, who was ten years younger than him, and his family. He noticed that Nikoloz Baratashvili was a gifted young man; he liked him very much and often consulted him while working on his research. Mikhail Barataev often attended literary gatherings with Nikoloz Baratashvili at various homes in Tbilisi. Nikoloz Baratashvili was the heart and soul of these gatherings.

The only thing they might have had in common was their passion for science and the exploration of historical past and antiquities. Nikoloz Baratashvili's perception of his motherland came from the core, from the center of Georgia, unlike that of Mikhail Barataev – a citizen and an acting State Councillor of Russia – who perceived the reality from outside Georgia, from the center of the Empire. This reality was shaped by Georgia's incorporation into Russia and, in fact, by its conquest. Nikoloz Baratashvili was an advocate of the modern state system, republican and liberal ideas, whereas the elderly Russian statesman (a Russian citizen of Georgian origin) was an advocate of imperialistic ideas, assessing the situation in Georgia as a "state of peace" – a heavenly state. Their views were in diametric contradiction to one another.

Nevertheless, Mikhail Barataev should be considered an educated and progressive-minded person of that time; it is likely why he was suspected of having links with the Decembrists (he is considered to be the first Georgian Mason). Due to their shared interest in ancient history, the distant relatives might have built a friendship despite their age gap.

Nikoloz Baratashvili writes about him in a letter sent to Grigol Orbeliani: “He left for St. Petersburg equipped with a vast database about the history of Georgia” (Baratashvili, N. 2012. Letter VIII).

After arriving in St. Petersburg, Mikhail Barataev, equipped with information about Georgian history, got in touch with certain circles in the Academy of Sciences and suggested compiling a catalog of Georgian manuscripts and entrusted Nikoloz Baratashvili with organizing the copies of these manuscripts. In 1842, before leaving for St. Petersburg, Mikhail Barataev arranged a meeting where Nikoloz Baratashvili was introduced to Julie Freiche, a representative of the St. Petersburg Academy of Sciences, during a visit to Tbilisi. On January 13, 1843, Julie Freiche, after arriving in St. Petersburg, wrote in a report to the academy: “I am proud to inform the Academy of Sciences that one of the Georgian poets I had the pleasure to meet during my visit to Georgia, expressed his readiness and desire to prepare the first list of Georgian manuscripts, in case of consent from the Academy, and make copies of the manuscripts selected by the Academy” (Chikovani, 1947, p. 147).

The fact that a then-unknown young poet was entrusted with such a responsible task is considered a merit of Mikhail Barataev (Gozalishvili, 1987, p. 63).

Such attention and appreciation expressed towards the young poet, who felt abandoned by those around him, by an elderly high-ranking official and distant relative, might have invoked respect and reverence in Nikoloz Baratashvili towards Mikhail Barataev. His attitude might have encouraged the hopeless young poet who had lost all hope of succeeding in his personal and social life. Additionally, it should be noted that Mikhail Barataev sometimes wrote poems, albeit in Russian. We know of two of his poems dedicated to Alexander Chavchavadze and his daughter Nino, Alexander Griboyedov’s wife. Their shared passion for poetry might have influenced their relationship. Nikoloz Baratashvili and Mikhail Barataev most likely discussed the topical issue of their time, which was of great concern to contemporary society – the issue of Russian orientation. When Nikoloz Baratashvili wrote his poem in Mikhail Barataev’s notebook, he was expressing the views of the person who asked him to write the poem rather than his own.

It should be noted that Mikhail Barataev had been so busy with developments in his life since July 1842 that he could not visit Tbilisi or fulfill what he had promised to do for Nikoloz Baratashvili (namely, to act as a mediator and ask the St. Petersburg Academy of Sciences to offer Nikoloz Baratashvili a job, which might have helped the impoverished poet meet his financial needs). Mikhail Barataev had not inquired about Meliton Baratashvili’s family either, who had been through difficult times. The

brilliant poet and thinker was in such a poor condition that he was obliged to accept any job to make ends meet, and eventually, he died of malaria while working in a disease-ridden territory.

The lyrical character of the poem, which is an example of ode poetry and employs artistic and expressive means unfamiliar to Nikoloz Baratashvili's poetry, and which, unlike his other works, uses a relatively simple and trivial style, praises the advantages brought to Georgia and the Georgians by Russia. This lyrical character of the poem sees a "reality" that the poet himself cannot see and that cannot be found in any other poems by Nikoloz Baratashvili. Otherwise, it would be impossible to explain how the same great poet could simultaneously be the author of "The Fate of Kartli" (Nikoloz Baratashvili had been working on this historical poem until 1844), "Merani," and "Hyacinth and a Bit," and the ideologically contradictory poem "The Tomb of King Erekle." In his letter to his uncle, General Grigol Orbeliani, the poet expressed such bold political opinions that Petre Ushikashvili did not dare to copy them in the 1870s. If Russia had brought Georgia such peace and heavenly conditions that made the poet rejoice in the freedom of his motherland and write a poem like "The Tomb of King Erekle," why would he have been so worried at the same time? Whose captivity did he describe in the poem "Hyacinth and a Bit"? What did he want to express in his poem "Merani"? Why would this undoubtedly greatest thinker of early 19th-century Georgia have changed his national and political views in just a few months or even weeks? Who could have influenced him so profoundly? Could we speak of the poet's volatile or unstable personality? This is something that researchers of his poetry entirely reject!

"The Tomb of Iberia" was the original title of the poem, which the publishers later changed. Russia did prove to be the tomb of Iberia, and who knows, the poet might have meant to express his emotional disposition towards the issue raised in the poem through this single phrase in its title!

It should be noted that the poem "The Caucasus, Beware!" about the Chechen-Dagestan war, written by Nikoloz Baratashvili in 1844, which is usually considered alongside "The Tomb of King Erekle" to highlight the poet's alleged Russian orientation, describes a completely different situation. The reason for Georgia's diligent involvement in the Caucasian War was the country's historical past. The enthusiasm displayed by Georgian noblemen and peasants was comparable to that seen in a patriotic war. By participating in that war, the Georgians – natives of a country oppressed and ruined by Dagestanis for centuries – sought to take revenge for what had been done to their ancestors. The poem has nothing to do with Russia, and the "King" mentioned in the poem (originally "King" was used, but it was later replaced by "Emperor," and

now “King” can be found in all publications) is not a Russian Emperor but King Erekle, who speaks from the sky encouraging Georgian fighters.

“Russia has brought happiness and peace to the Georgian nation”– these words cannot belong to Nikoloz Baratashvili because (a) he must have known that King Erekle did not desire what Russia did: abolishing Georgian statehood and turning it into a part of the Russian Empire; (b) turning Georgia into a part of the Russian Empire did not bring civil peace to Georgia; instead, anti-Russian uprisings followed, and many Georgians died in wars fought by Russia. However, Russified Georgians like Mikhail Barataev, serving the Russian Empire and its interests, had the sentiments expressed in the poem. (c) This attitude and viewpoint are not expressed in any other poem written by Nikoloz Baratashvili; his poetry is imbued with the spirit of national freedom and state independence.

The poem is an example of ode poetry, which is not characteristic of the poet. We believe that Nikoloz Baratashvili used this style to express the sentiments of a committed servant of the Russian Empire – a “Statski Sovetnik” (State Councillor) who came from Russia and became friends with the poet’s family. Mikhail Barataev’s biography and the details associated with his stay in Tbilisi substantiate the argument that the ideas expressed in the poem must have belonged to Mikhail Barataev and not to Nikoloz Baratashvili. According to Akaki Bakradze, the poem is an example of ironic poetry, and if we fail to identify it as such, “we risk being misled in our judgment of one of the greatest Georgian poets and thinkers, falsely accusing him of supporting Georgia’s loss of independence. Otherwise, we not only risk being misled in our judgment but also deliberately harm and ruin Nikoloz Baratashvili’s reputation.” Bakradze asserted that irony is not characteristic of the style of ode poetry. However, the idea expressed in the poem, whether ironically or seriously, cannot be considered to belong to Nikoloz Baratashvili. Considering Nikoloz Baratashvili’s personality, the poet’s bitter irony toward the viewpoint expressed in the poem is entirely natural.

## **CONCLUSION**

Nikoloz Baratashvili is the poet and thinker with the most national consciousness in Georgian literature of the first half of the 19th century. He preached and established the ideal of an independent state and freedom in Georgian literature. In this regard, he is the predecessor of the Georgian public figures of the 1860s, particularly Iliia Chavchavadze. “The Tomb of King Irakli” is not an expression of Nikoloz Baratashvili’s national and political beliefs. He held an entirely different point of view in the poems and letters written during the same period.

The great poet did not conform to the contemporary political situation, and he was aware that Georgia's conquest by Russia was not King Erekle's ideal. He did not see the happiness in modern Georgia that appears in the poem. The poem "Tomb of King Irakli" was, and remains, the perspective of the person to whom the poet dedicated it and inscribed it in an album with his own hand. Mikheil Baratashvili, a Georgian born and raised in Russia, held this view. Poet Nikoloz Baratashvili employed his well-established artistic method to express Mikheil Baratashvili's opinion in a poem dedicated to him. When evaluating Baratashvili's poetic legacy, this poem should not be used as evidence to argue the poet's alleged Russian orientation.

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# For Specification of One Context of “The Passions of Saint Shushanik” (“He Visited a Holy Man in His Place (Vani)...”)

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DOI: [HTTPS://DOI.ORG/10.62343/CJSS.2023.228](https://doi.org/10.62343/CJSS.2023.228)

## ABSTRACT

The article deals with the specification of the context of one phrase from “The Passions of Saint Shushanik” – “He went to a holy man at his residence (*vani*) to ask about something.” This excerpt from the text gives rise to some questions: 1. Who is the holy man? Is he a secular or a religious figure? 2. Why do Iakob and Apots go to him – to ask about something or to make a visit to his place? 3. What could ‘*vani*’ (residence, monastery) mean in this context? The article discusses E. Chelidze’s interpretation of this phrase, according to which the holy man is a religious figure. At the same time, Apots and Iakob go to pay him a visit at his place. Taking specific arguments and the reading preserved in the earliest copy (A 95) of “The Passions of Saint Shushanik” into consideration, we try to show that the holy man must be a churchman, and Apots and Iakob went to him to ask about something. At the same time, the word *vani* probably means where a religious person resides – a monastery or a cell rather than a house.

**Keywords:** *Holy, Bishop, Monastery, Saints, Monk, Priest, Confessor*

## INTRODUCTION

Iakob, Shushanik's confessor, and Apots, court bishop, learn about Varsken's adopting Zoroastrianism and the Queen's being stricken with grief from a deacon. They are visiting a holy man, and this is where the deacon, urgently sent from the palace as a messenger, calls upon them: Apots<sup>1</sup>, the bishop of the Pitiakhsh's palace, was not there but was visiting a holy man at his residence (*vani*) to ask about something. Moreover, I, Queen Shushanik's confessor, accompanied the bishop" (A 95, 434). Here, the text is cited from the Parkhali Gospel, which preserves the earliest text of 'The Passions of Saint Shushanik.' This excerpt attracts our interest from several aspects: a) who is the *holy man*? b) what is the purpose of Apots and Iakob visiting him – *to enquire about something or to pay him an ordinary visit*? And what is the meaning of *vani* in this context?

After observing this section, researcher Edisher Chelidze concludes that the bishop would not visit a religious or secular figure to enquire about something. Consequently, the scholar believes that the phrase – “to ask about something” – was added to the text by the scribe and was not written by the author: “The holy man mentioned by Iakob, indeed, does not possess any religious title; otherwise, like in other cases, the author would have reported about it. He cannot be a monk either, as it is sometimes suggested because Iakob would comment on it. Even if the mentioned man possessed any degree or was a monk, it appears unconvincing that the bishop personally visited him to enquire about something instead of summoning him. Moreover, the bishop would never visit a secular figure, even a dignified Christian, for a reason mentioned above” (Chelidze, 2014, p. 297). Eventually, the author concludes that “the bishop and the priest paid a visit to a worthy member of their congregation who was unable to visit them probably because of his feebleness and illness.” Resulting from the discussion, the *vani* (residence) should be considered not as a cell or a monastery, i.e., a religious abode, but the residence of a secular figure (this is how E. Chelidze explains it: “I went to that house (*vani*) together with him,” A130, 172). Thus, it is necessary to specify the context to interpret the term.

## METHODS

The methodology of this study employs an interdisciplinary approach, combining textual analysis, philological critique, and historical contextualization to address the questions raised by the excerpt from the Parkhali Gospel. The study conducts a comparative textual examination of the Parkhali Gospel and other manuscripts to identify variations, giving

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<sup>1</sup> Manuscript A 95 mentions Aput; all the others mention Apots; it must be the case of confusion about the graphemes 't' and 'ts,' which resemble each other in *Bukhari*.

precedence to the earliest manuscript for authenticity, while semantic analysis explores the term *vani* within its immediate textual and broader ecclesiastical contexts. The application of the epithet “holy” is scrutinized to distinguish between religious and secular figures. Linguistic nuances are analyzed to evaluate potential scribal alterations, particularly omissions or additions that reflect theological or historical biases.

Historical contextualization situates the text within the framework of Georgian monasticism in the 5th and 6th centuries, correlating archaeological and historical evidence to reconstruct the development of monastic practices and the architecture of religious dwellings, such as cells, *lavras*, and cenobitic monasteries.

Finally, the study explores whether the “holy man” was a monk or secular figure and interprets *vani* as either a religious or secular residence, ensuring a nuanced analysis grounded in historical, linguistic, and textual evidence.

## **RESULTS**

In our opinion, the researcher’s discussion mentioned above is somewhat contradictory. First, we should pay attention to the epithet ‘holy,’ which the author applies concerning this man. This epithet is mainly used in the text to refer to the martyred queen. Several religious figures (deacon, priest, bishop, archbishop) are shown in the plot as main characters. However, the author mainly refers to them by names and religious hierarchy – Bishop Ioane, Archbishop Samuel, etc., and there are only a couple of occasions when the author uses epithets such as holy and blissful (‘And the holy bishop was served a meal’; then blissful Bishop Ioane quickly brought a shroud for wrapping’) to refer to them. Thus, Iakob does not refer to even high-ranking religious figures as ‘holy,’ and it would be even weirder to use this epithet for a secular person. Therefore, the assumption that Iakob mentions the holy man to indicate a secular person – a member of the bishop’s congregation, rather than a religious figure renowned for his purity and worthy of this epithet, appears groundless.

E. Chelidze puts forward another argument to support his position and remarks: ‘The ‘holy man’ mentioned by Iakob, indeed, does not possess any ecclesiastical rank, or else the author, just like in other cases, would inform us about it. He cannot be a monk either, as it is sometimes assumed, because Iakob would mention it’ (Chelidze, 2014, p. 298).

There are four religious figures in the text whose names are known to us – Iakob Khutsesi (his name is mentioned randomly), Archbishop Samoel, Bishops Apots and Ioane. Apart from them, another *priest* is mentioned in the text section where

the enraged pitiakhsh tells Bishop Apots on Easter Monday: ‘Hand my wife over to me, why are you keeping us apart?’ Moreover, he started cursing and condemning God fiercely. And a priest told him: “Lord, why are you behaving and speaking so cruelly and cursing the bishop and Saint Shushanik?” Two *deacons* are mentioned in the text: one, who informs Iakob and Apots about Varsken’s adoption of Mazdean religion, and the other – who tries to encourage the Queen and hides away halfway through his word for fear of Varsken. In addition, it cannot be excluded that the deacon mentioned twice in the text is the same person. As we see, the author does not consider it necessary to specify the names of these figures because they have no vital importance for the author’s purpose. Moreover, of no importance is the name of the holy man, who is not connected with the events in Pitiakhsh’s palace either.

In our opinion, the phrase “He went to his residence to ask about something” has an unambiguous context: accompanied by Iakob, the bishop went to a holy man to ask about something. This version is applied in the earliest copy – Parkhali Gospel. However, this phrase is missing in other manuscripts (they lack the ending – “about something”): “But Apots, the court bishop, was not there because he was visiting a holy man at his residence to ask after (or about something); and I, the Queen’s confessor, too, was accompanying him at that residence” A130, 172; comp.: But Apots, the court bishop, was not there because he was visiting a holy man at his residence (*vani*) to ask after (or about something), and I, the Queen’s confessor, too, was accompanying him at that residence” A170, 121; comp.: But Apots, the court bishop, was not there because he was visiting a holy man at his residence (*vani*) to ask after (or about something), and I, the Queen’s confessor, too, was accompanying him at that residence” A 176. 198, etc.). As we see, only the phrase from Parkhali Gospel includes ‘about something.’ Based on the other manuscripts, E. Chelidze considers that Iakob and Apots were paying an ordinary visit to the man rather than intending to find out about something. This assumption seems correct if we ignore the reading preserved in Parkhali Gospel and draw a conclusion from the incomplete phrase – “was visiting.”

Moreover, this form is encountered with precisely the same connotation at the beginning of the text (the servant sent by Varsken asked after Shushanik). However, it would be illogical to disregard the reading of the earliest copy and consider the version of the later manuscripts to be correct. We suggest that these two words (about something) were lost while copying, or if we consider editorial interference (which is less likely), then the scribe should be making corrections to the text according to the same logic as followed by E. Chelidze – the bishop would not go to a holy man to ask about something. However, if the bishop is unlikely to visit a religious figure, it is even more unlikely that he visited a secular one. Or, why the reason the

researcher considered it possible for the bishop to visit a secular person cannot be the same as one for visiting a religious figure? These reasons could be the age, feebleness, illness of the holy man, or a specific vow.

Thus, if we believe the reading of the earliest copy is correct, i.e., restore the phrase to its original version (it is pointed out by E. Chelidze too – “Generally, it is indeed much more convincing that the later scribe, who interpreted “ask” as “putting a question” rather than asking after, added the word ‘something’ instead of extracting it”). There is no ground to cast doubt on this reading. It becomes clear that with Iakob, the bishop went to a holy man – a religious figure - to ask about something; otherwise, the author would not use this epithet concerning him. However, the author does not specify his name for a simple reason – this man is not connected to the subject of his narrative. The author mentions him because Apots and himself went to this man to find out about something and because he probably could not go to the bishop due to his old age, illness, or a vow. Furthermore, attention should be paid to the pathos of the narrative of his section: “He went to a holy man to ask about something” – to the residence of a holy man to ask about *something*... It means that in this context, neither the person is essential, which is why it is “a holy man,” nor the subject, which the bishop tries to find out, that is why the problem is ‘something.’

Let us find out what ‘*vani*’ (residence) might mean.

The sentence should be interpreted as follows: Apots went to the residence of a holy man to find out something. Let us consider the holy man to be a religious figure. It is logical that the *vani*, where he is, must be a religious facility, the residence of a religious figure – a cell or a monastery.

But which? Which form of the above-listed activities can be presumed? Did the man reside in solitude, or could *Vani* imply a monastic unity?

Christianity recognizes three primary forms of ascetic practice: *anachoretic*, *lavral* and *cenobitic*. Anachoretic means living in solitude, while a person leading this life is called an anchorite or a hermit. They would settle in a desert or some other secluded site and try to conceptualize and conceive the notion of God. This practice became a religious lifestyle because of the many followers of such asceticism in the third century. The most renowned site for solitary life chosen by anchorites was the Desert of Thebaid in Egypt).

