

Events and Commentaries

International Kartvelological Congress

The first International Kartvelological Congress dedicated to the issues and prospects of Georgian Studies was held in Tbilisi on 11-13 November 2015 under the auspices of Georgian National Academy of Sciences, Iv. Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University and Patriarchate of Georgia. The day before the opening of the Congress, Georgian and foreign participants met Honorary Chairman of the Congress Organizing Committee, Catholicos-Patriarch of all Georgia Ilia II. Sessions took place at the premises of the Georgian National Academy of Sciences and I. Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University. The congress was opened by the Chairman of the Organizing Committee and Vice-President of the Academy R. Metreveli. Congress participants were welcomed by the President of the Georgian National Academy of Sciences, Academician G.Kvesitadze, Bishop Ioane (Gamrekeli) - Metropolitan of Rustavi, Minister of Culture of Georgia M. Giorgadze, Rector of the Don Technical University, Prof. B. Meskhi, president of the Chechen Academy Sh. Gapurov. The first plenary session was held on the Academy premises as well. The second plenary session was held in November 12 at the Iv. Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University, where the participants were welcomed by the rector Academician V. Papava. Professor Matishov, the Head of the South Center of the Russian Academy of Sciences, delivered a speech at the same session.

All major fields of Georgian Studies (language, literature, history, archeology, ethnology, history of art) were presented broadly that evidences the epochal significance of the Forum. Two plenary sessions took place. The Congress was divided into three sections (linguistics, history of Georgia and religion, literature and art). Each session held 15 meetings. A total of 115 reports were delivered.

The Organizing Committee published extensive theses of reports in advance. It should be noted that part of the reports will be published in the "Science Almanac of Black Sea Region Countries" of the Don State Technical University, as well as in subsequent issue of the Proceedings of the Georgian National Academy of Sciences, the Series of History, Archeology, Ethnology and Art History.

The Congress clearly showed, which is particularly important, that currently Kartvelology is successfully developing in the world's leading scientific and educational centers. The visual evidence of this is its representative character. Together with Georgian colleagues the reports were delivered by celebrated scholars from the leading scientific institutions of France (Paris), the UK (London), Germany (Berlin), Romania (Bucharest), Russian Federation (Moscow, Rostov-on-Don, Grozny, Ingushetia), Japan (Tokyo), Turkey (Ankara, Istanbul, Rize, Pamukkale), Israel (Jerusalem), Azerbaijan (Baku), Armenia (Yerevan). For the sake of illustration some of them can be listed: French Kartvelologist, professor Bernar Outtier's report was dedicated to the 13th-century unknown Georgian manuscript fragment that was found in Matenadaran and its importance for the history of Old Georgian language; German linguist Professor V. Boeder reported on the morphological and syntactic peculiarities of the Georgian language; Swedish linguist and ethnologist, professor at Malmö University Karena Walming presented the diary of a Finnish officer about travelling to Georgia in 1838-1839 that keeps extremely valuable data about ethnographic life in Eastern Georgia of the time. Japanese researcher, professor of the Tokio University Hirotake Maeda, discussed completely new Iranian material about Giorgi Saakadze. Romanian researcher,

professor Nicolae Dura presented the results of a long-term study of Antimos the Iberian (17th century). The participation of well-known foreign Kartvelologists gave the Forum international resonance. Their efforts in studying and popularization of the Georgian language, history and culture, are invaluable. The significance of the activities of foreign Kartvelologists is not limited with this. Their contribution to provide the international scientific community with accurate and unbiased information on a number of controversial issues relating to Georgia's historic past and the present, literature and art history is totally essential. It is no secret that the history and culture of this or that issue, various motives, biased, more inaccurately covered, under the false views of the print or electronic media. It is one thing when Georgian scholars are raising their voices against the falsifiers, but there is quite different effect and resonance when foreign authoritative scholars express their viewpoint on controversial issues. They often respond to such discussions, and how remarkable is the fact that their unbiased opinions essentially coincide with the views of Georgian polemicists that is of particularly great importance for demonstration of the unbiasedness of the Georgian

researchers.

The Congress widely discussed the issues recently accumulated in the development of Georgian studies, and at the same time, set up the ways how to overcome them and prospects for the future. The recommendations elaborated by the first Congress are vital for the dynamic growth of Georgian Studies, as much in Georgia as outside the country. It was decided to give periodic character to the gathering of Kartvelologists at this kind of international forum and arrange it once every three years. This Congress gave rise to some new ideas, e.g. the necessity to compile common history of the Caucasus has come to the fore.

Within the framework of the Congress program, the participants visited the Georgian National Museum, had the opportunity to see the results of current archaeological excavations (the head of the expedition, Prof. V. Licheli) on the Grakliani hill (Kaspi Municipality), including the newly discovered ancient inscription (7th c. BC) on the territory of Georgia. They also visited Uplitsikhe and those who had a desire could visit the Stalin Museum in Gori.

Thus, we can say that the Congress was a great success and it fully met our expectations.

Academician R. Metreveli

The Chairman of the Organizing Committee of
Kartvelological Congress

Vice-President of the Georgian National Academy of
Sciences