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Brief review of Georgian History, Language and Culture:
• The Day of the Georgian Language
• The Kartvelian Languages
• Georgian script
• The Georgian Literary Language through the Centuries

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14<sup>th</sup> of April
The Day of the Georgian Language
New Constitution of USSR by Brezhnev 1977 and Mother Tongue crisis in Tbilisi, Georgia, April 1978
Tbilisi State University, was founded 1918, before Sovietization of the Georgia
New Constitution of USSR by Brezhnev and Mother Tongue crisis in Tbilisi, Georgia, April 1978

14 April 1978, demonstrations in Tbilisi, capital of the Georgian SSR, took place in response to an attempt by Soviet government to change the constitutional status of the indigenous Georgian language. After a new Soviet Constitution was adopted in October 1977, the Supreme Soviet of the Georgian SSR considered a draft constitution in which, in contrast to the Constitution of 1936, Georgian was no longer declared to be the State language. A series of indoor and outdoor actions of protest ensued and implied with near-certainty there would be a clash between several thousands of demonstrators and the Soviet government, but the Georgian Communist Party chief Eduard Shevardnadze negotiated with the central authorities in Moscow and managed to obtain permission to retain the previous status of the Georgian language. Since 1990, 14 April has been celebrated in Georgia as the Day of the Georgian Language.
Monument of the book “Mother Tongue” by Elguja Amashukeli
Tbilisi 1983
The term Ibero-Caucasian (or Iberian-Caucasian) was proposed by Georgian linguist Arnold Chikobava for the non-Indo-European languages spoken north and south of the Caucasus mountain range.

Arnold Chikobava 1898 - 1985
The South Caucasian or Kartvelian (Georgian) Languages

- Georgian
- Mengrelian (or Mingrelian)
- Laz (Chan)
- Svan
The Northwest Caucasian or Abkhaz / adygh Languages

- Abkhaz
- Abaz
- Kabardian (or Cerkezian)
- Ubikh (now extinct)
The North-central Caucasian or Nakh Languages

- Chechen
- Ingush
- Batsbi (or Tsova-Tush)
The Northeast Caucasian or Dagestan Languages

- Avarian (or Avar)
- Andian (Andi, Botlikh, Ghodob, Chamal, Bagval, Tindi, Karata, Akhvakh)
- Didoian (Dido, Khvarshi, Bejit, Hunzib)
- Lak-dargwa (Lak, Dargwa, Kubach)
- Lizgian (Lezg, Tabassaran, Aghul, Rutul, Tsakh, Krits, Buduk, Khinalug, udi)
Other Languages in Caucasus:

- **Indo-European**: Armenian, Russian, Ukrainian, Ossetic, Greek Pontic dialect, Persian, Kurdish, Judeo-Tat, Bukhori.

- **Turkic**: Azerbaijani, Balkar, Karachay, Kumuk, Nogai.

- **Semitic**: Assyrian Neo-Aramaic.

- **Mongolic**: Kalmyk.
Genealogical tree of the Ibero-Caucasian Languages

*Ibero-Caucasian

Abkhaz-Adygh

Nakh-Daghestan

Kartvelian

Bask - believed to be related to Caucasian languages by some scholars
Common similarities:

- Glottal consonants;
- Ergative construction;
- Lexical evidence; etc.

Natural question:

Are these similarities typological or genetic ones?
Genealogical tree of the Kartvelian Languages

Proto-Kartvelian

Proto-Karto-Zan

Proto-Zan

Georgian

Svan

Laz

Mengrelian
Methodology:

- **Comparison** of words representing concrete language vocabulary;
- **Identification** regular phonetic correspondences:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Georgian</th>
<th>Megrelian</th>
<th>Svan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(k'ac-i)</td>
<td>(k'ocio)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(as-i)</td>
<td>(osť-i)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(k'at\textsuperscript{h}am-i)</td>
<td>(k'ot\textsuperscript{h}om-i)</td>
<td>(k'at\textsuperscript{h}äl)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

‘a man’

‘hundred’

‘a hen’
General Information on the Georgian Language

The Georgian Alphabet

- The Georgian alphabet is one of the oldest scripts in the world. There are several hypotheses concerning the origin of the Georgian Alphabet. According to the oldest Georgian chronicle the origin of the Georgian alphabet is supposedly ascribed to Pharnavaz I, the first king of Kartli, an ancient Georgian kingdom known as Iberia. Some scholars assumed that Georgian script existed before Georgia was converted to Christianity. In 326 AD Christianity was adopted as the state religion by the rulers of Iberia, King (later Saint) Mirian III and Queen (later Saint) Nana.