*Lavra* was a unity of monks in which members were essentially hermits. Each followed their way of spiritual life, but they were united around a leader (abba) as a single sizeable religious family. On Sundays and feasts, the brethren of a *lavra* would congregate in a typical church and conduct liturgy together. *Lavra* monasti-

cism was based on a close relationship with a specific virtuous person. There were no standard rules or a typicon, members of a lavra did not practice the tradition of dining together. Eventually, a lavra became a dense settlement, with the main church standing in the center and surrounded by a fence. Such architecture became a classical form of later-period Byzantine monasteries. After a certain period, a lavra was used to indicate simply a large monastery (Gabidzashvili, 2007, p. 476). *The Cenobitic* (κοινός+βίος, life in common) form of asceticism differed from the lavral one. It was based on the unity characterized by regulated community life of religious persons and strict discipline defined by the typicon.

## **RESULTS**

*What is the situation like in Georgia at the time?*

K. Kekelidze suggests that the founding of early monasteries in Georgia must be associated with the beginning of activities of the Assyrian Fathers. M. Tamarashvili believes that in Georgia, “monastic life probably began not later than the fifth century since the priests sent from Constantinople or Antioch would not be able to ignore such a powerful means of distribution of the true faith” (Tamarashvili, 1995, pp. 334-345).

Based on recent research outcomes, D. Khoshtaria concludes that in Georgia, the first monasteries probably emerged not later than the fifth century, at least a century prior to the arrival of the Assyrian Fathers (Khoshtaria, 2001, p. 49). The scholar considers that the earliest source of the history of Georgian monasticism is the Greek inscription of the crypt of Tsilkani (“I, Tikas, and my monk, Abba Paranus, built this crypt with hewn stones for ourselves”), which, in terms of structure, content and paleographic features, must belong to the fourth-fifth centuries and must point to the burial of the monks of the monastery. This is evidenced by the remains of a hall-type church, which must be a rather old construction, revealed just three meters from the crypt. D. Khoshtaria considers that when Saint Ise of Tsilkani arrives in Tsilkani, there already exists a cathedral there, and he is ordained a bishop: “And Saint Ise became the bishop of Tsilkani and the grave of him, blissful, is still visible there” (Abuladze 1063, p. 229).

In the same period, there was another monastery in Kartli; an account about it is found in a Syrian document of the sixth century – in an epistle of Toma, superior of Beit Mar Isaak Gabuleli, which, apart from other information, contains that about the arrival of Mar Simeon, a Syrian monk, in Georgia. This fact took place in the 540s-550s. In Georgia, he visited Tana Monastery and anathematized unworthy bishops. According to G. Abramishvili, Tana Monastery must indicate Ateni – the



oldest and most important ecclesiastical centers of the Tana Gorge (Abramishvili, 1996, pp. 64-65). The original church was probably built here in the mid-fifth century, and this must also be the monastery's establishment date (Abramishvili, 1992, pp. 10-11). D. Khoshtaria suggests that the early dating of the monasteries of Ateni and Tsilkani gives grounds for our more careful approach to the account of the founding of Opiza Monastery in the second half of the fifth century, which is preserved in the 'Vita of Vakhtang Gorgasali' and which was considered to be an unreliable source by Georgian scholars (Kekelidze, Javakhishvili). Here, D. Khoshtaria notes that while discussing the early period of Georgian monasticism, it is necessary to consider the fact that a long time before the Assyrian fathers arrived in Kartli, there had existed Georgian monasteries in the Holy Land (mid-fifth century – the monastery of Iberians built by Peter the Iberian in Jerusalem, near Tower of David; the monastery of St. Theodore, discovered as a result of archaeological excavations near Bethlehem, as well as the monastery of Iberians in Jerusalem, which Procopius of Caesarea mention, are also associated with the name of Peter the Iberian, etc.) (Khoshtaria, 2001, pp. 53-54).

## CONCLUSION

Thus, researchers conclude that in the fifth century, Georgian monasteries existed in Georgia and abroad. In contrast, the arrival of the Assyrian Fathers in Kartli in the mid-sixth century gave rise to asceticism - an eastern (Syrian) monastic practice – and the emergence of numerous new monasteries.

In old Georgian, *Vani* is a polysemic term meaning 1. *residence, dwelling*: 'many people came to *his residence (vani)*,' Acts 28:23; however, *sakhe/sakhed* is applied as its parallel from: "She (a Zoroastrian woman) came to Saint Shushanik to thank her and went back *home (sakhed)* delighted" (Abuladze 1063:23); "when dusk fell, she went to the entrance of the temple to the servants of his master, not to her home (*sakhed*)" (2 Kings, 11,13); 2. *Monastery/cell*: Hilarion the Iberian "built a *monastery (vani)*, let his mother into it and donated villages to it"; "I am not to blame if anyone goes back to their monastery (*vani*)" (Gogvadze, 1986, p. 177) [comp.: savane –(+14.8 Jerem. ZA)- residence ZAB; daivana (26, 17 Genesis) – camped ZAa). In "The Life of Grigol of Khandzta," *Vani* is used in the context opposite the *house*: "He owned villages *near the residence (savane)* of Blissful Grigol, when Grigol saw the poverty of his disciples, with God's will, he went to the *house* of Gabriel Dapanchuli." (Abuladze 1063:258). At the same time, *Vani* and *monastery* are used as *parallel forms*: "Blissful Father Grigol searched carefully and found a suitable place near Gunatle, blessed it, and a *monastery* of nuns was built there, now

called Gunatlis Vani. The priest conducting liturgy in this *monastery* (*vani*) was sent to Khandzta by Blissful Grigol on Gabriel's plea (Abuladze 1063:260). Moreover, they headed for the deserts in Samtskhe and Kartli and found two sites for the *monastery*, and built cells in both places. Tevdore's monastery (*vani*) was called Nedzvi, and that of Christepore – Kvirike-tsminda" (Abuladze 1063:279).

The above-mentioned gives grounds to assume that *vani*, where the holy man was staying, was a monastic complex, considering that we are dealing with the *cenobitic* form of monasticism here. But if this man is a hermit and ministers in solitude, then *vani* should mean a cell, a single-room residence of an anchorite.

Thus, in our opinion, the holy man is a religious person, a monk, whom Bishop Apots visits to ask about something. His dwelling – *vani* – is his cell, which could be the accommodation of an anchorite monk, or this cell could be part of a monastic complex since, as mentioned above, by this time in Georgia, there had already existed the communities of ecclesiastics that formed monasteries.

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Manuscripts: A 95; A 130; A 170; A 176 – funds of K. Kekelidze National Center of Manuscripts.

## The European Ombudsman: Defending Democracy and Human Rights Amidst the Crisis in Ukraine

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DOI: [HTTPS://DOI.ORG/10.62343/CJSS.2024.248](https://doi.org/10.62343/CJSS.2024.248)

### ABSTRACT

The European Ombudsman is appointed to combat cases of European “maladministration” towards European citizens. He is seen as the promoter of good Community administration, with a concern for transparency in the democratic and institutional functioning of Europe, involving citizens as directly as possible. A survey of the main minutes and decisions taken by the European network of ombudsmen (May 2022–October 2023) following Russia’s invasion of Ukraine reveals three major issues on which the Ombudsman is establishing himself as a soft power institution within the European Union: the reception of refugees within the European Union, the transparency of the EU Council’s decision-making process in relation to sanctions against Russia, and participation, through his referral, in monitoring Ukraine’s progress in terms of democracy, the rule of law, and the fight against corruption.

*Keywords:* Ombudsman, Ethics, European Union, Democracy, Rights

## INTRODUCTION

The position of ombudsman, also known as “mediator” or “rights defender,” now exists in over 120 countries worldwide. In countries where the ombudsman is more than just a puppet post, he or she is one of the essential guarantors of the rule of law. Their *raison d’être* is to help protect citizens from possible malfunctioning of the public service and to prevent potential abuse of power by the administration.

At the EU level, the European Parliament elects the Ombudsman for the duration of its legislature, i.e., five years. His role is to promote democracy (Friedery, 2020) and guarantee transparent, ethical European administration (More O’Ferrall, 2019). He acts both as ombudsman for the EU as a whole and as coordinator of the European Network of Ombudsmen, which brings together ombudsmen from all EU member states and beyond, including EU candidate countries such as Moldova, Albania, Serbia, and Ukraine.

At a time of war in Ukraine, this strategic position, held since 2013 by Ireland’s Emily O’Reilly, deserves a special spotlight.

The unprecedented crisis that has shaken Europe since the start of the war in Ukraine has once again put the issue of democracy and fundamental rights at the top of the European political agenda, and for two reasons:

1. The Russian invasion is a clear violation of these rights.
2. This invasion accelerates the idea of seeing states currently on the fringes of the European political space (Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia, etc.) join the Union on the condition that these countries eventually reach the required level of respect for human rights, freedom, and democracy.

The role of the European Ombudsman in light of these crises is, therefore, legitimate. This is why; first, we present the role of the Ombudsman as mediator and coordinator of the European Network of Ombudsmen, whose usefulness we will question. We then look at the Ombudsman’s activities since the start of the war in Ukraine. We also look at the Ombudsman’s prospects for action in the aftermath of the war in Ukraine and in light of the future membership promised to the countries of the European Political Community, conditional on respect for human rights and democracy. Finally, we compare the European Ombudsman with National Human Right Institutions (NHRIs) underscoring the complementary roles of these institutions.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### **A brief history of the Ombudsman and its gradually extended prerogatives**

The European Ombudsman was born “in the texts” in 1992, within the framework of the Maastricht Treaty, before finding its first operational expression in 1995, when the first of them, Finnish Jacob Söderman, was elected by the European Parliament. He held this post until 2003 when the Greek Nikifóros Diamandoúros, who was replaced in 2013 by Emily O’Reilly, succeeded him for ten years.

Created at the same time as European citizenship, which was also institutionalized by the Maastricht Treaty, the European Ombudsman is intended to reinforce this notion of supranational citizenship, as researcher Héléne Michel explains: “The possibility for citizens to refer matters to the Ombudsman is not simply a matter of increasing the citizen’s protection vis-à-vis the European administration. It is part of a more general perspective, on the one hand strengthening the legitimacy of institutions by giving citizens the right to call European institutions to account, and on the other reducing the distance between these institutions and citizens” (Michel, 2018, p. 120).

It should be noted that the term “European Ombudsman” refers both to the person in charge of the function and to the entity that this person manages (75 people, with a budget of around 13 million euros).

Despite a relatively low number of complaints (750 per year on average, a third of which are directed against the European Commission, the remainder concerning lesser institutions, and often formulated by citizens with a professional link to Europe) in relation to the size of the European political arena, the Ombudsman has gradually extended his symbolic and political influence as an instrument of “transparency” and support for the exercise of European citizenship (Oberdorff, 2013).

The 2021 reform has considerably contributed to the “institutionalization” of its political legitimacy, as it has extended its prerogatives: its function is no longer exclusively defensive, as it can use the strategic initiative inquiry mechanism, which aims to proactively identify areas of importance considered strategic (Raulet-Descombey, 2022). For example, in early 2024, the European Ombudsman launched a strategic initiative to ensure sufficient transparency in the European Commission’s use of artificial intelligence.

The European Ombudsman’s mandate covers “the entire EU administration, with the exception of the European Parliament in its political role and the Court of Jus-

tice of the European Union in its judicial role. The European Ombudsman does not investigate the political actions of European deputies or the decisions of the Court” (O’Reilly, 2023).

The Ombudsman is European in that it focuses on EU institutions and supranational in that it is the supranational version of an initiative that originated in Scandinavia under the name of Ombudsman (Bousta, 2007).

The influence of the Swedish “version” is evident since it aimed to challenge the excesses of power of the royal administration on behalf of individuals without calling into question the decisions of the Crown. Today, this institution exists in almost all EU member states, albeit with slightly differing competencies from one country to another; the European Ombudsman plays the role of coordinator between these various national ombudsmen (Hofmann, 2017).

This need for coordination has arisen because the European Ombudsman can only investigate cases of maladministration at the level of the European institutions, with which European citizens have minimal direct contact. On the other hand, European citizens may be subject to an excess of power on the part of a national administration due to the application of a European law by the Member State where they reside. Such situations call for cooperation between the European and national levels of citizen/administration mediation.

In 1996, the European Network of Ombudsmen was set up with the aim of exchanging best practices and carrying out investigations in a spirit of harmony when these concern issues that may affect both national and European levels of maladministration - and all this in a horizontal perspective, neither binding nor hierarchical, between the European Ombudsman and national ombudsman institutions (Inglese & Binder, 2018).

To date, the Network comprises some 95 offices in 36 European countries, including EU and non-EU member states, as well as candidate countries such as Ukraine.

On this point, it should be remembered that guaranteeing respect for democracy, the rule of law and, consequently, the fundamental rights of citizens is one of the conditions for accession to the Union by candidate countries. This conditionality has been all the more critical given that successive enlargements, since the mid-1980s with Spain and Greece in particular, then in the early 2000s with the post-Communist countries of Central and Eastern Europe, have often involved states that were in the process of or had just completed, a democratic transition - a transition that their entry into the EU has helped to consolidate (Schneider & Tucny, 2002).



Today, the institution of the Ombudsman, present in Ukraine, and the quality of its work are explicitly part of the assessment forged by the European Commission as part of the examination of Ukraine's candidacy for the EU (European Commission, 2022)<sup>1</sup>.

The discursive relationship between the defense of the values of freedom, democracy, and the rule of law and the War in Ukraine is, therefore, twofold, as expressed in substance by President Volodymyr ZELENSKY in numerous speeches, including his address to the European Parliament on March 1, 2022:

*There is an expression, 'Ukraine chooses Europe'. That is what we have been striving for, and that is where we are have been and are still headed. I would very much like to hear you say to us that Europe now chooses Ukraine. [...] We are fighting for our rights, for our freedoms and for our lives... Now we are fighting for our survival, and this is our highest motivation, but we are also fighting to be equal members of Europe. We have proven our strength. We have proven that, at the very least, we are the same as you are. So prove that you are with us."*

Russia is attacking Ukraine because Ukrainian citizens are turning towards Europe, aspiring to the same values, and it is because Ukrainian citizens are fighting for these values that they are destined to be supported by Europe and to join the European project. Furthermore, it is in this capacity, as well as with regard to its competencies as a guarantor of the rule of law at the European level and European coordinator of the mediation institutions of its member countries, including Ukraine, that the role of the European Ombudsman can itself reflect this double discursive relationship.

## **METHODS**

### **Ombudsman's action since the beginning of the war in Ukraine**

In this research, we aimed to examine the role of the European Ombudsman in addressing key challenges arising from Russia's invasion of Ukraine. We have therefore conducted a detailed analysis of the main minutes and decisions of the European Network of Ombudsmen from May 2022 to October 2023 (see Appendix 1).

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<sup>1</sup> See European Commission. (2022). *COM (2022) 407 final: Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, European Council, and Council, Opinion of the Commission on Ukraine's application for membership of the European Union*. "The Ombudsman Institution - the Commissioner for Human Rights of the Ukrainian Parliament - is designated as the National Human Rights Institution and accredited with 'A' status by the World Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions as being in full compliance with the Paris Principles."

The selection criteria for these minutes and decisions were based on their relevance to the response of European institutions to Russia's invasion of Ukraine. The documents should reflect the European Ombudsman's active involvement or direct recommendations. The analysis was limited to documents publicly available through official EU channels and related reports.

More specifically, the categorization into three dominant themes emerged inductively from the analysis of the selected materials:

- (1) the reception of refugees within the EU, documents highlighting the role of the Ombudsman in ensuring compliance with European principles of fair treatment and access to resources for refugees displaced by the war.
- (2) the transparency of the EU Council's decision-making process in relation to sanctions against Russia, decisions and discussions emphasizing the Ombudsman's oversight regarding the transparency and accountability of sanctions imposed on Russia.
- (3) Ukraine's prospective EU accession, records examining the Ombudsman's contribution to monitoring Ukraine's progress on democracy, the rule of law, and anti-corruption measures in light of its candidacy for EU membership.

## **RESULTS**

On May 10, 2022, at the European Network of Ombudsmen Conference in Strasbourg, Emily O'Reilly stressed that her main aim was to define "how we [European Ombudsmen] can best support and monitor the EU's efforts to offer shelter and protection to all those forced to leave their homes and families in Ukraine." The role of the European Ombudsmen is thus to ensure that refugees enjoy their rights, mainly "access to healthcare, employment, housing, education, and social support," in the member states to which they have fled, while warning of the risk of human trafficking.

The European Ombudsman is seen as "a soft power institution within the European ecosystem" (O'Reilly, 2023). Concerning the sanctions imposed on Russia, the European Ombudsman has focused on ensuring that European citizens can consult documents relating to these sanctions at the Commission. In June 2022, the European Ombudsman asked the EU Council to proactively make available documents relating to the adoption of sanctions against Russia in order to assess the transparency of the EU Council's decision-making process on these sanctions, but this was refused.

The European Ombudsman was also approached by a European citizen following the European Central Bank's refusal to grant public access to documents relating to the implementation of sanctions against Russia. The Ombudsman consulted the documents in question and assessed the ECB's response, which justified the refusal because full disclosure would undermine the protection of the public interest regarding the Union's financial, monetary, or economic policy and international financial relations. Following his investigation, the Ombudsman concluded that there had been "no maladministration by the European Central Bank."

As for the question of Ukraine's accession to the EU, Emily O'Reilly has publicly questioned whether membership is conditional on respect for the rule of law on Ukrainian territory: "Does the EU have the strategic patience to wait for the transformation of Ukrainian institutions that the government has promised as part of its anti-corruption reforms? Alternatively, will the desire to quickly create a coherent geopolitical counterweight to Russian and Chinese hard power mean turning a blind eye to institutional shortcomings?"

These institutional shortcomings, if accepted as they stand in order to speed up the accession process, will be put to the test by the possibility for any European citizen to appeal to the Ombudsman. This is already the case, as illustrated by the decision handed down on August 18, 2022, concerning the refusal of the European External Action Service (EEAS) to give the public access to a document concerning the suspension of political parties in Ukraine (Case 952/2022/MIG).

## ***DISCUSSION***

### **The Ukrainian Ombudsman: a special case?**

Ukraine's accession to the EU would strengthen the weight of the European Ombudsman in assessing the country's necessary institutional transformation. All the more so as the Ukrainian Ombudsman institution's independence from political power does not appear to be total at this stage. For example, when Ombudswoman Valeria Lutkovska's term ended in 2017, it took the Ukrainian Parliament almost a year to appoint her successor. During that time, the international community expressed concern about the lack of transparency and ultra-politicization of the appointment. Two of the three candidates were members of Parliament (the ombudsman's electoral body). However, the legal provisions were relatively vague on this subject since they were supposed to be ineligible for this election unless they resigned their mandate – which Lyudmila Denisova did, once finally elected to the post in March 2018.

At the end of May 2022, three months after the start of the invasion of Ukraine, Lyudmila Denisova was dismissed by Parliament. She had been publicly criticized, not least by a number of humanitarian associations, for her handling of the crisis, and in particular for her communication concerning the sexual crimes allegedly committed by Russian soldiers against children. However, these same associations were moved by the way in which her mandate was interrupted, even though nothing in the Constitution or ordinary law provided for such a provision.

This procedure could only be justified by the imposition of martial law, given the exceptional circumstances. It was nonetheless denounced by the UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine as a “violation of international law.” To our knowledge, representatives of European institutions, including the European Ombudsman, have not publicly denounced Denisova’s dismissal. Nevertheless, the swift appointment of the new ombudsman, Dmytro Lubinets, in June 2022, shows that Kiev attaches great importance to this position, particularly in view of its bid for EU membership.

