

Glorious Way to Science To Memory of Academician Thomas Gamkrelidze

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To the credit of Georgia and national science, academician Thomas Gamkrelidze occupied a prominent place in the avant-garde of the world linguistic community in the second half of the last century and the beginning of this century. He is a founder and active supporter of all scientific innovations, and his works became the basis for new research initiatives in descriptive and comparative linguistics, mathematical linguistics and typology, philosophy of language and linguoculturology, etc. The creative biography of the scholar should be assessed in the broader context of the history of civilized humanity, because, as the cultural and scientific trends of the era show, the Georgian intellectual channel once again turned out to be one of the advocates of cardinal processes in the world. It is in this historical and cultural context that the place and role of such a scholar and thinker as academician Thomas Gamkrelidze should be considered. Academician T. Gamkrelidze made an optimal synthesis of the best achievements of three important scientific schools – Kartvelology, Oriental studies and Indo-European studies. Thomas Gamkrelidze's emergence on the scientific arena coincides with the beginning of the second stage in the development of structuralism in linguistics, which was associated with the transition from an atomistic description of linguistic data to their systematic understanding. T. Gamkrelidze was one of the first young linguists who thoroughly studied the relevant areas of mathematics in order to test the new possibilities of accurate linguistic analysis. The antinomy between synchrony and diachrony, characteristic of the previous period, has been overcome ... This new trend has replaced the antihistoricism and synchronic structuralism characteristic of the first decades of the twentieth century. © 2021 Bull. Georg. Natl. Acad. Sci.

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The biography of Academician Thomas Gamkrelidze is one of the most striking examples of what important achievements a person can have in his life and to become a leader of the newest challenges of the time. Academician Thomas Gamkrelidze made a significant contribution to the development of Kartvelology, Georgian Oriental Studies and Indo-European studies, to the success of Georgian science enhancing its prestige in the

international arena. At the same time, as it is typical to the life of creative intelligentsia of the developing countries, his social activities in the toughest period for country's development were the most remarkable during the last decade of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century.

Thomas Gamkrelidze was born in Kutaisi on October 23, 1929. Immediately after leaving school, he entered I. Javakhishvili Tbilisi State

University and in 1952 graduated from the Department of Semiotic Studies of the Faculty of Oriental Studies, majoring in Semitology. After graduating from the university, Thomas Gamkrelidze began working at the Institute of Linguistics of the Georgian Academy of Sciences and, at the same time, he mastered the basics of Semitology under the supervision of academician Giorgi Tsereteli, at the Tbilisi State University. On the initiative of his supervisor, he was sent to Leningrad and there, under the guidance of the famous orientalist, professor I. Dyakonov, he studied the languages of the Ancient East – Akkadian, Urartian, Hittite, etc.

After successfully completing the postgraduate course, Thomas Gamkrelidze positioned himself as a prominent specialist in the field of general linguistics and oriental studies. Shortly after graduating from university, in 1956, he defended his candidate dissertation titled "Non-Indo-European Elements of the Hittite Language", which was assessed as a doctoral dissertation. The doctoral dissertation again dealt with the structural nature of Hittite – "Hittite language and laryngeal theory". This paper presented a new insight into the historical development of Indo-European laryngeal phonemes and their peculiar reflexes in the diachrony of Indo-European languages. While researching the origin and phonemic system of the Hittite cuneiform script, he developed the "laryngeal theory" in his own way that deals with the long process of development of Indo-European phonemes. In this paper, the scholar has already manifested himself as the best researcher of the comparative historical problems of Indo-European languages and the fundamental problems of Hittitology.

Extensive theoretical training and a broad scientific outlook allowed the researcher to respond to a broad range of theoretical challenges and make his unique mark on modern, topical scientific issues, which emerged at the latest stage in the development of science in the field of general

linguistics, Kartvelology, Oriental studies or Indo-European studies. All this time Thomas Gamkrelidze worked very successfully in the field of theoretical linguistics, as well as the study of Kartvelian languages, ancient Oriental languages and Indo-European languages. He not only preserved the most important achievements of the founders of Georgian university and academic scientific schools, but also developed these achievements to new level and created novel scientific paradigms in many areas: Ivane Javakhishvili's studies in the field of writing systems, Giorgi Akhvlediani's heritage in phonetics and phonology, Akaki Shanidze's fundamentals of the theory of grammar, Arnold Chikobava's approaches in the field of comparative studies, Giorgi Tsereteli's legacy in the field of semitology ...

The creative biography of the scholar should be assessed in the broader context of the history of civilized humanity, because, as the cultural and scientific trends of the era show, the Georgian intellectual channel once again turned out to be one of the advocates of cardinal processes in the world. It is in this historical and cultural context that the place and role of such a scholar and thinker as academician Thomas Gamkrelidze should be considered.

In this regard, Thomas Gamkrelidze's biography requires consideration on several important aspects:

– Thomas Gamkrelidze graduated from Tbilisi State University, i.e. he received fundamental European education within the Georgian National University.