- There are 3 historical systems of the Georgian Alphabet:

  - Asomtavruli or Mrglovani – from the beginning till 9th century;
  - Nuskhuri – 9th - 11th centuries;
  - Mkhedruli from 11th century till today.
Examples of the ancient Georgian inscription: Asomtavruli or Mrglovani from the Georgian church in Bethlehem
Mosaic inscription, 430-433 AD
Examples of the ancient Georgian inscription: Asomtavruli or Mrglovani from the church Bolnisi Sioni, near Tbilisi, Georgia, 492-493 AD
Examples of the Georgian script: Asomtavruli or Mrglovani 10th century
Examples of the Georgian script: Nuskhuri 1681
Examples of the decorated initial letters of Georgian script Mkhedruli, from medieval centuries

The Letter m
Examples of the decorated initial letters of Georgian script Mkhedruli, from medieval centuries

The Letter u
Letters and Sounds of modern Georgian

- 5 vowels:
  \( \mathfrak{a} - \mathfrak{a} \quad \mathfrak{e} - \mathfrak{e} \quad \mathfrak{i} - \mathfrak{i} \quad \mathfrak{o} - \mathfrak{o} \quad \mathfrak{u} - \mathfrak{u} \)

- 28 consonants:
  \( \mathfrak{b} - \mathfrak{b} \quad \mathfrak{f} - \mathfrak{ph} \quad \mathfrak{d} - \mathfrak{d} \quad \mathfrak{g} - \mathfrak{gh} \quad \mathfrak{t} - \mathfrak{ch} \quad \mathfrak{n} - \mathfrak{n} \quad \mathfrak{r} - \mathfrak{r} \)
Letters not in use from 19th century

ơ — Short i, like Russian ĭ

herits — Like English w

ლ — Specific sound kh, but different from ბ – x

მ — replaced in modern Georgian by ღო – vi

ნ — replaced in modern Georgian by ღო – ei

ო — replaced in modern Georgian by ღო – oi, ჷმო – hoi

ჶ — f (used for foreign words in 11th and 12th centuries) later replaced by ღჶ – ph
General features of the current Georgian alphabet

- Unlike many other languages there are no capital letters.
- All graphic signs denotes phonemes.
- Each sound corresponds to one letter.
  
  For instance, there are no patterns like English $sh$ or $ch$
  
  In Georgian $sh$ is ღ and $ch$ is – ღ.
- Each letter corresponds to one phoneme. For instance, there is no letter like $O$ in Russian which, depending on the context, can be pronounced like $O$ or like $A.$
Old Georgian centers of scholarship and culture:

- Monastery of Saint Saba near Jerusalem, c. 6\(^{th}\) - 8\(^{th}\) centuries. ("Sinai Homiliary", first dated Georgian manuscript was written here in 864, afterwards taken to mount Sinai, Egypt).

- Monastery of Saint Catherine at Sinai, 9\(^{th}\) - 10\(^{th}\) centuries (Egypt).

- Holy Monastery of Iviron, was established 980-983 AD (Greece).

- Several monasteries in Tao-Klarjeti (historical region of Georgia in southwest of the country, now in Turkey): Khandzta, Shatberdi and others, 7\(^{th}\) - 13\(^{th}\) centuries.

- Monastery of David Gareja, 6\(^{th}\) – 18\(^{th}\) (now on the border of Georgia and Azerbaijan).
Saint Catherine’s Monastery
Sinai Peninsula, showing location of Mount Sinai (Egypt)
Holy Monastery of Iveron
The monastic complex of Khandzta
The monastic complex of David Gareja
Jacob of Tsurtavi (Georgian: იაკობ ცურტაველი) also known as Jacob the Priest, was the 5th-century Georgian priest and writer from Tsurtavi, then the major town of the Lower Iberia, Georgia.
Saint Shushanik
440-475

“Martyrdom of the Holy Queen Shushanik” was written between 476 – 483 by Jacob of Tsurtavi
Shota Rustaveli, the greatest Georgian poet
1172-1216
Strophe from “The Knight in the Tiger’s Skin” by Shota Rustaveli

“A narrow road cannot keep back Death, nor a rocky one; by him all are levelled, weak and strong-hearted; in the end the earth unites in one place youth and greybeard. Better glorious death than shameful life!”

Translated by Marjory Scot Wardrop
Akaki Shanidze, Georgian linguist, 1887-1987, one of the founders of Tbilisi State University in 1918
Periodization of the Literary Georgian Language

- Old Georgian Literary Language: 5\textsuperscript{th} - 11\textsuperscript{th} centuries.

- Middle Georgian Literary Language: 12\textsuperscript{th} – 18\textsuperscript{th} centuries.

- New Georgian Literary Language: from 19\textsuperscript{th} - present.

A. Shanidze
Reference:

Electronic resources:
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- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Northwest_Caucasian_languages
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nakh_languages
Thank you for attention!