A comparative analysis of the European Ombudsman and similar crisis management institutions provides valuable insights into their respective roles in addressing the war in Ukraine. Particularly, a comparison between the European Ombudsman and National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) reveals both shared objectives and distinct mandates. While both aim to protect human rights and promote democracy, their operational focuses diverge.

As discussed, the European Ombudsman primarily ensures that EU institutions respond to the crisis effectively, emphasizing adherence to human rights and democratic principles. This includes as mentioned in our article overseeing the reception of refugees within the EU, advocating for transparency in the EU Council’s decision-making processes regarding sanctions on Russia, and monitoring Ukraine’s prospective EU accession. Conversely, NHRIs focus on protecting and promoting human rights across all phases of conflict. They engage directly with affected populations, providing critical support to refugees and displaced persons through hotlines, awareness campaigns, and monitoring efforts. As part of the European Network of National Human Rights Institutions (ENNHRI), NHRIs have also participated in high-level meetings aimed at discussing and developing best practices to address challenges arising from the conflict (European Network of National Human Rights Institutions, n.d.). This brief comparison underscores the complementary roles of these institutions, with the European Ombudsman addressing systemic and institutional governance and NHRIs engaging in localized, human-centered responses.

## **CONCLUSION**

We can now conclude on future enlargements and the future importance of the Ombudsman. In the wake of the war in Ukraine, the Ombudsman's prospects for action need to be examined from two angles. On the one hand, guaranteeing respect for democracy, the rule of law, and, consequently, the fundamental rights of citizens are among the conditions for accession to the European Union by candidate countries. This is the case, for example, of the Caucasus countries applying for EU membership: Georgia in the short term, Armenia in the medium term, and Azerbaijan possibly in the long term. This institutional transformation conditions EU aid to member countries (e.g., Hungary and Poland). In this context, the European Ombudsman is a soft power institution.

On the other hand, in a world in tension and faced with Russian and Chinese powers, the question of the EU's geopolitical orientation arises. As part of their EU accession process, the institutional shortcomings of the candidate countries, if accepted as they stand in order to strengthen the EU's geopolitical counterweight against these two great powers, will then be put to the test by the possibility for any European citizen to refer a matter to the Ombudsman.

In this way, the Ombudsman's influence within Europe's borders would be strengthened, and he could claim a more significant role than his current one, which is limited to a discursive and prescriptive stance.

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**Appendice 1 - Minutes listed and available on the Ombudsman website (e.g: <https://www.ombudsman.europa.eu/en/opening-summary/en/158540>)**

1	How the EU Council ensures transparency decision-making on sanctions against Russia	CASE SI/3/2022/ LDS	OPENING Friday June 03, 2022  DECISION Wednesday February 15, 2023	Council of the European Union
2	Conference of the European Network of Ombudsman 2022. Introductory remarks by the European Ombudsman	SPEECH Emily O'Reilly	DATE Tuesday May 10, 2022	CITY Strasbourg - COUNTRY France
3	Decision concerning the refusal of the European Central Bank (ECB) to grant public access to documents relating to emergency and preparedness measures in connection with Russia's invasion of Ukraine	CASE 1327/2022/ SF	OPENING Monday July 18, 2022  DECISION Monday September 12, 2022	European Central Bank
4	Decision concerning the refusal of the European External Action Service (EEAS) to grant public access to a document concerning the suspension of political parties in Ukraine	CASE 952/2022/ MIG	OPENING Wednesday May 11, 2022  DECISION Thursday August 18, 2022	European External Action Service
5	Speech at Warsaw University - The European Ombudsman in the geopolitical age: protecting fundamental rights and responsibility	SPEECH Emily O'Reilly	DATE Wednesday September 27, 2023	CITY Warsaw - COUNTRY Poland
6	Nominations for the European Ombudsman for Good Administration Award 2023	EVENT DOCUMENT	DATE Tuesday May 02, 2023  DATE Wednesday June 28, 2023	CITY Brussels - COUNTRY Belgium
7	Report - European Network of Ombudsman Annual Conference 2022	EVENT DOCUMENT	DATE Tuesday May 10, 2022  DATE Thursday April 28, 2023	CITY Strasbourg - COUNTRY France
8	Garden reception at the Irish embassy	SPEECH Emily O'Reilly	DATE Friday September 09, 2022	CITY Brussels - COUNTRY Belgium
9	World Summit of Ireland - keynote speech: The Future of Europe	SPEECH Emily O'Reilly	DATE Tuesday October 24, 2023	CITY Dublin - COUNTRY Ireland
10	Current trends and major developments in ethics, lobbying and evolving donor practices - keynote address at Georgetown University, Washington, D.C.	SPEECH Emily O'Reilly	DATE Tuesday September 27, 2022	CITY Washington D.C. - COUNTRY United States



# The High North

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## ABSTRACT

The High North, encompassing the Arctic regions of countries such as Norway, Russia, Canada, Denmark (Greenland), and the United States (Alaska), is a region of critical geopolitical, environmental, and economic significance. This area is characterized by its harsh climate, unique ecosystems, and the presence of indigenous communities with rich cultural heritages. Climate change is dramatically reshaping the High North, leading to the melting of ice caps and glaciers, which in turn opens new maritime routes and reveals vast reserves of natural resources like oil, gas, and minerals. These developments have spurred international interest and competition, highlighting the need for robust governance and sustainable practices. The region's environmental sensitivity, combined with its role in global climate regulation through ice-albedo feedback mechanisms, underscores the urgency of addressing environmental and socio-economic challenges. The High North stands at the forefront of global climate change impacts, necessitating comprehensive strategies for conservation, sustainable development, and international collaboration to ensure its future stability and resilience.

*Keywords:* The High North is a complex region; The role of Arctic Allies as strategic actors; The Arctic Council; The Arctic Allies as strategic actors; The High North security; the High North is contrary to NATO's interests

## **INTRODUCTION**

The High North is a complex region consisting of sovereign territories, continental shelves, international waters, territorial seas, and exclusive economic zones (Buchanan, 2021). Geographically, it includes the North Atlantic, elements of Northern Europe, and Arctic regions; it is the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's (NATO) Northern Flank. It is also an area of geostrategic importance, holding oil and natural gas, minerals, and fisheries (Buchanan, 2022). Recognition of the region as a strategically important arena started during the Cold War (Tamnes & Offerdal, 2014). Acknowledgment of the area as a strategically significant zone began during the Cold War due to its location between rival superpowers and its possible function during wartime as a pathway for nuclear strategic exchanges. According to the NPT (The Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) is an international treaty aimed at preventing the spread of nuclear weapons and promoting cooperation in the peaceful use of nuclear energy. It was opened for signature in 1968), non-nuclear-weapon states that are parties to the treaty have pledged not to produce or acquire nuclear weapons or any other devices capable of nuclear explosions.

However, following the Cold War, "Arctic exceptionalism" prevailed, meaning the High North became a unique region with unwritten but commonly accepted norms and collaboration (Devyatkin, 2023). This status quo is now at risk (Buchanan, 2021). Climatic changes continue to increase accessibility, resource extraction, and East-West shipping routes, allowing for strategic military positioning. Russia's 2022 further invasion of Ukraine has heightened the immediacy of these changes and increased tensions. As such, the "New North" will likely become the center of geopolitical interests and competition, perhaps sooner than anticipated (Ozawa, 2021).

While acknowledging the role of Arctic Allies as strategic actors, this essay seeks to consider the High North as an area of strategic competition for NATO. In the context of increasing strategic competition with Russia and China, it will analyze NATO's prospective role in the region while maintaining its three core tasks of deterrence and defense, crisis prevention and management, and cooperative security (A, 2023). This essay will use three prospective futures from Buchanan to consider shifting strategic competition between NATO and Russia to understand what actions can be taken to avoid deepening ruptures in the geostrategic environment: (1) the High North will become more "fractured," meaning the region becomes a strategic flashpoint once more in Cold War-style competition; (2) more "fragmented," meaning maintaining a scenario where relationships between NATO Allies and Russia in the region are simultaneously friendly and hostile (Rowe, n.d.); or

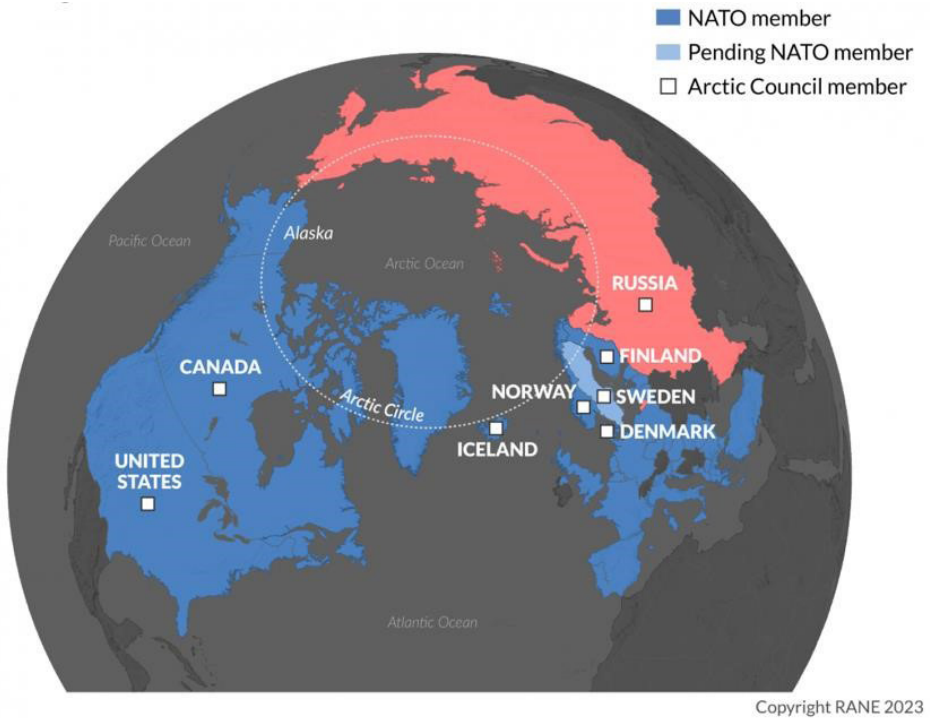
(3) more “functional,” with greater collaboration between states on areas of mutual interest (Buchanan, 2021). This essay presumes that functional collaboration between NATO and Russia is unrealistic and that a fractured High North is a wholly undesirable current trajectory (Kjaergaard, 2023).

This essay will address changes following Russia’s 2022 invasion of Ukraine, including expanded NATO membership and changes to the Arctic Council. It will argue that there will be increased impetus for NATO to respond to and invest in countering threats from the High North to avoid fracturing the region. The implications of Russia-China cooperation will be analyzed regarding the threat to the Alliance before concluding with recommendations for NATO to ensure a less fractured High North. It will conclude that NATO must take steps to avoid a fractured High North and aspire for functionality or maintain partial fragmentation to reduce the threat to the Northern Flank.

## ***METHODS***

Non-military issues pertaining to the High North have long been governed by the Arctic Council. However, the stakeholder community has expanded and now includes “near-Arctic” states like China, multilateral institutions, and commercial entities (Buchanan, n.d.). In this context, Russia’s 2022 invasion of Ukraine had two critical security implications for the High North. First, NATO membership has been extended to two more Arctic Council states: Finland and, soon, Sweden (Sacks, 2022). Second, Russia has been suspended from the Arctic Council, meaning it is no longer a forum for cooperation on Arctic issues (Kornhuber et al., 2023). These issues will be examined in turn.

The expansion of Alliance membership northward is significant. As depicted in “item 1,” Finnish membership has increased the NATO-Russia border by approximately 1,340 kilometers (U.K. Parliament, 2007–2008). This poses a significant challenge. The security and stability of the High North is a primary concern for Finland and Sweden due to their geography on the Northern Flank (Kai Kornhuber, 2023). Therefore, their membership is predicted to mark a political shift toward NATO responding to Northern security issues (Anna, 2023). This will include ensuring NATO’s supply and communication lines, such as the Greenland, Iceland, and UK (GIUK) gap, changing capability pressures for Allies, and increasing the necessity for regional intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) to defend the border with Russia. These defensive actions should maintain fragmented High North security.

**Figure 1**

**Note.** Reference: RANE. “Shifting Arctic Governance” 2023 [Map]

[https://www.stratfor.com/sites/default/files/styles/wv\\_large/public/arctic-council-nato-may-2023.png?itok=O2bQPZkM](https://www.stratfor.com/sites/default/files/styles/wv_large/public/arctic-council-nato-may-2023.png?itok=O2bQPZkM)

To date, NATO has been unable to reach a consensus on its policy toward the High North, resulting in a diluted approach within the 360-degree strategy (NATO, 2018). The High North is only briefly addressed in the 2022 Strategic Concept, which acknowledges that Russia’s capability to disrupt freedom of navigation and reinforcements is a strategic challenge for NATO. In 2020, NATO established the Atlantic Command in JFC Norfolk, co-located with the U.S. 2nd Fleet, to respond to High North issues. Examining NATO’s political drivers, many recognize the risk of fracturing security. The United States views the region as “an arena for sustainable economic development, international cooperation, and governance” (“National Strategy for the Arctic Region,” 2022). Similarly, the United Kingdom, a Near-Arctic nation, acknowledges the growing importance of the High North to its national defense and security and the increasing competition in the evolving security environment (Defence, 2022). Denmark’s approach to the region is predominantly sovereign, although Denmark has been a critical advocate within NATO for protecting the Northern Flank. Denmark’s high priority is to maintain low risk

in the High North (Defence O.i., 2023). The Canadian Arctic strategy treats all threats from the High North as a national, rather than NATO, priority (Canada, 2019). However, military investment in Canada remains at approximately 1.29% of GDP (Gollom, 2023). While overall military investment is higher in the U.K. and the U.S., Arctic-specific investment remains modest, even though Arctic capabilities are notoriously expensive and uniquely challenging (Savitz, 2022). The United States Coast Guard currently operates two icebreakers, the same number as China. There may soon be more significant investments from Denmark in High North capabilities, such as ISR, to improve situational awareness (Command, 2023).

Conversely, Russia has increased investments in capabilities and facilities (Mathieu, n.d.), such as the Standing Russian Arctic Civil Icebreaker Fleet, which has 26 ships and at least five nuclear-powered icebreakers in production (Lagutina, 2013). While production has slowed following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, this fleet outnumbers all other fleets in the High North littoral countries combined (Lagutina, 2013). This imbalance fragments and risks fracturing NATO security in the High North.

**Figure 2**



**Note.** Reference: *The Economist*. "Northern Sea Route" 2023 [Map]

<https://www.economist.com/the-economist-explains/2018/09/24/what-is-the-northern-sea-route>

The Kremlin's 2020 family of strategic documents reaffirms the priority of protecting national interests in the Russian Arctic Zone ("The Foundations of State Policy of the Russian Federation in the Arctic in the Period to 2035"). The "Northern direction" (K Z., 2010) of Russia's strategy is summarized in two main areas: first, maintaining jurisdiction over the Northern Sea Route (NSR), which navigates a vast stretch of the Northern Flank (as shown in fig. 2); and second, extending control over the exploration and exploitation of natural resources on Russia's continental shelf beyond the standard 200-nautical-mile limit (Nazarin, 2018). With numerous Arctic-capable assets, Russia dominates the NSR, regulating all shipping (Malte, 2023). It is expected to be primarily navigable in the summer by 2025–2030, potentially shifting Russia from the periphery of the world economic system to the center (Maria, 2013).

Russian capability investment and dominance of the NSR are at odds with the stability and security of the Alliance. This, combined with NATO's potential re-focus northward, risks fracturing stability in what has been a "low-tension" area (Mathieu, 2019). It is feasible that any NATO re-focus northward could be viewed as encroachment into a traditionally non-NATO arena, further fracturing stability.

## **RESULTS**

Russia has been suspended from the Arctic Council, and the Nordic Council of Ministers has also stopped cooperation with Russia (Aagaard, n.d.). Additionally, Russia has halted participation in the Barents Euro-Arctic Council (Astri Edvardsen., 2023). This diminished cooperation through international fora is assessed to reduce transparency as nations continue to pursue divergent national interests without governance (Kai Kornhuber. et al., 2023). This diplomatic drought is significant. While the Arctic Council is explicitly not a forum for defense issues, cooperation on areas of mutual scientific and indigenous interest increased functionality or, at the very least, reduced fracturing security in other interdependent defense areas (Andrew, 2020). This is a result of the duality of Russia's approach to "securing" investments in the "zone of peace" ("Plan razvitiya infrastruktury Severnogo morskogo puti na period do 2035 goda," 2019). Utilizing dual-use scientific and defense capabilities blurs the line between military and security (Buchanan, n.d.). However, the U.S. has mostly refrained from militarizing the High North, with the Coast Guard retaining policing responsibility; this is not universal across the Alliance. Like Russia, Denmark maintains a dual-use approach for capabilities in the High North. This means the Arctic Council had aided functionality in the arena by increasing Russian and Allied awareness of dual-purpose assets and presence.



Removing this forum for cooperation and deconfliction risks misunderstanding and escalation, thus fracturing the High North.

Regarding Russia's ambition, which mostly adheres to international laws and norms, Russia claims approximately 40% of the High North (over 9 million square kilometers) (Note, 2013). Almost 10% of Russia's GDP originates from the Russian Arctic Zone, accounting for 20% of all exports ("The Decree of the President of the Central Executive Committee of the USSR," 2013). Russia's paused participation in the Arctic Council is unlikely to impact this economic pursuit. However, as Russia traditionally derives its strategic position and power from the hydrocarbon and minerals trade, new exploitation of the High North threatens to undermine sanctions imposed on Russia following its invasion of Ukraine, thus fracturing security more globally. Securing investments in the High North is a costly endeavor, but in a "zone of peace and mutually beneficial cooperation" ("Plan razvitiya infrastruktury Severnogo morskogo puti na period do 2035 goda," 2019), Russia has found a new partner: China.

Russia has increasingly looked to China in an age of frozen diplomacy and economic anxiety. The partnership between NATO's two greatest threats risks fragmenting security and directly threatens NATO security. China identifies as a near-Arctic state in the "greater Arctic" [大北极] (Li, 2016). Obtaining Arctic Council observer status in 2013, China has since increased its ambitions, often citing Arctic issues impacting China's interests (*China's Arctic Policy*, 2018), including as part of the Chinese Belt and Road Initiative, the NSR, and China's vision for a Polar Silk Road.

Russia's diplomatic isolation will open opportunities for increased cooperation between Russia and China in areas of shared benefit. Russian and Chinese interests converge over the NSR, which can potentially reduce the distance between Europe and Asia by 40% (Deiana, 2023). The NSR, under favorable Russian control, offers China an option to overcome its "Malacca Dilemma" (Pawel Paszak, 2021), whereby more than 80% of China's energy and cargo currently pass through the Malacca Strait, making it vulnerable to denied passage in a conflict (Satish, 2023). Similarly, China is dependent on over 70% of its oil and 40% of its natural gas from imports (Xie, 2021), making the High North an attractive source of resources. China needs Russia's support and cooperation as the largest Arctic country to achieve its goals, while Russia, in turn, requires Chinese financial investment.

While currently a case of peaceful coexistence, cooperation between NATO's primary adversary and a country considered a strategic threat (Luis, 2023) risks frag-



menting NATO's security. Alternatively, other states demanding natural resources may seek to gain from Russia's geography in a manner more functional for High North security. With its defined Arctic policy, interests in developing the NSR, and stable relations with Moscow, India could become a viable alternative and less fracturing to High North security. Both nations are already discussing deepening cooperation in the Arctic (Malte Humpert 2023).

## **CONCLUSION**

### **Navigating the strategic waters**

The High North was once marked by Arctic exceptionalism and collaborative norms. However, as demonstrated by the issues discussed in this paper, the region's isolation has thawed, and the risk of fracturing is increasing. Fracturing the High North is contrary to NATO's interests and should be an Alliance priority to prevent. Therefore, NATO must balance its core aims in this evolving geopolitical context and agree on a policy that allows the following actions:

**Balancing deterrence and dialogue:** NATO should think creatively about confidence-building measures and exploit opportunities for dialogue with Russia. A shift in mindset will be difficult due to current political constraints on cooperation, but it is required. Effort "should concentrate on proving to the Kremlin that cooperation is in everybody's interest" (Juha Kämpylä, Harri Mikkola, 2019). This will help undermine the emerging Russian-Chinese cooperation and reduce regional fractures. Areas for consideration include military deconfliction mechanisms and emergency and rescue protocols. It may be simpler to achieve consensus on using political levers to reaffirm the role of the Arctic Council as the forum for non-military Arctic issues and public recognition that reinstating Russian membership would increase functionality. This could be achievable and effective.

**Militarily:** NATO needs to make decisions that allow it to defend against and balance threats emanating from the High North. The upcoming final determination of the JFC Norfolk Area of Responsibility is necessary to allow for continued joint NATO exercises in all domains in the High North to strengthen NATO's defense and deterrence posture. This will help determine responsibility for undertaking ISR investment in the High North to increase awareness of possible threats. To ensure that NATO does not inadvertently contribute to a fractured High North, conscious capability investment decisions must be made (Officer in the Danish Joint Arctic Command, 2023). It will likely be difficult for NATO to achieve consensus to com-

pete with infrastructure or asset investment on the same scale as Russia and China while maintaining existing commitments. However, NATO should take practical steps to balance this presence by routinely identifying gaps and investing in High North capabilities through the Defense Planning Process.

As NATO charts its course in the High North, it must navigate with a clear-eyed assessment of the risks and opportunities. Any increased activity must be accompanied by transparent strategic messaging to mitigate the risk of miscalculation or misunderstanding. NATO's response should be agile, adaptive, and cooperative, ensuring the High North remains a region of shared interests rather than a fractured battleground.

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## Evaluating the Effect of Stock Liquidity and Limitation of Orders on Future Fluctuations Case Study: Petrochemical Companies Admitted to Tehran Stock Exchange

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### ABSTRACT

Fluctuations in stock prices are commonly observed in all stock exchanges and are considered a natural aspect of market dynamics. These fluctuations are influenced by various factors both within and outside of organizations. When these factors are identified, shareholders can make informed decisions by evaluating their holdings as well as those of others in the market. This enables them to take appropriate actions such as maintaining, selling, or replacing their shares as needed. This research examines the impact of stock liquidity and order restrictions on the future fluctuations of petrochemical companies listed on the Tehran Stock Exchange over a five-year period. Utilizing a panel data approach, monthly time series data obtained from the Stock Exchange is analyzed. The hypotheses are tested using panel data econometric methods and the EViews7 software. The findings reveal a significant relationship between relative liquidity and future stock price fluctuations, as well as a significant relationship between sales order limits and future fluctuations. Consequently, it is recommended that regulatory authorities implement effective policies regarding stock liquidity and sales order limits to manage and mitigate sudden fluctuations in the Stock Exchange.

*Keywords:* Stock liquidity; price fluctuation; transaction rates; purchase and sales; proposed price variances

## **INTRODUCTION**

A stock market is always affected by various vicissitudes that can cause fluctuations in its stock prices. Every country battles a range of such fluctuations as per its specific economic and political conditions. The Iran Stock Exchange is no exception and its fluctuations commonly affect the performance of the listed companies.

Stock liquidity is one of the most essential subjects for investors. When it comes to short-term investments, most investors prefer highly liquidated stocks. Investors with long-term aims are sensitive to stock prices and their changes. In fact, changes in share prices are vital sources of information when evaluating a company's financial situation, conducting a comparative analysis, and, most importantly, making decisions about stock transactions.

Understanding the effect of stock liquidity on market volatility can lead to the issuance of limiting regulations and decisions that are instrumental in controlling fluctuations. Simply put, information related to fluctuations and changes in transaction concepts are some of the most important criteria for evaluating investing deposits and other securities and for pricing derivatives.

Limitations regarding clause 10 of the executive instruction of online securities transactions in the Tehran Stock Exchange and Iran Forward Market include limitations on the type of orders, rate of orders, transaction time, and specific supplies and ordered prices. These limitations are explained below:

- A. Limitations on the type of orders  
Permissible orders for online customers (regarding order prices). Time limits with no limitations (including days, dates and open dates)
- B. Limitations on the amount of orders  
At present, there are no limitations on the amount of orders over and above the ordinary limits on main transactions
- C. Limitations on the time of transactions
  - i. Entering order time – this starts at the beginning of the transaction system's permitted order entering hour to 12:30PM
  - ii. Immediately post 12.30PM, orders through the daily credit of online customers must be eliminated
- D. Limitations on specific supplies
  - i. Online customers can enter their orders at the time of opening discount symbols, while observing the price limits of these orders
  - ii. The Stock Exchange or Forward Market should determine separate quo-

tas in all the primary supplies for each online customer. Online transaction customers can make purchases from primary supplies, keeping in mind the permissible amount of online transactions for the determined rate of shares.

- iii. Online customers have no right to competitive action or dominant transaction
- E. Price limits on orders
- i. The rate of permissible difference between the order price and the market price is applied at the opening discount and primary supply, as follows:
    - A customer's order purchase price in an online transaction cannot be more than the best market-quoted price
    - A customer's order selling price in an online transaction cannot be less than the best market-quoted price
    - At the time of entering the orders, if there are no purchase or sell orders, the aforementioned limitation is not applicable
  - ii. Some factors surrounding the percentage of permissible difference between the order price and the latest transaction price are:
    - In case the value of the order is less than or equal to one million Rials, the difference between the purchase/sales order prices and the latest transaction price can be a maximum of 2%. This limitation is applicable from 9:00AM to 12:30PM
    - If a transaction is not executed in the current day, the base price of the latest transaction would be the final price of the previous day

However, it should be noted that supply and demand are the only determining factors when it comes to property. One of the most critical objectives of stock exchange bureaus is creating regulated and transparent strategies for confronting the supply and demand criteria when determining the price of financial properties. Generally, strategists and legislators always try to eliminate the existing factors that cause a supply-demand imbalance. Laws and regulations that prevent any contrast between supply and demand are significant in newly emerged markets. To cushion the market against fluctuations and financial crises, legislators establish rules and limitations in financial markets for input or output investments, supply and demand of shares, determination of stock prices, stock selling rate, etc. Excessively fluctuating stock prices in new markets are mainly caused by speculation or a supply-demand imbalance. Prices in such markets are determined based on buy and sell orders (supply and demand) of securities. All the transaction orders of securities are sent

to the Stock Exchange from all over the country and stock prices are determined. Moreover, some stock exchange bureaus, like the Tehran Stock Exchange, do not have any market specialists or brokers due to easy transactions. As a result, price fluctuations are more intense. So far, the range of fluctuations has been determined by trial and error. Therefore, the current study aims to understand the effects of stock liquidity on future fluctuations of stock prices by analyzing the data from petrochemical companies listed on the Tehran Stock Exchange. The following hypotheses were determined when working toward the research objective:

A) Main hypothesis:

There is a significant relation between relative liquidity and future fluctuations in stock prices.

B) Subordinate hypotheses:

There is a significant relation between the limitations on purchase orders and future fluctuations.

There is a significant relation between the limitations on selling orders and future fluctuations.

## History of Research

The facilitation of property transactions is considered on the basis of liquidity (Taqavi & Biabani, 2003). In the absence of exclusive definitions, measuring and capturing liquidity is difficult. Some studies define *liquidity* as ‘the possibility of transforming any form of property into another form in the short-term, without causing loss to its real value.’ In other words, the term ‘liquidity’ is used when there are no changes in the original price (Benic & Feranic, 2008). Kyle (1985) stated that since brokers cannot distinguish between the orders created by aware brokers and those created by the ones looking for liquidity, they determine the prices as functions of imbalanced conditions in the order, which means uninformed and unaware people determine the transactions. This creates a positive relation between the rate of orders, transaction volumes, and price change. This is generally referred to as the price effect. Some researchers, like Elyk (1985), have studied the cross-sectional effects of liquidity on the expected yield of stocks.

Amihud and Mendelson (1991) stated that companies are inclined toward increasing their stock liquidity policies since liquidity can potentially improve the company’s yielding efficiency and value. Furthermore, they also observed that company managers often try to increase the liquidity of their securities by conversion of their companies into public joint stock entities, voluntary disclosure of information, and

stock distribution among more shareholders (i.e., increasing the number of shareholders for the free-floating shares of the company).

Chan and Faff (2003) studied the cross-sectional effect of liquidity in the Australian market by applying the stock turnover rate when pricing assets. They used monthly data and control factors, such as the ratio of the book value to the market, company size, and excessive market yields, and observed the effect of liquidity on the pricing of assets by using cross-sectional regression. They found a negative relation between the turnover and yield. The proposed price and yield were also found to be negatively related, showing a positive liquidity premium on one side and a negative liquidity premium in the Australian Stock Market on the other side.

Martinez, Nieto, and Tapia (2005) analyzed three crucial factors of liquidity and yield average in the Australian market. They used various liquidity criteria in their research. The first liquidity criterion was the Pastor et al. criterion (2003), based on the inverse relation between price fluctuations and ordering flows. The stock yields of dividend paying companies show less sensitivity as compared to liquidity. This indicates that investors focus on dividends and market liquidity when evaluating a company (Pastor et al., 2003). The second criterion was a market function, which is defined as the yield sensitivity to proposed transaction price changes. Efficient financial markets facilitate the fluent transfer of money from people with savings to people having profitable investment opportunities. Such markets indicate a high level of transactions and high market participation. Investors feel more secure in such markets and, hence, readily make transactions (Marshall & Young, 2003). As presented by Amihud, the final criterion was the absolute ratio of stock yield to the rate of transactions (in Euros). Results from this empirical study showed that the criterion reported by Amihud significantly improved the pricing model of assets.

Marshall (2006) perceived the liquidity criteria according to the transactions, such as turnover rate and purchase or sales proposed prices. He observed the contradictions between traditional and contemporary liquidity criteria. Drawing from previous studies, he considered a new criterion for liquidity, calling it 'VOW – the value of order weight.' Marshall found that the order-weighted coefficient was statistically significant even after controlling the beta variables with regard to the ratio of the book value to the market value and yields of the stockholder's income (Marshall, 2003).

Deuskar (2006) presented a model for analyzing the behavior between liquidity and the likely fluctuations of stock prices. He believed that the risk premium increases during high fluctuations. On the other hand, when the current yield of assets is low,



the rate of non-risk asset yield is also likely to be low. Lack of liquidity has the potential to improve the supply shock.

Fujimoto and Masahiro (2006) drew a positive relation between the lack of liquidity and stock yield fluctuations. Their research sample included 100 of the most significant shares from the New York Stock Exchange and 100 close index shares by the end of the year 2000. The liquidity criteria used in their study included stock turnover and the relative price difference between stock purchases and sales. The resultant variable for 75% of the examined shares indicated a greater lack of liquidity by increased stock return fluctuations.

## ***METHODS***

The present study is applied research. It has considered the effects of stock liquidity and order limitations on future fluctuations by using data analysis, inferential statistics, such as Pearson correlation, regression estimation tests, and analysis of the regression model hypotheses by “sweivE” software.

This study calculates liquidity using the following three factors:

1. Proposed stock transaction differences (purchasing and selling) indicating the difference between the highest and the lowest prices
2. Variable of the ratio of number of transacted shares to the total shares in the company. These numbers were collected primarily by the Rahavard Novin software. The values of the variable were then calculated using Excel
3. The variable ratio of the company’s transacting days to the total number of days when the Stock Exchange reported transactional activities, was calculated by Rahavard Novin and Excel software packages

The present study focuses on ordering limitations by considering purchase and sell order limitations as variables. The period considered for this research was from March 2010 to March 2014 (on a monthly basis). Statistical research samples included 12 active petrochemical companies, such as Persian Gulf, Iranian, Pardis, Shazand, Zagros, Maroun, Shiraz, Bandar Imam, Abadan, Jam, Urumieh, and Esfahan.

## RESULTS

This research used a regression model, as indicated in relation (1):

$$\sigma_{\tau+1}^M = a_0 + a_1\sigma_{\tau}^M + a_2RLIQ_{\tau}^{buy} + a_3RLIQ_{\tau}^{sell} + \sum_{j=1}^{11} b_j D_{j,\tau} + control + \varepsilon_{\tau+1}$$

Relation 1: Regression model of the project

The variable of stock fluctuations in the above model was calculated by relation (2):

$$\sigma_{\tau}^M = \sqrt{\frac{1}{K} \sum_{k=1}^K [MQ, MQ]_{\tau}^{sparse,k} - \frac{1}{K} [MQ, MQ]_{\tau}^{all}}$$

Relation 2: Variable equation for the stock fluctuations

### 3.2 Significance Test of Variables and the Model

T-test was used to analyse the significance of the independent variables in each model. The null hypothesis in the t-test was as follows:

$$\begin{cases} H_0 : \beta_1 = 0 \\ H_1 : \beta_1 \neq 0 \end{cases} \quad \text{Relation 3}$$

Its verification was analysed by the following relation:

$$T = \frac{\hat{\beta}_1 - \beta_1}{SE(\hat{\beta}_1)} \sim t_{\frac{\alpha}{2}, N-k} \quad \text{Relation 4}$$

The obtained T-statistic was compared with t in the table (calculated with N-K degree of freedom in 95% confidence level). If the absolute value of the calculated T were to be greater than that of t in the table, the numerical value of the test function would have been in the critical area, and the null hypothesis would have to be rejected. In this situation, the considered coefficient ( $\beta_1$ ) was significant, with a 95% confidence coefficient, indicating the relationship between dependent and independent variables.

F-statistic was used to analyze the significance of the regression model. The null hypothesis was as follows:

$$\begin{cases} H_0 : \beta_1 = \beta_2 = \dots = \beta_k = 0 \\ H_1 : \beta_1 \neq \beta_2 \neq \dots \neq \beta_k \neq 0 \end{cases} \quad \text{Relation 5}$$

The verification was considered by the following statistic:

$$F = \frac{ESS / (K - 1)}{RSS / (N - k)} \quad \text{Relation 6}$$

The obtained F-statistic was compared with the F values in the Table with K-1 and N-K degrees of freedom in error level ( $\alpha$ ) of calculated 5%. If the calculated F were to be greater than F in the Table, the numerical value of the test function would have been in the critical area, and the null hypothesis (H0) would have to be rejected. The model was significant in this situation, with a 95% confidence coefficient. If the calculated F were to be less than F in the Table, H0 (null hypothesis) would have to be accepted, and the significance of the model in a 95% confidence level would be rejected. In this study, the regression model verification was approved with regard to the F statistic.

## ***ANALYSIS***

This section looks at the data analysis made in this study using descriptive and inductive statistical values.

The ‘central value’ in the distributive study of a statistical population is the representative value by which the surrounding measures are distributed. The numerical criterion introducing the center of the data set is called the ‘measure of central tendency.’ Mean and average are among the most common centripetal criteria. In most cases, the average is near the mean value in Table (1). This indicates a normal distribution of variables.

Standard deviation is another dispersion index, showing the distance of the data from the average value. If the standard deviation is near zero, it indicates that the data is near the average value and has little dispersion. On the other hand, a large standard deviation indicates substantial data dispersion. The standard deviation is equal to the second root of the variance. The approximation of standard deviation is of the same dimension as the data. In all cases (Table 1), the standard deviation of the data is small, indicating appropriate data distribution.

Skewness is equal to the third normalized moment. It is a criterion for the distribution function’s existence or lack of symmetry. Skewness for a fully symmetrical distribution is equal to zero, positive for an asymmetrical distribution extending to higher values, and negative for an asymmetrical distribution extending to lower

values (Johnson et al., 2001). Table 1 shows the rate of skewness of variables. Apart from the leverage ratio, all other variables in this study are positively skewed. In most cases, low skewness indicates normal distribution of the variables.

Elongation is equal to the fourth normalized moment. In other words, elongation is a criterion that refers to the sharpness of the curve at the maximum point (Hassanipak, 2007). The rate of elongation for normal distribution is equal to 3. The daily virtual variable (D) is not placed under ‘descriptive statistics’ since it is a combination of 0 and 1.

**Table 1**  
*Descriptive statistics for the research variables*

Distribution form criteria		Dispersion criteria	Concentration criteria		Variable type	Abbreviation	Variable
Extensi-on	Skew-ness	Standard deviation	Mean	Average			
3.67	0.9	20617.8	25225.5	29178.96	independent	RLIQBUY	Relative liquidity towards purchasing
3.24	0.83	22405.4	27419.3	31195.3	independent	RLIQSELL	Relative liquidity towards selling
23.24	3.05	27.31	19.30	29.84	dependent	SIGMAT	Stock price fluctuations
10.24	2.35	103.25	1161.39	1556.63	control	NT	No. of transactions
57.66	5.98	1030.6	478.02	715.11	control	AQ	Volume of transactions
142.04	9.34	0.0002	$8/28 * e^{-6}$	$3/89 * e^{-5}$	control	AMR	Lack of liquidity variable

## 4.2 Pearson Correlation Test

Table 2 shows the correlation rate and significance levels in lines 1 and 2, respectively. The considered correlation is statistically significant if the significance is less than 0.05. As can be seen, the correlations are significant in some cases. For example, transaction volume (AQ) significantly correlates with all the variables, whereas the other variables have significant correlations with each other in some cases. However, the intensity of correlations is less than the value, with the possibility of co-linearity in the model.

**Table 2**  
*Correlation between the model variables*

	SIGMAT	RLIQSELL	RLIQBUY	NT	DT	AQ	AMR
SIGMAT	1.000000	----	----	----	----	----	----
RLIQSELL	0.023759 0.5250	1.000000	----	----	----	----	----
RLIQBUY	0.052180 0.1625	0.017029 0.6487	1.000000	----	----	----	----
NT	0.047807 0.2007	0.148525 0.0001	0.246328 0.0000	1.000000	----	----	----
DT	0.026915 0.4715	0.056815 0.1283	0.165505 0.0000	0.028587 0.4444	1.000000	----	----
AQ	0.092668 0.0130	0.158210 0.0000	0.117512 0.0016	0.342990 0.0000	-0.074497 0.0460	1.000000	----
AMR	-0.037630 0.3140	-0.007881 0.8330	-0.033722 0.3669	-0.067044 0.0726	0.151259 0.0000	-0.097005 0.0093	1.000000

### Tests for Determination of Regression Estimation Method and Results of Regression Model Fitness

Chow test is used to determine which method is more efficient for estimating the regression model: panel or combined data.

As seen in Table 3, the significance level of the Chow test in the considered equation is less than  $\alpha=0.05$ . Therefore, appraisal of the model is approved with a 95% confidence level by using the panel method. Since null hypothesis of Chow test was rejected on the basis of y-intercepts, Hausman test is used for identifying the existence of fixed or random effects.

**Table 3**  
*Results of Chow test for regression models*

Regression model (1)	Test statistic	Degree of freedom	Significance level	Result
Chow test	1.86	(687 & 11)	0.04	Using panel model
Hausman test	0.000	7	1.000	Not known

According to Table 3, the significance level of the Hausman test is prob-1.000. Thus, it can be concluded that the Hausman test cannot distinguish between fixed and random effects. This implies the need for a different criterion. Therefore, the

regression model is estimated to have random effects. Then, the potential of random effects is measured when expressing the relations between the model variables. The estimation results show that the expressed random effect with Rho rate equals 0.000, and the non-expressed random effect with Rho rate equals 1.00. These results indicate that random effects cannot express 100% of the model changes. Hence, fixed effects should be used for model estimation. The estimations with fixed effects are indicated in Table 4.

**Table 4**  
*Results of regression model fitness*

Response variable=Fluctuations of future stock prices			
Independent variables	Regression coefficients	t-test statistic	Significance level
Equation ( $\alpha$ ) constant	27.79	22.65	0.000
Fluctuations of present stock prices	0.03	2.18	0.02
Relative liquidity towards purchasing	-1.95	-0.59	0.55
Relative liquidity towards sales	0.0001	2.82	0.004
Daily virtual variable	-0.47	-0.35	0.71
No. of performed transactions	-0.0002	-0.51	0.60
Transaction volume	-0.001	-3.62	0.000
Variable for lack of liquidity	2464.09	0.50	0.61
F-test statistic: 3.52		Significance level: 0.000	
		Determinant coefficient: 0.26	
		Durbin-Watson statistic: 1.90	

## ***DISCUSSION***

Durbin-Watson statistic is considered for analysing regression hypotheses. It includes statistical values between 0-4. If the value of this statistic is closer to '2', then the likelihood of serial self-correlation in the model is low. According to the obtained Durbin-Watson statistic of 1.9, there is no possibility of serial self-correlation in the considered regression model (using the Durbin-Watson table).

### **4.4.2 Jarque-Bera Normality Test**

Jarque-Bera test and histogram analysis are used to understand the normality conditions of fitted model residues. According to Table 5, the significance level of Jarque-Bera is less than  $\alpha=0.05$  and equal to zero. Thus, the distribution of residues is not normal with 95% confidence level.

#### 4.4.3 Multi Co-linearity

When estimating least-square parameters, variance inflation in linear regression models is one of the most essential elements. However, a challenge in using this method is the existence of ‘co-linearity’. One way to identify multi co-linearity is using variance inflation factor. This factor shows how inflated the estimated coefficient of variance is compared to the estimated variables that do not have linear correlation.

Table 5 shows the variance inflation coefficients for the regression model under consideration. According to the results of this test, it can be concluded that no multi co-linearity exists for the variance inflation model.

**Table 5**

*Tests of regression hypotheses for the considered regression equation*

Test	Amount	Results
Durbin-Watson statistic	1.90	Lack of serial self-correlation probability in the model
Jarque-Bera test	133.26	Non-normal distribution of model residue (1)
Variance inflation statistic	1.14	Confirming the lack of multi co-linearity in the regression model

### ***ANALYSIS OF THE RESEARCH HYPOTHESES, DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION***

The research hypotheses are analysed in this section. Important relations for approving or rejecting the hypotheses are considered in Table 6.

**Table 6**

*Important considered relations*

Considered effect	Amount	Significance
Relation between purchase order limitations and future fluctuations	-1.95	---
Relation between selling order limitations and future fluctuations	0.0001	***

\*\*\*Significant with over 99% confidence

The obtained F-statistic for the estimated regression model in Table (4) equals 3.52, which is quite significant. Thus, it can be concluded that there is a significant relation between relative liquidity and future fluctuations in stock prices.



Table (6) shows that although the coefficient of relation between purchasing order limitation and future fluctuations is -1.95, this effect is not statistically significant. Therefore, we can state that there is no significant relation between purchasing order limitation and future fluctuations. Hence, the first subordinate hypothesis is rejected.

Furthermore, the results in Table (6) also show that the coefficient of relation between the selling order limitation and future fluctuations equals 0.0001. This implies a substantial statistical significance. Thus, it can be concluded that there is a significant relationship between the limitation of selling orders and future fluctuations. Hence, the first subordinate hypothesis is approved.

The results of this study showed a significant relation between liquidity and selling order limitation and future fluctuations. These factors can cause a great deal of future fluctuations in the Stock Exchange, and controlling these variables can greatly help the stock market progress.

As it was stated in the history of research, existing limitations in the stock exchange have caused serious problems in the market liquidity for investors. Cases such as a lack of brokers for a stock, the formation of sales queues, and the reluctance of buyers to purchase stocks with sales queues are among the reasons that stock liquidity has been overlooked for a long time. On the other hand, stockholders have to wait for the liquidation of their stock to justify the ESP or formation of assemblies. Experience has shown that in addition to the elimination of liquidity, an extension of this process causes the selling price of such stocks to be much lower than their inherent values. Consequently, the stock market experiences intensive fluctuations. It has been observed that long purchasing queues for a stock can encourage the public to purchase it.

One way to eliminate stock market fluctuations could be: if the capacity of the selling queue reaches a definite percentage of the total distributed stock (e.g., 1%), the fluctuation limits should be taken away from the mentioned stock symbol; the buyers in the buying queue should be allowed to propose their premium rates relative to the existing price or the sellers in the selling queue should be permitted to announce their discounts. Percentage determination could cause longer purchasing and selling queues. However, once the limitations are taken away, non-committed buyers and sellers are likely to withdraw. This could also encourage genuine buyers and sellers to execute their transactions. Moreover, this strategy could allow the existing supervision and penalty protocols in the stock exchange to reduce unreal stock transaction queues, thereby controlling future fluctuations.

## **CONCLUSION**

In addition to accessing limitations to the data for orders, the lack of research in the area of order limitations is a matter of concern. It is recommended that future researchers use the subject of this research in other industries when analyzing variables in the long run. Future researchers are also advised to use variables from those used in this study.

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# Service Leadership and Its Influence on Customer Orientation, Adaptive Selling, In-role Performance, and Service Recovery Performance

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DOI: [HTTPS://DOI.ORG/10.62343/CJSS.2024.251](https://doi.org/10.62343/CJSS.2024.251)

## ABSTRACT

Recently, due to the vital role of customers and the growing need for understanding all aspects of customer engagement by providing access to sufficient information about different services and various methods of service delivery, it is crucial to identify challenges associated with interacting with customers and maintaining long-term relationships with them, such as significant factors affecting hotels' profitability and stability. The current study aims to investigate the impact of service leadership on variables such as customer orientation, adaptive selling, service recovery performance, and in-role performance. A questionnaire-based survey was used to collect data from 93 participants chosen through simple random sampling from 145 employees and managers working in the service sectors of two-star and higher-rated hotels in Isfahan City, Iran. The results of statistical analysis, obtained via LISREL software through structural equation modeling, indicated that service leadership had a strong and positive influence on customer orientation, adaptive selling, service recovery (organizational citizenship behavior), and in-role performance (job performance). However, the minimum influence was observed in adaptive selling. It was also indicated that customer orientation had the most significant impact among all variables. Recommendations for further research are also presented.

*Keywords:* service leadership, customer orientation, organizational citizenship behavior, adaptive selling, in-role performance, service recovery performance

## **INTRODUCTION**

For many years, leadership has been a crucial issue in organizational behavior and management literature (Lee & Huang, 2019). Leadership plays a fundamental role in achieving organizational aims and improving organizational growth (Ghavifekr & Adewale, 2019). Researchers have confirmed that leadership positively impacts most performance outcomes, including sales enactment, job performance, customer satisfaction, customer orientation, financial performance, and organizational commitment (Anvari & Janjaria, 2023; Humphreys et al., 2003). Studies demonstrate that the leadership style prevalent in organizations affects the attributes of employees' performance. Moreover, leadership encourages positive behavior among employees, as well as employee engagement, which affects profitability through its influence on businesses, customer satisfaction, productivity, customer loyalty, enhanced safety, and retention (Popli & Rizvi, 2017).

Because of the critical role of leadership in performance (Saleem et al., 2019), it has been shown that superior leadership enhances job satisfaction and improves employees' performance, ultimately increasing the sustainability of business among organizations (Jermstittiparsert, 2020). Researchers have emphasized that poor leadership negatively affects the performance of salespersons and can result in low performance among workers in an organization (Tehreem et al., 2013). Leadership is also essential for the success of a team. Researchers and practitioners have repeatedly shown that team leaders are responsible for their team's performance. Leadership is also used as a critical tool for achieving sustainable change and organizational goals (Hao & Yazdanifard, 2015).

Today, organizations rely heavily on their service teams because these teams can resolve mistakes quickly, identify the changing needs of their customers with more precision, collaborate and coordinate with team members to meet those needs effectively and give these organizations a competitive edge over those that do not have service teams. Therefore, these teams are an effective tool that enables managers to fulfil the needs of their customers. However, this will not be possible if the team leaders cannot elicit a strong commitment among team members to retain customers and provide high-quality services. This commitment is aimed at encouraging team members to perform adaptive selling, which involves understanding what is necessary and valuable for their work because this type of selling results in a comprehensive understanding of customers' needs and how to meet those needs effectively. Moreover, collective capability has emerged as a concept for constructing task-specific tasks that can indicate the varying levels (units from teams) of the business within organizations. Providing successful services to customers can enhance the attitude and performance

of group members, enabling them to deliver service quality at an excellent level (De Jong et al., 2008; Gully et al., 2002).

Nowadays, the market focuses on meeting customers' desires and needs (Itani et al., 2019). Customer relationship management, as a business strategy, is a key factor in establishing the satisfaction of customers as the ultimate goal of a company (De Souza Freitas et al., 2020).

The present study was carried out to examine the impact of adaptive selling on the relationship between service leadership and service recovery performance, customer orientation, and job performance. Minimal research has been conducted in the field of adaptive selling. The findings of this study can be applied to help hotel managers communicate effectively with their employees and customers and obtain more information about their actual customer needs so that this information can be used in making decisions to improve staff performance and upgrade services. Therefore, according to the above facts and previous studies, the main question is whether strengthening the role of customer orientation, service recovery performance, in-role performance, and service leadership can be improved according to the mediating role of adaptive selling. In a review of the literature, it can be said that numerous studies have been carried out on the research variables, and some of these studies are referred to below:

Organizations can motivate their employees to enhance their job performance to increase their success. Considerable success is significant for achieving various business goals. For this reason, organizations should engage in different human resource management activities to encourage their employees to develop their job performance (Pujiono et al., 2020).

### **Research Hypotheses:**

The current study presents the following hypotheses:

**H1:** Service leadership impacts adaptive selling in two-star and higher-rated hotels in Isfahan.

**H2:** Adaptive selling impacts customer orientation in two-star and higher-rated hotels in Isfahan.

**H3:** Adaptive selling impacts in-role performance in two-star and higher-rated hotels in Isfahan.

**H4:** Adaptive selling impacts service recovery performance in two-star and higher-rated hotels in Isfahan.

## ***METHODS***

This research was conducted as a descriptive survey regarding its nature and methods. The sample consisted of 105 managers and staff from the service sector of two-star and higher-rated hotels in Isfahan City. Out of this number, a total of 93 questionnaires were returned. A standard questionnaire was used for this study. Table 1 lists the indicators and related questions for service leadership, customer orientation, adaptive selling, service recovery performance, and in-role performance. The questionnaire contained five components and 25 indicators for testing the hypotheses. Face validity and content validity were employed to determine the questionnaire's validity.

**Table 1**

*Indicators and related questions*

<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Related questions</b>
Service leadership	1-5
Adaptive selling	6-10
Customer orientation	11-15
In-role performance	16-20
Service recovery performance	21-25

## ***RESULTS***

In this paper, the reliability of the questionnaire was measured using Cronbach's alpha coefficient, with the total Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the entire questionnaire being 0.84. If the alpha coefficient of all the variables is greater than 0.70, then it can be said that the data collection tool is reliable. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was used to assess the normal distribution of the population. In contrast, the Friedman test was used to rank the order of importance of each variable. The regression line reflected the general movement route of the scattered points in a nominal coordinate system to indicate the intensity and correlation between the variables. Figure 1 exhibits the conceptual model of the study. Descriptive statistics of the participants are shown in Table 2, and descriptive statistics of the variables are presented in Table 3. The normality of the variables was measured, and the results are given in Table 4.



**Table 2**  
*Descriptive statistics of participants*

	<b>Group</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Gender	Male	77	82.8
	Female	16	17.2
	Total	93	100
Age status	Less than 30	15	16.1
	40-31 years	24	25.8
	50-41 years	48	51.6
	More than 50 years	6	6.5
	Total	93	100
Work experience	1 to 5 years	12	12.9
	5 to 10 years	30	32.3
	10 to 20 years	47	50.5
	More than 20 years	4	4.3
	Total	93	100
Education	Diploma	16	17.2
	Associate's degree	20	21.5
	Bachelor's degree	45	48.4
	Master's degree	12	12.9
	Total	93	100

**Table 3**  
*Descriptive statistics of variables*

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Average</b>
Service leadership	3.0394
Adaptive selling	3.2427
Customer orientation	3.4319
In-role performance	3.0394
Service recovery performance	3.2151

**Table 4**  
*Results of the normality test of variables*

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Significant level</b>	<b>Error value</b>	<b>The confirming assumption</b>	<b>Conclusion</b>
Service leadership	0.070	0.05	$H_0$	This variable is normal
Adaptive selling	0.12	0.05	$H_0$	This variable is normal
Customer orientation	0.12	0.05	$H_0$	This variable is normal
In-role performance	0.32	0.05	$H_0$	This variable is normal
Service recovery Performance	0.13	0.05	$H_0$	This variable is normal

**Figure 1**  
*Conceptual model*

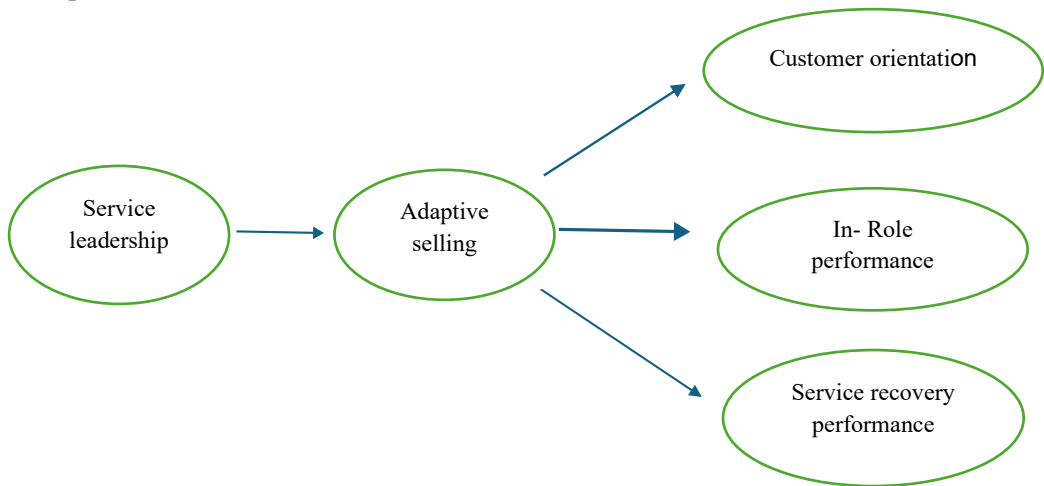


Table 5 shows the goodness of fit indices of models. According to the LISREL output, the calculated value  $\chi^2/df$  was equal to 2.01. The low value  $\chi^2/df$  represented the proper fit of the model, indicating that the proposed model was an appropriate model, according to the results obtained from the output of the LISREL software.

As the value  $\chi^2/df$  was more than the value of the standard significance level ( $\alpha = 0.5$ ), therefore, the proposed model was a good model. Several fitness indicators were used to assess the models in the structural equations used for the cases in this study, including root mean square error of approximation, the goodness of fit index, and the adjusted goodness of fit index. If the root mean square error of the approximation index is equal to 0.05 or less, then it is a good model.

Models that have an index of 0.1 or more have a weak fit. This indicator can be used to calculate the confidence interval. The ideal confidence interval is one with a low limit very close to zero and an upper limit not too high. As can be seen, the RMSEA of these models was low, indicating that they were in good condition. Whenever the GFI is closer to 1, the model fits better with the data. The index in this model was over 0.9, representing a good fit.

**Table 5**  
*Goodness of fit indices of models*

Index title	Standard index value	Index value of the model	Conclusion
$X^2/df$	Around 2	2.01	Appropriate model fit
p-value	More than 0.05	0.11	Appropriate model fit
GFI	More than 0.9	0.90	Appropriate model fit
RMSEA	Less than 0.1	0.06	Appropriate model fit
AGFI	More than 0.9	0.91	Appropriate model fit
NFI	More than 0.9	0.92	Appropriate model fit
NNFI	More than 0.9	0.91	Appropriate model fit
IFI	More than 0.9	0.93	Appropriate model fit
CFI	More than 0.9	0.096	Appropriate model fit

## **DISCUSSION**

This study aimed to evaluate the effect of adaptive selling on the relationship between service leadership and customer orientation, in-role performance, and service recovery performance in two-star and higher-rated hotels in the city of Isfahan. The research findings showed that service leadership affected adaptive selling in these hotels. The results indicated that the regression coefficient or beta value between the effects of service leadership on adaptive selling was 0.88, which means that one unit of change in service leadership resulted in a change of 0.88 in adaptive selling. The coefficient of determination, which showed the variability of adaptive selling explained by service leadership, was 0.77, indicating a strong relationship. Since the result obtained was higher than the significance level in this research ( $p > 0.05$ ), the hypothesis was confirmed. Therefore, it was concluded that service leadership has a positive and significant impact on adaptive selling, consistent with the findings of Aryee et al. (2019).

As shown by the results of the regression coefficient or the beta value, adaptive selling significantly impacted customer orientation in two-star and higher-rated hotels in Isfahan. The beta value of 0.81 indicated that one unit of change in adaptive selling resulted in a change of 0.81 in customer orientation. The coefficient of determination was 0.67, indicating the influence of customer orientation concerning adaptive selling, thereby reflecting a strong relationship. The hypothesis was confirmed

since the impact was higher than the significance level obtained in this research ( $p < 0.05$ ). Therefore, it was concluded that adaptive selling has a significant and positive impact on customer orientation, consistent with the findings of Sofi et al. (2020).

As the results indicated, the regression coefficient or beta value for the impact of adaptive selling on in-role performance was 0.75, showing that a change of one unit in adaptive selling created a change of 0.75 in in-role performance. The coefficient of determination was 0.57, which indicated the influence of in-role performance concerning adaptive selling, thereby illustrating a relatively strong relationship. Since the result was higher than the significance level of this research ( $p < 0.05$ ), the hypothesis was confirmed. Therefore, it was concluded that adaptive selling significantly and positively impacts in-role performance. This finding was consistent with the results of Harindranath et al. (2019) and Inyang et al. (2018).

Adaptive selling also impacted service recovery performance in two-star and higher-rated hotels in Isfahan. As the results showed, the regression coefficient or beta value for the impact of adaptive selling on service recovery performance was 0.63, indicating that one unit of change in adaptive selling resulted in a change of 0.63 in service recovery performance. The coefficient of determination was 0.40, indicating the influence of service recovery performance regarding adaptive selling, reflecting an average relationship. Since the impact was higher than the significance level of this research ( $p < 0.05$ ), the hypothesis was confirmed. Therefore, it was concluded that adaptive selling has a significant and positive impact on service recovery performance, consistent with the findings of Santos-Vijande et al. (2013) and Charoensukmongkol and Suthatorn (2020).

## **CONCLUSION**

Because successful organizations in a competitive business environment develop competitive strategies based on their conditions and competitive advantages, it is recommended that the effects of these competitive strategies (cost reduction, product innovation, and quality promotion) be studied as moderator variables. Similar research should be conducted in other areas and industries to assess the external validity of the findings. Additionally, the relationship between other elements influencing service leadership should be examined. The statistical results of this study cannot be generalized to other populations. Since this study was conducted in Isfahan City, the research results cannot be generalized to the entire country of Iran due to differences in culture, demographics, interests, opinions, and perceptions.

Due to the sensitivity of managers and the cultural tendency to consider information as private, some sales managers and experts may have refrained from providing certain information to the researchers. Another limitation of this study was the data collection method using a questionnaire. This method includes limitations inherent in written questionnaires, such as the impossibility of thoroughly verifying the accuracy of respondents' answers and the unwillingness of sales managers and staff to cooperate.

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## The Land Surveyor and the GPS in the Context of Systematic Land Registrations

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### ABSTRACT

The article explores the historical context of the Surveyor Institute and its role in the legal order of land rights registration. It emphasizes the significance of GPS technologies in ensuring the accuracy of real estate rights registration. The article also examines the role of systematic registrations in clarifying overlapping cadastral data and preventing neighborhood disputes. Additionally, it addresses the challenges related to surveying activities in Georgia and underscores the importance of establishing a legal framework for this profession.

**Keywords:** *systematic registration, property rights, surveyors' institute, legal framework, surveying activities, cadastral data*



## ***INTRODUCTION***

The Institution of Surveyors has played a crucial role in the process of land privatization and the operation of an entire regime of property rights over land in Georgia since the country gained independence and continues to do so today. In recent decades, the importance of this profession has grown significantly with the introduction of systematic registrations of rights to real estate. The Surveyor Institute is instrumental in determining accurate cadastral data. It should be noted that surveyors primarily operate as subjects of private law, and a comprehensive definition of their rights and duties is unfortunately absent from the current legislative framework in Georgia.

This paper provides insights into how the Surveyor Institute and GPS systems address legal challenges in the systematic land registration process. It reviews the role of the Surveyor Institute and the existing legal situation in Georgia, aiming to establish the need for a regulatory framework governing surveying activities. The article highlights aspects of the Surveyor Institute and GPS systems that are significant to the law.

## ***METHODS***

The study employs a multidisciplinary approach, combining historical analysis, legal comparative methods, and technical evaluation. Historical and legal documents were analyzed to explore the evolution of the Surveyor Institute and gaps in Georgian legislation. A comparative review of international practices highlighted best practices for systematic land registration. Additionally, technical evaluation of GPS and RTK systems underscored their importance in achieving cadastral accuracy. Case studies from Georgian cadastral activities further illustrated the challenges and opportunities, providing a comprehensive basis for proposing reforms in legal and technological frameworks.

## ***RESULTS***

### **Historical Context of Surveying Activities**

Surveying activity dates back to ancient times. The land register recorded in Egypt dates back 3,000 years and is related to the process of restoring the boundaries of agricultural farms damaged by the Nile flood and the construction of the Great Pyramid of Giza. Sources of Roman law indicate that surveyors established the basic surveying tools through which the geographical units of the Roman Empire were defined. A tax register of the conquered lands existed from 300 AD, with administrative data about the land processed by the surveyors (Hopkins, 1994, p.

116). The borders of the land and landmarks can also be read in biblical concepts, for example, in Deuteronomy 19:14 and 27:17; Proverbs 22:28 and 23:10; and Job 24:2 (Holy Bible, 2nd ed.).

In Europe, in the 18th century, a survey method known as “triangulation,” which relied on measuring angles, was used to network various communications (ICSM, n.d.). During the early days of the colonization of Australia and New Zealand, different methods were employed to determine geographical data, including the measuring wheel, Gunter’s chain, and compass. Surveyors performed this task, numbering the country’s perimeter (Hallmann, 1994). However, over time, outdated methods such as the so-called “Bafta” and others have been replaced by GPS systems (e.g., GNSS Rover, Total Station). These devices allow surveyors to measure a geographic object with maximum accuracy.

## ***DISCUSSION***

### **Surveyor as a land surveyor at the time of registration**

In the process of registering rights to real estate, one of the important aspects is the land survey, which takes into account the interests of both the buyer and the seller. For example, from the 20th century to the present day, the functional role of the surveyor’s activity in the USA has not changed: determining the boundaries of the land-land survey-which establishes the geographical boundaries of the property. This process is necessary to avoid future neighborhood disputes due to overlapping borders. Through advanced technology and methodology, a land surveyor provides legal data-based geoinformatics data processing. In the context of limited commercial rights, such as easements and essential roads, the surveyor specifies the geographic location of the easement and accurately reflects it in the documentation (Wilson, 2006).

During zoning, land surveyors assess whether a property complies with municipal zoning ordinances, providing critical information to the buyer, including the seller. Land surveyors play an important role in creating a topographic map, an essential component of construction permit documentation (U.S. Department of the Interior, 1973, pp. 144–222). Moreover, land surveyors have an essential function in the resolution of land disputes by providing expert results and evidence; for example, in connection with the demarcation of country borders, they create maps of property and land in general with high accuracy, which is a necessary basis in the process of real estate registration and obtaining ownership rights (McNeil, 1992). Land surveyors are responsible for bringing the document establishing the ownership right

into harmony with the actual circumstances (Pylaeva, 2020). A land information system can be created with cadastral programs and digital maps collected in geoinformation systems (GIS; Tanawijaya, 2022).

Surveying activity is of such great importance, both in legal and other sciences, that in many developed countries, the profession of surveyor requires legal education (Ronald, 2008, p. 31). The government of Georgia carries out systematic registration of rights to land plots free of charge (Roland, 2015, p. 35). The process of registration of ownership rights and changes in registered data on plots of land located in different geographical areas or within the scope of a project of special state and public importance is ongoing on a proactive basis (Article 2 of the Law of Georgia on the Method of Systematic and Sporadic Registration of Rights to Land Plots and Perfection of Cadastral Data, 2020).

With the establishment of the National Public Registry Agency, the legal importance of systematic registrations has increased, especially in geographical areas where there is an overlapping situation in the registered data, which becomes the cause of legal disputes between owners. In this process, the land surveyor and advanced GPS technologies play a decisive role. The Surveyor's Institute provides the field digitization of agricultural land as an object, the preparation of documents necessary to register ownership rights, and the specification of geographical boundaries (Navratil, 2004, pp. 471–486). Systematic registration is also a legal mechanism for obtaining ownership rights for legitimate owners (Article 4 of the Law of Georgia on the Method of Systematic and Sporadic Registration of Rights to Land Plots and Perfection of Cadastral Data, 2020). Within the framework of systematic registration, a social context is provided for citizens, which implies a registration fee subsidy. Surveyors and GPS technologies play an advanced role in effectively implementing systematic registration, protecting and realizing the rights of the true owner (Article 2 of the Law of Georgia on Public Registry, 2020).

### **Measure challenges in Georgian legal reality**

There is no separate legal framework for surveying activities in Georgia. The surveyor's rights and duties are not sufficiently regulated at the normative level. Instead, they are scattered across various provisions in orders or separate normative acts. For example, Order No. 1-1/410 of the Minister of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia, dated August 3, 2016, specifies that the surveyor, acting based on a written contract with the interested party, is responsible for preparing the cadastral survey drawing. However, this alone is insufficient to establish a comprehensive legal order for the rights and duties of surveyors. In foreign countries,

separate normative materials and legal frameworks are dedicated to regulating this profession and defining surveyors' rights and duties.

For example, there is a special law regarding land surveying and cadastre production in Germany. The normative content stipulates that a national land survey must be conducted to ensure that, for example, the registration object requested by a private owner aligns with state interests. Land cadastre production is also carried out in the context of conducting property surveys, where determining the time and boundaries of buying and selling is mandatory. These processes are managed using geoinformation systems (VermG, 2004). In contrast, Georgian legislation does not require the surveyor to be involved in the agreement process between parties or to verify such agreements. However, in the Netherlands, like France, the surveyor has the right to verify and record the parties' agreement after conducting a field survey and adjusting the geometric relationships in office conditions using geoinformation systems (GIS) (Wakker, 2003).

### **GPS in surveying cadastral boundaries and updating maps**

In the Netherlands, to effectively process information about the rights of owners and land plots, the cadastral and land registry agencies are separate institutions (Wakker, 2003). They divide the registration process into cartographic and administrative activities, ultimately serving one purpose. The administrative database contains essential legal and administrative information about any land plot. At the same time, the cadastre ensures the alignment of geo-information systems and cadastral survey drawings of the plot with administrative data. There is no separate legal framework for the cadastre. Since the introduction of the land register and cadastre in the Netherlands in 1832, all changes to the cadastral map have been preserved in the geoinformation system of the land plot (Gurung, 2021).

Map updating is related, for example, to the agreement of the parties on the location of new boundaries when the surveyor measures new boundaries, establishes the coordinates of new boundaries, brings them into correspondence with topographic objects, and determines objects located on the ground (Hagemans, 2022). At the beginning of the 19th century, one of the tools used by surveyors was a chainsaw; today, this has been replaced by GPS devices, which are managed by RTK-kinematic servers, enabling real-time coordinate digitization. The RTK method ensures the accuracy of GPS measurements. According to registered digital cadastral data, the location of objects is determined by coordinates (Amerisurv, 2021). The surveyor can determine the actual coordinates with a GPS device (Safrei, 2018). GPS tech-

nologies are integrated into many digital devices; however, in surveying activities, positioning is done through at least two satellite GPS receivers—one for measuring the baseline and the other for measuring the actual distance and location of the position (Meng, 2020).

Resolving land use conflicts is a complex process. During disputes, it is necessary to analyze spatial data, which is carried out through GIS. However, to ensure the accuracy and reliability of GIS data, GPS technology is necessary as an advanced tool for collecting, verifying, and updating spatial data. The legislation of Georgia does not explicitly require that only licensed persons can carry out surveying activities. This is evident from the archive records of the National Agency of Public Registry, where several registration documents and cadastral survey drawings are stored, having been created by unlicensed persons using improper tools (e.g.).

## **CONCLUSION**

Systematic registration of rights to immovable objects is an essential process for securing property rights and ensuring the social function of the land. A historical review of the Surveyors' Institute has highlighted the relevance of this profession from the earliest times.

GPS systems play a crucial role in determining land boundaries and collecting accurate cadastral data. Therefore, it is essential to implement GPS and RTK land surveying methods in all surveying activities.

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# Property Crime in the South Caucasus - Panel Data Analysis

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## ABSTRACT

The paper aims to determine the various variables affecting property crimes (theft, robbery, burglary) in the South Caucasus (Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Georgia). For this purpose, we used panel data from three countries – registered property crimes from 1997 to 2018. Using the first difference estimator of the GMM, we studied the effect of deterrence, socio-economic, geographical, and other variables on property crime rates. The analysis revealed that past crime and urbanization positively affect property crime, while the clear-up rate and real wage change have negative effects. However, the study does not confirm a statistically significant relationship for other economic variables used in the empirical analysis, which may be explained by the economic development levels of these countries.

*Keywords:* property crime, deterrence, urbanization, socio-economic factors, panel data

## **INTRODUCTION**

The classical theory of crime postulates that criminal action depends on a rational individual's free choice due to evaluating the cost-benefit of an illegal action (Becker, 1968; Ehrlich, 1975). In this calculation, the individual considers the risk of disclosure, the probability of punishment, and its severity. Becker (1968) argued that the increase in the probability of punishment has a more direct influence on the potential criminal than the severity of the punishment.

According to Merton (1938), crime is determined by the gap between the culturally recognized goals in society and the legitimate means to achieve them, which pushes the individual toward illegal actions. Cohen and Felson (1979) consider crime an opportunity. Namely, without crime deterrents, a motivated offender and a suitable target increase the likelihood of committing a crime. From the social disorganization theory's perspective, the crime rate is high in a community/neighborhood where social control mechanisms are weakened. According to various authors, this is caused by cultural-value misunderstanding among community members, a lack of social bonds, social capital, and collective (Shaw & McKay, 1942; Rose & Clear, 1998; Sampson et al., 1999). Moreover, the insufficiency of the abovementioned can be caused by poverty, unemployment, population mobility, ethnic heterogeneity, and many other factors (Shaw & McKay, 1942; Sampson & Groves, 1989; Kubrin & Weitzer, 2003).

The broad interest of scholars in the empirical study of the mentioned theories is apparent. However, relatively less attention has been paid to the former Soviet Union countries. In these countries, the transition from a socialist regime to a democratic system based on market principles has only occurred over the past three decades. Among them are South Caucasus countries that also featured armed conflicts in the first decade of the re-establishment of independence (Nagorno-Karabakh, Abkhazia, South Ossetia, Civil War). These conflicts affected economic transition, justice, and institutional development. As a result of these conditions, these countries have been experiencing a lack of adequate legal means of property protection. At the same time, the institution of the 'thieves-in-law' (organized crime characteristic of post-Soviet states) has gained more and more power (Kukhianidze, 2009; Kupatadze, 2012; Slade, 2013). Therefore, our purpose is to study crime rates in the South Caucasus countries, namely, to empirically examine socio-economic and other factors affecting property crime in Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan.

The classical theory pays enormous attention to crime deterrence, from which the clear-up rate is singled out. According to the theory, if the crime detection likeli-

hood is high, it has a negative effect on the crime rate since, in such circumstances, there is a high probability of arrest for a potential offender (Saridakis & Spengler, 2012; Bun et al., 2019). Therefore, one frequently used explanatory variable in empirical studies determining property crime is the clear-up rate (Buonanno & Montolio, 2008; Han et al., 2013; Engelen et al., 2016).

Some scholars consider inflation to explain the change in the crime rate (Nilsson, 2004; Tang & Lean, 2007; Nunley et al., 2015; Rosenfeld & Levin, 2016; Rosenfeld et al., 2018). High inflation is expected to increase crime rates (Devine et al., 1988). On the one hand, inflation reduces the purchasing power of households. In particular, more nominal financial resources are needed under inflation to maintain the consumption level. Thus, high inflation implies a decrease in living standards. On the other hand, income inequality is anticipated to increase (Albanesi, 2007), which may positively affect the crime rate (Soares, 2004).

Among the economic factors affecting the crime rate, the most widely studied is unemployment (Cantor & Land, 1985; Raphael & Winter-Ebmer, 2001; Buonanno, 2003; Edmark, 2005; Öster & Agell, 2007; Andresen, 2012; Altindag, 2012; Phillips & Land, 2012; Speziale, 2014; Recher, 2019). In addition, from the labor market indicators, employee output (wages) is often used (Doyle et al., 1999; Gould et al., 2002; Machin & Meghir, 2004). Some scholars consider that if wages increase at the bottom, a negative effect on crime is expected. On the contrary, if wages increase at the top, it raises inequality among the workers, which can become an incentive for low-paid employees to earn income through illegal means (Machin & Meghir, 2004; Engelen et al., 2016).

Ehrlich (1975) argues that an educated individual has less incentive to commit a crime. Since an individual with low education is anticipated to earn less than the average wage, it is more likely that the latter will engage in illegal income earning. In the case of an educated person, the potential offender's opportunity costs increase, or the punishment imposed on them is relatively expensive (Lochner & Moretti, 2004). The positive relationship between crime and education is empirically supported (Edmark, 2005; Buonanno & Leonida, 2006; Buonanno & Montolio, 2008; Lochner, 2010; Machin et al., 2011; Bennett, 2018; Nordin, 2018).

A lifestyle change is predicted after divorce. Dramatic lifestyle changes are related to crime, so changing an individual's marital status can lead to committing a crime. Some authors have empirically demonstrated a positive relationship between property crime and divorce (Nilsson, 2004; Edmark, 2005; Halicioglu, 2012; Halicioglu et al., 2012).

Examining the relationship between the population's age structure, gender, and crime is of great interest to scholars. It is considered that young men are more likely to engage in criminal activity (Cohen & Land, 1987; Steffensmeier & Harer, 1987; Devine et al., 1988; Levitt, 1998; Levitt, 1999; Buonanno, 2003). Moreover, it is widely supported empirically (Entorf & Spengler, 2000; Rickman & Witt, 2007; Choe, 2008; Buonanno & Montolio, 2008; Lin, 2009; Hooghe et al., 2010; Altindag, 2012; Han et al., 2013; Engelen et al., 2016; Rosenfeld et al., 2018; Brosnan, 2018).

Urban locations, characterized by a high density, are considered contributors to street crime. In urban areas, the object of the crime is more accessible, and the probability of a crime being committed is higher. According to Glaeser and Sacerdote (1999), city size and crime are related in three ways:

- Higher pecuniary returns to crime in urban areas.
- Lower probability of arrest in urban areas.
- Urban areas' attraction (or creation) of crime-prone individuals.

On the other hand, in less urban areas and small towns, the police have much more information about the population and are more familiar with potential criminals. Wilson and Herrnstein (1998) argue that due to the familiarity of the population in smaller cities and less dense settlements, the simultaneous informal community and formal sanctions for the potential offender are expected to have a more powerful deterrent effect. Several papers deal with the positive relationship between urbanization and crime rate (Buonanno & Montolio, 2008; Hooghe et al., 2010; Halicioglu et al., 2012; Speziale, 2014). However, a negative relationship was also found (Engelen et al., 2016).

## ***METHODS***

For the empirical study of the determinants of crimes against property, based on the literature reviewed above, we can derive the following econometric model:

$$CR_{it} = a + \beta_1 CR_{it-1} + \beta_k D_{it} + \beta_z E_{it} + \beta_y S_{it} + \beta_x G_{it} + \varepsilon_{it} \quad (1)$$

where

$$\varepsilon_{it} = \eta_i + v_{it} \quad (2)$$

In equation (1),  $CR$  - the crime rate is the dependent variable. In addition, the model includes the lagged dependent variable as an explanatory variable since some scholars argue that a criminal past leads an individual to commit crimes in the future (Witt et al., 1999; Saridakis & Spengler, 2012; Frederick et al., 2016). The other independent variables on the right-hand side are deterrence ( $D$ ), economic variables ( $E$ ), social factors ( $S$ ), and geographic/demographic variables ( $G$ ). In both equations,  $i$  denotes countries, where  $i = 1, 2, 3 \dots I$ , and  $t$  denotes time (year), where  $t = 1, 2, 3 \dots T$ . In equation (1),  $\alpha$  is an intercept, and  $\beta$  is the slope, presented for each  $k$ -,  $z$ -,  $y$ -, and  $x$ -th explanatory variables. The last term on the right-hand side of equation (1) is the unobservable random error. In equation (2), is the unobserved time-constant country-specific effect that may be correlated with some independent variables. Under such a condition, the assumption  $\text{Cov}(x_{it}; \varepsilon_{it}) = 0$  is violated. Thus, it is necessary to eliminate the issue that is possible by first difference transformation. As a result, we get the following linear dynamic model:

$$\Delta CR_{it} = \delta_1 \Delta CR_{it-1} + \delta_k \Delta D_{it} + \delta_z \Delta E_{it} + \delta_y \Delta S_{it} + \delta_x \Delta G_{it} + \Delta v_{it} \quad (3)$$

where  $v_{it}$  is the error term that is correlated with the lagged dependent explanatory variable -  $\text{Cov}(CR_{it-1}; v_{it}) \neq 0$  (endogeneity). Because  $\Delta CR_{it-1} = CR_{it-1} - CR_{it-2}$  is correlated with  $\Delta v_{it} = v_{it} - v_{it-1}$  and  $CR_{it-1}$  correlates with . In addition to the lagged dependent variable, endogeneity may be with crime deterrence variables (Reilly & Witt, 1996; Levitt, 1996; Witt et al., 1999; Saridakis & Spengler, 2012; Frederick et al., 2016). However, dealing with the endogeneity problem can be done using the Generalized Method of Moments (GMM). In particular, this is the difference GMM estimator (Arellano & Bond, 1991). For the First-differences equation, where there is an endogeneity problem, we use the lags of their origin levels (t-2) as the instruments. Baltagi (2005; 2021) has well summed up the justification of instrumenting the endogenous variable by its lag. Finally, to get a consistent estimate of  $\delta_1$ ,  $\delta_k$ ,  $\delta_z$ ,  $\delta_y$  and  $\delta_x$  ( $N \rightarrow \infty$  with  $T$  fixed), the first-difference equation is following:

$$\begin{aligned} CR_{it} - CR_{it-1} = & \delta_1 (CR_{it-1} - CR_{it-2}) + \delta_k (D_{it} - D_{it-1}) + \delta_z (E_{it} - E_{it-1}) + \\ & + \delta_y (S_{it} - S_{it-1}) + \delta_x (G_{it} - G_{it-1}) + (v_{it} - v_{it-1}) \end{aligned} \quad (4)$$

From equation (4), if we take a simple autoregressive model for  $CR_{i1}$ ,  $CR_{i2}$ ,  $CR_{i3} \dots CR_{it}$ , first, second, third ... observation, we derive the following:

$$CR_{i3} - CR_{i2} = \delta(CR_{i2} - CR_{i1}) + (v_{i3} - v_{i2}); \quad t = 3 \quad (5)$$

$$CR_{i4} - CR_{i3} = \delta(CR_{i3} - CR_{i2}) + (v_{i4} - v_{i3}); \quad t = 4 \quad (6)$$

$$CR_{i5} - CR_{i4} = \delta(CR_{i4} - CR_{i3}) + (v_{i5} - v_{i4}); \quad t = 5 \quad (7)$$

In this case,  $CR_{i1}$  is a valid instrument since it is highly correlated with  $(CR_{i2} - CR_{i1})$  and not correlated with  $(v_{i3} - v_{i2})$  as long as the are not serially correlated. Like  $CR_{i1}$ ,  $CR_{i2}$  is valid as long as it is highly correlated with  $(CR_{i3} - CR_{i2})$  and has no correlation with  $(v_{i4} - v_{i3})$ , etc.

## RESULTS

Among property crimes, three main types- robbery, burglary, and theft- and their clear-up rate are discussed. The data source on crime is the annual reports published by the official statistics offices of Georgia, Azerbaijan, and Armenia (<https://www.geostat.ge/en> ; <https://www.armstat.am/en/> ; <https://www.stat.gov.az/?lang=en>). In the case of Georgia, additionally, the data for the years 1997-2012 were requested from the Ministry of Internal Affairs (<https://police.ge/en>). Data on the number of prisoners, real wages, divorce rates, and urbanization were also obtained from the mentioned sources. Other demographic variables, such as total population, age, and gender, are obtained from the database prepared by the UN Population Division (<https://population.un.org/wpp/>). Changes in the consumer prices index and the GDP per capita (at constant prices, PPP) are from the WEO database of the International Monetary Fund (<https://www.imf.org/en/data>). The employment rate and education level are from the databases of the International Labor Organisation and the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (<https://ilostat.ilo.org/>; <http://uis.unesco.org/>).

The data we used covers the period 1997-2018 in the South Caucasus—Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia. Economic, social, and demographic variables are presented, which are expected to be factors in property crime (see Table 1).

Since the data includes crimes registered by the police, imperfect recording is expected to exist (Lin, 2009). This problem is reflected not only in the crime rate but also in the clear-up rate. As a result, this increases the measurement error (Levitt, 1996). However, the actual crime rate is assumed to be proportional to unreported (Ehrlich, 1996). Accordingly, the problem can be alleviated by transforming the variable into the natural logarithm. The logarithmic form of variables reduces the

range between variable values, reducing the impact of crime reporting bias and outliers (Choe, 2008; Saridakis & Spengler, 2012; Frederick et al., 2016). Therefore, our dependent and independent variables (except price changes and real wage growth) will be used in the logarithm.

The models we selected are valid. We utilized Arellano and Bond's one-step first difference estimator, where the original level lag (t-2, t-3, t-4 ... t-n) was used as an instrument for the endogenous variables. To test the validity of the instruments, we used Sargan's *J* statistic. The null hypothesis assumes that the instruments used are valid. Hence, the null hypothesis may not be rejected under the conditions of the valid instruments. The instruments used with 6 out of 8 models are valid. In the case of robbery, all models meet the validity test, and only four are suitable for burglary.

Regarding autocorrelation, we used the Arellano and Bond test. Here, the null hypothesis for the first AR(1) and the second AR(2) - order is based on the absence of autocorrelation. Therefore, the null hypothesis should not be rejected for second-order AR(2) and be rejected for first-order AR(1), respectively. As a result, the absence of first-order autocorrelation is rejected for all types of property crimes, and vice versa for second-order is not rejected (see Table 2).

Our analysis reveals a statistically significant positive relationship ( $P < 0.001$ ) between the current and past crime rates, confirmed in all valid models. A similar result is found with the clear-up rate, which negatively correlates with the property crime rate ( $p < 0.001$ ). Also, there is a statistically significant positive association between urbanization and the crime rate ( $P < 0.001$ ). However, no statistically significant relationship is found between the population proportion of young and middle-aged men and the crime rate (see Table 2).

As for the labor market indicators - in the two models, the negative effect of the real wage is statistically significant at 0.05 and 0.1. On the other hand, there is no statistically significant relationship between employed young men and property crime. In contrast, an increase in the employment rate of men aged 25+ has a positive association ( $P < 0.001$ ). A similar result exists between tertiary education and the aggregated property crime rate ( $P < 0.5$ ).

In contrast to the aggregate crime rate, in some models, a statistically significant negative relationship between the clear-up rate and robbery rate is confirmed only at 0.1. Also, there is no significant relationship between the robbery rate, urbanization, and other variables. There is a statistically significant positive relationship between both crime categories - robbery and burglary and the lagged rate ( $P < 0.001$ ), and the clear-up rate of robbery is associated with a decrease in the crime rate ( $P$



< 0.001). There is no evidence of the effect of urbanization, real wage growth, and employment rate on the robbery and burglary rates (see Table 3 & Table 4).

The share of theft in property crimes is high. The positive association between the theft rate and its lag is confirmed at 0.001. Also, urbanization has a relatively large impact, statistically significant at 0.001. Namely, other things being equal, an increase in urbanization leads to an increase in theft (see Table 5). On the other hand, improving the detection of the mentioned crime category leads to a reduction in crime, confirmed at 0.001.

Finally, we have seen that all models are valid. The magnitude of impact under different types of crime is explained by different independent variables. In some cases, evidence of the influence of theoretically expected variables is not found.

## ***DISCUSSION***

The results of our analysis allow us to prove that the property crime (theft, robbery and burglary) rate is determined by its lag. Moreover, our estimates are the range obtained using a similar model by other authors (Witt et al., 1999; Buonanno & Montolio, 2008; Saridakis & Spengler, 2012). Also, the analysis established that the clear-up rate, other things being equal, decreases the property crime rate. Such an effect is more visible in theft and burglary, whose coefficient is between -0.19 and -0.43 and repeats the results of a similar empirical model (Saridakis & Spengler, 2012; Curry et al., 2016). As for other variables, a statistically significant relationship with urbanization is confirmed. Namely, other things being equal, an increase in the share of residents in an urban settlement is associated with an increase in thefts. In this case, urbanization, population age distribution and growth (first difference of GDP per capita) are similar to the results obtained by other authors with a similar empirical model (Howsen & Jarrell, 1987; Buonanno & Montolio, 2008). Like Han et al.(2013), we find no evidence of a statistically significant relationship between labor market indicators and property crime rates. In more detail, the authors examined data from England and Wales (1992-2008) but found no evidence of a labor market effect on property crime. However, similar to our results, the coefficient of the dependent variable lagged in the theft was between 0.60 - 0.68 (Han et al., 2013). In contrast to the latter, our study revealed a significant negative relationship between real wage growth and theft and burglary rates.

## **CONCLUSION**

We studied the socioeconomic factors of property crimes (robbery, burglary, and theft) in South Caucasus countries from 1997-2018. For this, we used Arellano and Bond's one-step first difference estimator. Our analysis confirms that the high crime rate in the previous period and urbanization are positively associated with current crime rates. In addition, the clear-up and the change in real wages have a negative effect on property crime. Evidence for the effects of urbanization and real wage is particularly robust in theft.

Evidence for the effect of urbanization on property crime provides empirical support for both classical and sociological theories of crime. In urbanized areas, there is a greater concentration of property, which increases the opportunity for a potential offender to receive benefits. On the other hand, the probability of arrest is relatively low because, in such areas, it is relatively tricky for the police to find a circle of suspects (Glaeser & Sacerdote, 1999). According to classical theory, this increases the net benefit of the potential offender. Furthermore, in sociological theory, the possibility of social (informal) control decreases in urban areas since there are fewer social ties (Sampson & Groves, 1989).

We do not have enough evidence for the effect of other socio-economic indicators on property crime. The economic development of the South Caucasus countries can explain this. All three countries are developing economies. Some scholars argue that development brings social conditions with a specific and different relationship to crime. As a result, property crime will increase, and violent crime will decrease (Shichor, 1990; Arthur & Marenin, 1995). Suppose the development benefits do not improve the whole population's well-being and are distributed only to high-income groups. Under such circumstances, poor people are more likely to commit property crimes since the opportunity to earn more income through illegal activities increases. Therefore, it is expected that there is a non-linear relationship between development and property crime. Empirical proof of this requires, on the one hand, an individual-level (micro) study and, on the other hand, a larger sample and time series.

## **Acknowledges**

We would like to thank the researchers at Gnomon Wise and other colleagues for their valuable comments.

## **Funding**

This research did not receive any grant.

## Conflict of Interest Statement

None of the authors had a conflict of interest.

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Table 1: Descriptive statistics

Variables	Definition	Armenia					Azerbaijan					Georgia				
		N	M	SD	Min	Max	N	M	SD	Min	Max	N	M	SD	Min	Max
CR	Property crime (per 100 000 inhabitants)	22	136.1	43.68	87.1	249.5	22	46.77	19.52	23.87	83.8	22	325.1	177.4	119.3	841
CRr	Robbery (per 100 000 inhabitants)	22	2.981	0.924	1.547	4.942	22	1.964	0.481	1.212	3.098	22	19.6	14.15	6.98	55.77
CRb	Burglary (per 100 000 inhabitants)	22	5.965	1.895	3.612	8.674	22	2.658	0.681	1.718	4.136	22	20.77	16.29	7.157	71.04
CRth	Theft (per 100 000 inhabitants)	22	127.2	43.02	78.52	239.8	22	42.14	19.43	19.58	79.79	22	284.7	158.4	94.13	714.1
CR_c	Clear-up rate	22	0.26	0.143	0.058	0.577	22	0.913	0.077	0.714	1.035	22	0.453	0.215	0.164	0.789
CR_r_c	Clear-up rate	22	0.537	0.179	0.106	0.933	22	0.849	0.172	0.412	1.132	22	0.574	0.128	0.354	0.738
CRb_c	Robbery clear-up rate	22	0.379	0.152	0.151	0.735	22	0.963	0.148	0.625	1.201	22	0.607	0.177	0.245	0.792
CRth_c	Burglary clear-up rate	22	0.247	0.144	0.055	0.573	22	0.916	0.074	0.733	1.072	22	0.442	0.228	0.141	0.805
P	Prisoners (per 100 000 inhabitants)	22	146.2	42.57	77.14	229	22	242.6	28.04	208.6	315.5	22	314.1	162.3	155.4	644.9
Wr	Real wage growth, %	22	9.164	8.417	-2.2	25.8	22	13.31	11.74	-0.61	52.5	22	11.9	11.66	-1.96	36.06
GDPpc	GDP per capita (PPP, int. dollar)	22	8200	3080	3379	12715	22	9967	4728	3179	14876	22	8819	3262	4269	14257
CPI	Consumer Price Index growth (%)	22	4.146	3.614	-1.41	14.05	22	5.274	6.36	-8.53	20.78	22	5.684	4.268	-0.94	19.14
ERYM	Young men employment rate	22	29.58	1.952	24.34	32.25	22	34.39	3.485	29.14	41.42	22	32.37	2.389	28.63	36.86
Er25M	Adult men employment rate (25+)	22	64.67	2.735	60.35	70.28	22	75.18	1.376	72.77	77.67	22	72.25	2.256	67.73	75.31
15_44rP	Share of males aged 15-44 in the population	22	45.45	0.587	44.48	46.38	22	49.98	1.28	47.67	51.55	22	44.58	1.652	41.24	46.06
15_24rP	Share of males aged 15-24 in the population	22	7.902	0.755	6.487	8.863	22	9.316	0.89	7.594	10.44	22	8.219	0.719	6.634	8.822
25_34rP	Share of males aged 25-34 in the population	22	6.614	0.978	5.486	8.244	22	9.316	0.89	7.594	10.44	22	7.617	0.188	7.313	7.856
35_44rP	Share of males aged 35-44 in the population	22	5.958	0.787	5.031	7.221	22	7.112	0.476	6.484	7.776	22	7.208	0.258	6.9	7.653
U	Urbanisation rate	22	63.84	0.732	63.08	65.5	22	52.45	0.79	51.1	53.24	22	56.58	1.101	54.34	58.66
E	Share of the persons with tertiary education in the population	22	38.94	6.636	28.78	48.67	22	20.06	2.434	18.03	25.91	22	39.53	8.166	25.28	57.26
D	Registered divorce (per 100 000 inhabitants)	22	89.52	32.63	37.13	149.5	22	99.14	27.43	62.41	148.8	22	123.1	90.5	39.4	276.3

Table 2: Property crime rate (theft, robbery, burglary)

Independent variables	Dependent Variable - Property crime							
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8
Property crime <sub>t-1</sub>	.679****	.663****	.636****	.663****	.764****	.651****	.669****	.721****
Clear-up rate	-.346****	-.187****	-.384****	-.432****	-.283****	-.336****	-.333****	-.23****
Prisoners	.0561	.109	-.00548	-.126*	.00651	-.0962	-.104	.0608
Wage growth	-.00359		-.00572*	-.00727**	-.00492	-.00192		-.0028
GDP per capita		.0512						
Inflation	.00254		.00144	.00303	.00513	.00591	.00548	.00554
Employment 14-24	-.461	-.443		.131			-.1	
Employment 25+	2.84****							
Education	.344*	.527****	.36**		.523**			.495****
Divorce	-.0239		-.206****	-.211****	-.0479			-.0399
Urbanisation			8.44****	9.29****		5.88****	5.99****	
Share of males aged 15-24					-.0425	-.0317		
Share of males aged 25-34					-.652			
Share of males aged 35-44								.195
m1	0.0023	0.0024	0.0008	0.0014	0.0009	0.0030	0.0039	0.0015
m2	0.7985	0.5806	0.3551	0.2963	0.4521	0.2923	0.3404	0.4868
J	0.2455	0.0619	0.3311	0.1761	0.1316	0.0118	0.0105	0.0806
N	60	60	60	60	60	60	60	60

Note: \* Statistically significant at the 0.1; \*\* statistically significant at the 0.05; \*\*\* Statistically significant at the 0.001. m1 and m2 of the first and second order autocorrelation test; J Sargan Test.

Table 3.: Robbery rate

Independent variables	Dependent Variable - robbery							
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8
Robbery rate $t_{-1}$ (ln)	.66***	.678***	.684***	.712***	.557***	.798***	.94***	.573***
Robbery clear-up rate	-.174	-.174*	-.175*	-.165	-.226*	-.191*	-.169	-.16*
Prisoners	-.084	.194*	-.136	-.199*	-.0023	-.252**	-.306**	-.0738
Wage growth	.00668		.00559	.00487	.00424	.00639		.00852*
GDP per capita	-.456	.111						
Inflation	.00227		.00276	.00265	-.000111	.00183	.00224	
Employment 14-24	.00227	-.367		-.198			-.136	
Employment 25+	1.47							
Education	.232	.647***	.212		.586*			
Divorce	-.182		-.248**	-.209*	-.207*			
Urbanisation			3.36	3.32		2.01	2.17	
Share of males aged 15-24					.847	.556		
Share of males aged 25-34					-.419			
Share of males aged 35-44								-.711
<i>m1</i>	0.0009	0.0036	0.0008	0.0007	0.0010	0.0010	0.0010	0.0010
<i>m2</i>	0.9870	0.5774	0.9756	0.8759	0.8990	0.8544	0.9531	0.9583
<i>J</i>	0.4700	0.2589	0.4738	0.4121	0.4964	0.3691	0.4646	0.3271
<i>N</i>	60	60	60	60	60	60	60	60

Note: \* Statistically significant at the 0.1; \*\* statistically significant at the 0.05; \*\*\* Statistically significant at the 0.001. *m1* and *m2* of the first and second order autocorrelation test; *J* Sargan Test.

Table 4: Burglary rate

Independent variables	Dependent Variable - burglary							
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8
Burglary rate <sub>t-1</sub> (ln)	.441***	.687***	.4929***	.4688***	.346***	.451***	.464***	.403***
Burglary clear-up rate	-.504***	-.169*	-.6162***	-.6174***	-.498***	-.703***	-.551***	-.528***
Prisoners	.0534	.131	-.07427	-.1211	.145	-.153	-.11	.0112
Wage growth	.00133		-.0008299	-.001269	.0005	-.00148		.00226
GDP per capita		.109						
Inflation	.0102		.01153*	.01144*	.00787	.0105	.0137*	.0125*
Employment 14-24	-1.06**	-.35		-.6664			-.847*	
Employment 25+	.657							
Education	.456*	.54**	.2573		.596**			.24
Divorce	-.119		-.1897**	-.1448*	-.116			-.225***
Urbanisation			4.171	3.56		3.31	.568	
Share of males aged 15-24					1.53***	.925**		
Share of males aged 25-34					.926			
Share of males aged 35-44								-1.19**
m1	0.0258	0.0024	0.0155	0.0146	0.0254	0.0100	0.0124	0.0202
m2	0.5800	0.4023	0.6403	0.6512	0.7635	0.3093	0.8336	0.9703
J	0.0794	0.1955	0.0782	0.0626	0.0370	0.0450	0.0406	0.0387
N	60	60	60	60	60	60	60	60

Note: \* Statistically significant at the 0.1; \*\* statistically significant at the 0.05; \*\*\* Statistically significant at the 0.001. m1 and m2 of the first and second order autocorrelation test; J Sargan Test.

Table 5: Theft rate

Independent variables	Dependent Variable - theft							
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8
Theft rate $t_{-1}$ (ln)	.695***	.658***	.642***	.661***	.782***	.628***	.665***	.738***
Theft clear-up rate	-.346***	-.186***	-.382***	-.432***	-.287***	-.344***	-.342***	-.227***
Prisoners	.0559	.101	-.0025	-.115	.00102	-.0706	-.0911	.0678
Wage growth	-.00445		-.0067**	-.00827***	-.00591	-.00273		-.00356
GDP per capita		.0481						
Inflation	.00242		.000795	.00235	.0057	.00556	.00497	.00593
Employment 14-24	-.435	-.432		.18			-.046	
Employment 25+	3.09***							
Education	.301	.517***	.33*		.501**			.486**
Divorce	-.0093		-.199***	-.211***	-.0423			-.0231
Urbanisation			9.11***	10***		6.72***	6.9***	
Share of males aged 15-24					-.113	-.125		
Share of males aged 25-34					-.769			
Share of males aged 35-44								.286
$m1$	0.0016	0.0024	0.0005	0.0009	0.0008	0.0022	0.0029	0.0012
$m2$	0.7206	0.5967	0.3171	0.3032	0.4074	0.3059	0.3643	0.4272
$J$	0.2923	0.0522	0.3619	0.2349	0.1389	0.0119	0.0142	0.0878
$N$	60	60	60	60	60	60	60	60

Note: \* Statistically significant at the 0.1; \*\* statistically significant at the 0.05; \*\*\* Statistically significant at the 0.001.  $m1$  and  $m2$  of the first and second order autocorrelation test;  $J$  Sargan Test.



## Appendix 1: Detailed description of models

In our data set, the time series exceeds the individuals, and multicollinearity exists ( $T > N$ ). Therefore, after the variance inflation factors (VIF) test ( $VIF \geq 3$  ;  $R^2 \geq 60$ ), we use the explanatory variables characterised by collinearity separately in different models to minimise the problem. All equations are as follows:

**Model 1:** There are used incarceration rate (P), real wage growth (Wr), the employment rate of men aged 15-24 (ErYM), the employment rate of men aged 25+ (Er25+M), change in the consumer price index (CPI), the share of the persons with tertiary education in the population (E) and the registered divorce (D).

$$\Delta \ln CR_{it} = \delta_1 \Delta \ln CR_{it-1} + \delta_2 \Delta \ln CR_{-Cit} + \delta_3 \Delta \ln P_{it} + \delta_4 \Delta W_{rit} + \delta_5 \Delta \ln E_{rYM_{it}} + \delta_6 \Delta \ln E_{r25M_{it}} + \delta_7 \Delta \ln CPI_{it} + \delta_8 \Delta \ln E_{it} + \delta_9 \Delta \ln D_{it} + \Delta v_{it} \quad (1)$$

$$\Delta \ln CR_{rit} = \delta_1 \Delta \ln CR_{rit-1} + \delta_2 \Delta \ln CR_{-Cit} + \delta_3 \Delta \ln P_{it} + \delta_4 \Delta W_{rit} + \delta_5 \Delta \ln E_{rYM_{it}} + \delta_6 \Delta \ln E_{r25M_{it}} + \delta_7 \Delta \ln CPI_{it} + \delta_8 \Delta \ln E_{it} + \delta_9 \Delta \ln D_{it} + \Delta v_{it} \quad (2)$$

$$\Delta \ln CR_{bit} = \delta_1 \Delta \ln CR_{bit-1} + \delta_2 \Delta \ln CR_{-Cit} + \delta_3 \Delta \ln P_{it} + \delta_4 \Delta W_{rit} + \delta_5 \Delta \ln E_{rYM_{it}} + \delta_6 \Delta \ln E_{r25M_{it}} + \delta_7 \Delta \ln CPI_{it} + \delta_8 \Delta \ln E_{it} + \delta_9 \Delta \ln D_{it} + \Delta v_{it} \quad (3)$$

$$\Delta \ln CR_{th_{it}} = \delta_1 \Delta \ln CR_{th_{it-1}} + \delta_2 \Delta \ln CR_{-Cit} + \delta_3 \Delta \ln P_{it} + \delta_4 \Delta W_{rit} + \delta_5 \Delta \ln E_{rYM_{it}} + \delta_6 \Delta \ln E_{r25M_{it}} + \delta_7 \Delta \ln CPI_{it} + \delta_8 \Delta \ln E_{it} + \delta_9 \Delta \ln D_{it} + \Delta v_{it} \quad (4)$$

**Model 2:** There are used the prisoners (P), real GDP per capita (GDPpc), the employment rate of men aged 15-24 (ErYM) and the share of the persons with tertiary education in the population (E).

$$\Delta \ln CR_{it} = \delta_1 \Delta \ln CR_{it-1} + \delta_2 \Delta \ln CR_{-Cit} + \delta_3 \Delta \ln P_{it} + \delta_4 \Delta \ln GDP_{pc_{it}} + \delta_5 \Delta \ln E_{rYM_{it}} + \delta_6 \Delta \ln E_{it} + \Delta v_{it} \quad (5)$$

$$\Delta \ln CR_{rit} = \delta_1 \Delta \ln CR_{rit-1} + \delta_2 \Delta \ln CR_{-Cit} + \delta_3 \Delta \ln P_{it} + \delta_4 \Delta \ln GDP_{pc_{it}} + \delta_5 \Delta \ln E_{rYM_{it}} + \delta_6 \Delta \ln E_{it} + \Delta v_{it} \quad (6)$$

$$\Delta \ln CR_{bit} = \delta_1 \Delta \ln CR_{bit-1} + \delta_2 \Delta \ln CR_{-Cit} + \delta_3 \Delta \ln P_{it} + \delta_4 \Delta \ln GDP_{pc_{it}} + \delta_5 \Delta \ln E_{rYM_{it}} + \delta_6 \Delta \ln E_{it} + \Delta v_{it} \quad (7)$$

$$\Delta \ln CR_{th_{it}} = \delta_1 \Delta \ln CR_{th_{it-1}} + \delta_2 \Delta \ln CR_{-Cit} + \delta_3 \Delta \ln P_{it} + \delta_4 \Delta \ln GDP_{pc_{it}} + \delta_5 \Delta \ln E_{rYM_{it}} + \delta_6 \Delta \ln E_{it} + \Delta v_{it} \quad (8)$$

**Model 3:** There are used the prisoners (P), real wage growth (Wr), Urbanization rate (U), change in the consumer price index (CPI), the share of the persons with tertiary education in the population (E) and registered divorce (D).

$$\Delta \ln CR_{it} = \delta_1 \Delta \ln CR_{it-1} + \delta_2 \Delta \ln CR_{-Cit} + \delta_3 \Delta \ln P_{it} + \delta_4 \Delta W_{rit} + \delta_5 \Delta \ln U_{it} + \delta_6 \Delta CPI_{it} + \delta_7 \Delta \ln E_{it} + \delta_8 \Delta \ln D_{it} + \Delta v_{it} \quad (9)$$

$$\Delta \ln CRr_{it} = \delta_1 \Delta \ln CRr_{it-1} + \delta_2 \Delta \ln CRr_{-Cit} + \delta_3 \Delta \ln P_{it} + \delta_4 \Delta W_{rit} + \delta_5 \Delta \ln U_{it} + \delta_6 \Delta CPI_{it} + \delta_7 \Delta \ln E_{it} + \delta_8 \Delta \ln D_{it} + \Delta v_{it} \quad (10)$$

$$\Delta \ln CRb_{it} = \delta_1 \Delta \ln CRb_{it-1} + \delta_2 \Delta \ln CRb_{-Cit} + \delta_3 \Delta \ln P_{it} + \delta_4 \Delta W_{rit} + \delta_5 \Delta \ln U_{it} + \delta_6 \Delta CPI_{it} + \delta_7 \Delta \ln E_{it} + \delta_8 \Delta \ln D_{it} + \Delta v_{it} \quad (11)$$

$$\Delta \ln CRth_{it} = \delta_1 \Delta \ln CRth_{it-1} + \delta_2 \Delta \ln CRth_{-Cit} + \delta_3 \Delta \ln P_{it} + \delta_4 \Delta W_{rit} + \delta_5 \Delta \ln U_{it} + \delta_6 \Delta CPI_{it} + \delta_7 \Delta \ln E_{it} + \delta_8 \Delta \ln D_{it} + \Delta v_{it} \quad (12)$$

**Model 4:** There are used prisoners (P), real wage growth (Wr), Urbanization rate (U), change in the consumer price index (CPI), registered divorce (D) and employment rate of men aged 15-24 (ErYM).

$$\Delta \ln CR_{it} = \delta_1 \Delta \ln CR_{it-1} + \delta_2 \Delta \ln CR_{-Cit} + \delta_3 \Delta \ln P_{it} + \delta_4 \Delta W_{rit} + \delta_5 \Delta \ln U_{it} + \delta_6 \Delta CPI_{it} + \delta_7 \Delta \ln D_{it} + \delta_8 \Delta \ln E_{rYM_{it}} + \Delta v_{it} \quad (13)$$

$$\Delta \ln CRr_{it} = \delta_1 \Delta \ln CRr_{it-1} + \delta_2 \Delta \ln CRr_{-Cit} + \delta_3 \Delta \ln P_{it} + \delta_4 \Delta W_{rit} + \delta_5 \Delta \ln U_{it} + \delta_6 \Delta CPI_{it} + \delta_7 \Delta \ln D_{it} + \delta_8 \Delta \ln E_{rYM_{it}} + \Delta v_{it} \quad (14)$$

$$\Delta \ln CRb_{it} = \delta_1 \Delta \ln CRb_{it-1} + \delta_2 \Delta \ln CRb_{-Cit} + \delta_3 \Delta \ln P_{it} + \delta_4 \Delta W_{rit} + \delta_5 \Delta \ln U_{it} + \delta_6 \Delta CPI_{it} + \delta_7 \Delta \ln D_{it} + \delta_8 \Delta \ln E_{rYM_{it}} + \Delta v_{it} \quad (15)$$

$$\Delta \ln CRth_{it} = \delta_1 \Delta \ln CRth_{it-1} + \delta_2 \Delta \ln CRth_{-Cit} + \delta_3 \Delta \ln P_{it} + \delta_4 \Delta W_{rit} + \delta_5 \Delta \ln U_{it} + \delta_6 \Delta CPI_{it} + \delta_7 \Delta \ln D_{it} + \delta_8 \Delta \ln E_{rYM_{it}} + \Delta v_{it} \quad (16)$$

**Model 5:** There are used the prisoners (P), real wage growth (Wr), the share of men aged 15-24 in the population (Pr15\_24M), the share of men aged 25-34 in the population (Pr25\_34M), changes in the consumer prices index (CPI), the share of the persons with tertiary education in the population (E) and registered divorce (D).

$$\Delta \ln CR_{it} = \delta_1 \Delta \ln CR_{it-1} + \delta_2 \Delta \ln CR_{-Cit} + \delta_3 \Delta \ln P_{it} + \delta_4 \Delta W_{rit} + \delta_5 \Delta \ln Pr_{15\_24M_{it}} + \delta_6 \Delta \ln Pr_{25\_34M_{it}} + \delta_7 \Delta CPI_{it} + \delta_8 \Delta \ln E_{it} + \delta_9 \Delta \ln D_{it} + \Delta v_{it} \quad (17)$$

$$\Delta \ln CRr_{it} = \delta_1 \Delta \ln CRr_{it-1} + \delta_2 \Delta \ln CRr_{-Cit} + \delta_3 \Delta \ln P_{it} + \delta_4 \Delta W_{rit} + \delta_5 \Delta \ln Pr_{15\_24M_{it}} + \delta_6 \Delta \ln Pr_{25\_34M_{it}} + \delta_7 \Delta CPI_{it} + \delta_8 \Delta \ln E_{it} + \delta_9 \Delta \ln D_{it} + \Delta v_{it} \quad (18)$$

$$\Delta \ln CRb_{it} = \delta_1 \Delta \ln CRb_{it-1} + \delta_2 \Delta \ln CRb_{-Cit} + \delta_3 \Delta \ln P_{it} + \delta_4 \Delta W_{rit} + \delta_5 \Delta \ln P_{r15\_24M_{it}} + \delta_6 \Delta \ln P_{r25\_34M_{it}} + \delta_7 \Delta CPI_{it} + \delta_8 \Delta \ln E_{it} + \delta_9 \Delta \ln D_{it} + \Delta v_{it} \quad (19)$$

$$\Delta \ln CRth_{it} = \delta_1 \Delta \ln CRth_{it-1} + \delta_2 \Delta \ln CRth_{-Cit} + \delta_3 \Delta \ln P_{it} + \delta_4 \Delta W_{rit} + \delta_5 \Delta \ln P_{r15\_24M_{it}} + \delta_6 \Delta \ln P_{r25\_34M_{it}} + \delta_7 \Delta CPI_{it} + \delta_8 \Delta \ln E_{it} + \delta_9 \Delta \ln D_{it} + \Delta v_{it} \quad (20)$$

**Model 6:** There are used the prisoners (P), real wage growth (Wr), the share of males aged 15-24 in the population (Pr15\_24M), the change in the consumer price index (CPI) and Urbanization rate (U).

$$\Delta \ln CR_{it} = \delta_1 \Delta \ln CR_{it-1} + \delta_2 \Delta \ln CR_{-Cit} + \delta_3 \Delta \ln P_{it} + \delta_4 \Delta W_{rit} + \delta_5 \Delta \ln P_{r15\_24M_{it}} + \delta_6 \Delta CPI_{it} + \delta_7 \Delta \ln U_{it} + \Delta v_{it} \quad (21)$$

$$\Delta \ln CRr_{it} = \delta_1 \Delta \ln CRr_{it-1} + \delta_2 \Delta \ln CRr_{-Cit} + \delta_3 \Delta \ln P_{it} + \delta_4 \Delta W_{rit} + \delta_5 \Delta \ln P_{r15\_24M_{it}} + \delta_6 \Delta CPI_{it} + \delta_7 \Delta \ln U_{it} + \Delta v_{it} \quad (22)$$

$$\Delta \ln CRb_{it} = \delta_1 \Delta \ln CRb_{it-1} + \delta_2 \Delta \ln CRb_{-Cit} + \delta_3 \Delta \ln P_{it} + \delta_4 \Delta W_{rit} + \delta_5 \Delta \ln P_{r15\_24M_{it}} + \delta_6 \Delta CPI_{it} + \delta_7 \Delta \ln U_{it} + \Delta v_{it} \quad (23)$$

$$\Delta \ln CRth_{it} = \delta_1 \Delta \ln CRth_{it-1} + \delta_2 \Delta \ln CRth_{-Cit} + \delta_3 \Delta \ln P_{it} + \delta_4 \Delta W_{rit} + \delta_5 \Delta \ln P_{r15\_24M_{it}} + \delta_6 \Delta CPI_{it} + \delta_7 \Delta \ln U_{it} + \Delta v_{it} \quad (24)$$

**Model 7:** There are used the prisoners (P), Urbanization rate (U), the change in the consumer prices index (CPI) and the employment rate of men aged 15-24 years (ErYM).

$$\Delta \ln CR_{it} = \delta_1 \Delta \ln CR_{it-1} + \delta_2 \Delta \ln CR_{-Cit} + \delta_3 \Delta \ln P_{it} + \delta_4 \Delta \ln U_{it} + \delta_5 \Delta CPI_{it} + \delta_6 \Delta \ln E_{rYM_{it}} + \Delta v_{it} \quad (25)$$

$$\Delta \ln CRr_{it} = \delta_1 \Delta \ln CRr_{it-1} + \delta_2 \Delta \ln CRr_{-Cit} + \delta_3 \Delta \ln P_{it} + \delta_4 \Delta \ln U_{it} + \delta_5 \Delta CPI_{it} + \delta_6 \Delta \ln E_{rYM_{it}} + \Delta v_{it} \quad (26)$$

$$\Delta \ln CRb_{it} = \delta_1 \Delta \ln CRb_{it-1} + \delta_2 \Delta \ln CRb_{-Cit} + \delta_3 \Delta \ln P_{it} + \delta_4 \Delta \ln U_{it} + \delta_5 \Delta CPI_{it} + \delta_6 \Delta \ln E_{rYM_{it}} + \Delta v_{it} \quad (27)$$

$$\Delta \ln CRth_{it} = \delta_1 \Delta \ln CRth_{it-1} + \delta_2 \Delta \ln CRth_{-Cit} + \delta_3 \Delta \ln P_{it} + \delta_4 \Delta \ln U_{it} + \delta_5 \Delta CPI_{it} + \delta_6 \Delta \ln E_{rYM_{it}} + \Delta v_{it} \quad (28)$$

**Model 8:** There are used the prisoners (P), real wage growth (Wr), the share of men aged 35-44 in the population (Pr35\_44M), the change in the consumer price index (CPI), the share of the persons with tertiary education in the population (E) and the registered divorce ( D).

$$\Delta \ln CR_{it} = \delta_1 \Delta \ln CR_{it-1} + \delta_2 \Delta \ln CR_{-Cit} + \delta_3 \Delta \ln P_{it} + \delta_4 \Delta W_{rit} + \delta_5 \Delta \ln P_{r35-44M_{it}} + \delta_6 \Delta CPI_{it} + \delta_7 \Delta \ln E_{it} + \delta_8 \Delta \ln D_{it} + \Delta v_{it} \quad (29)$$

$$\Delta \ln CRr_{it} = \delta_1 \Delta \ln CRr_{it-1} + \delta_2 \Delta \ln CRr_{-Cit} + \delta_3 \Delta \ln P_{it} + \delta_4 \Delta W_{rit} + \delta_5 \Delta \ln P_{r35-44M_{it}} + \delta_6 \Delta CPI_{it} + \delta_7 \Delta \ln E_{it} + \delta_8 \Delta \ln D_{it} + \Delta v_{it} \quad (30)$$

$$\Delta \ln CRb_{it} = \delta_1 \Delta \ln CRb_{it-1} + \delta_2 \Delta \ln CRb_{-Cit} + \delta_3 \Delta \ln P_{it} + \delta_4 \Delta W_{rit} + \delta_5 \Delta \ln P_{r35-44M_{it}} + \delta_6 \Delta CPI_{it} + \delta_7 \Delta \ln E_{it} + \delta_8 \Delta \ln D_{it} + \Delta v_{it} \quad (31)$$

$$\Delta \ln CRth_{it} = \delta_1 \Delta \ln CRth_{it-1} + \delta_2 \Delta \ln CRth_{-Cit} + \delta_3 \Delta \ln P_{it} + \delta_4 \Delta W_{rit} + \delta_5 \Delta \ln P_{r35-44M_{it}} + \delta_6 \Delta CPI_{it} + \delta_7 \Delta \ln E_{it} + \delta_8 \Delta \ln D_{it} + \Delta v_{it} \quad (32)$$

To analyse, we utilised Arellano and Bond's one-step first difference estimator. The original level lag (t-2, t-3, t-4 ... t-n) was used as an instrument for the endogenous variables. Furthermore, we tested the instrument validity by Sargan's J statistic. The null hypothesis assumes that the instruments used are valid. Hence, the null hypothesis may not be rejected ( $P > 0.05$ ) under the conditions of the valid instruments.

Regarding to the autocorrelation, we used the Arellano and Bond test. Here, the null hypothesis for the first AR(1) and the second AR(2) - order is based on the absence of autocorrelation. Therefore, the null hypothesis should not be rejected ( $P > 0.05$ ) for second-order AR(2) and be rejected ( $P < 0.05$ ) for firstorder AR(1), respectively. Consequently, if the conditions of both mentioned tests were met, we considered the model valid.