– He passed the school of Oriental Studies, in particular, ancient oriental languages, on the basis of which the task of studying the ancient civilizations of the world, including the Georgian-Caucasian one, was immediately set.

– Academician T. Gamkrelidze as a scholar and thinker made an optimal synthesis of the best achievements of three important scientific schools

– Kartvelology, Oriental studies and Indo-European studies.

Thomas Gamkrelidze appeared to have been one of the main recipients, developers and founders of the novel scientific ideas, not only among different scientific schools, but also among various fields of science.

The first monograph of T. Gamkrelidze entitled “Sibilant correspondences and Some Questions of the Ancient Structure of the Kartvelian Languages” [1] can be regarded as a kind of symbolic topos. The scientific value of this work is widely known. With filigree phonological “technique” it gives analysis of those deviances which were observed in the series of correspondences of Kartvelian sibilants. However, this work should be assessed rather from the viewpoint of what we called epoch-making. Namely, this book reveals some of the features that have become a kind of characteristic of the new time and trends:

a) An announcement of new scientific ideas, new paradigms of thinking occur;

b) The attitude towards the research method becomes more rigorous and principled;

c) The rational convergence and integration of different scientific methods takes place, namely, the exact laws of structural linguistics have added greater strength to the postulates of comparative research.

d) The interests of comparative phonology and the study of historical grammar have become more closely related.

e) The scientific language has become more precise and formalized, in fact, creating a new metalanguage, completely abandoning the elements of subjective style, journalistic and artistic stylistic features.

By the way, a kind of marker of the formalization of the scientific language is the introduction of technical symbols among the abbreviations that first appeared in this article: // – phoneme, [] – sound, {} – morpheme, ~ – equivalence, > – "transition", etc.

Thomas Gamkrelidze's emergence on the scientific arena coincides with the beginning of the second stage in the development of structuralism in linguistics, which was associated with the transition from an atomistic description of linguistic data to their systematic understanding. T. Gamkrelidze was one of the first young linguists who thoroughly studied the relevant areas of mathematics in order to test the new possibilities of accurate linguistic analysis.

In the 60s and 70s of the last century, by the establishment of strict, methodically compiled, non-contradictory provisions in the sphere of linguistics, Thomas Gamkrelidze became akin to a new generation of linguists working in the USA, Europe and Russia, who prioritized scientific research to establish probable linguistic models and the establishment of analytical rules, development of methods and principles for the structural description of grammatical systems. But, unlike popular trends, he was not the subject to fashion anti-historicism. T. Gamkrelidze was one of the exceptions who had an excellent centuries-old experience in historical linguistics and used the discussion of diachronic data to shed light on the interrelated structures of language. Thus, the striving for a strict formal description, approaching the exact sciences, was not an end in itself, but a new stage in linguistic analysis. T. Gamkrelidze was one of the first to point out that in the second half of the last century, interest in diachronic linguistics increased again, and a new turn took place in historical linguistics. By transferring the concepts, methods and operations of synchronous linguistics into diachronic linguistics, a synthesis of synchronous and diachronic linguistics was actually carried out, which gave us important results from the viewpoint of linguistic phenomena.

Returning again to T. Gamkrelidze's first fundamental research (indicated “Sibilant correspondences...”), we can say that this work is a new milestone not only in the study of the Kartvelian languages, but also in the development

of linguistic thought. It is quite obvious that, along with the linguistic capabilities of the young author, the knowledge and experience of several scientific schools are condensed in it. It is also not coincidental that this work, according to the author's own definition, outlines new prospects for linguistic research, including the study of the Paleo-Caucasian languages.

According to the general assessment of Thomas Gamkrelidze himself, historical linguistics is classified as an interchange (alternation) of "linguistic paradigms" in time and space [2]. T. Gamkrelidze identifies 7 paradigms of the development of European linguistics:

- "Universal Grammar" by Antoine Arnauld and Claude Lancelot
- "Comparative Historical Linguistics"
- N.Marr's Japhetic Linguistics (under certain conditions)
- "Synchronous linguistics": structuralism, descriptive, linguistic typology and universals
 - Chomsky's Transformational Generative Grammar
 - Structural-typological comparative studies (Jakobson, Semeren ...)
 - Nostratic Macrofamily and Linguistics (Pedersen, Ilich-Svitych ...).

This general model of the development of linguistic thought, somewhat conventionally can be used to assess the history of Georgian linguistics, especially since stage VI of this scheme – "Structural-Typological Comparative Studies" – from the point of view of time, also coincides well with the stages of the rapid growth of Georgian schools of linguistics.

Stage I – also, by general assessment, St. Petersburg Kartvelology – can be called a general philological school, in which only some separate interesting manifestations of European comparative linguistics appear.

Stage II – the linguistic school of Tbilisi State University (with its versatility), which managed to provide adequate responses to the challenges that

European historical-comparative research demanded from our science by the end of the 19th century. The contribution of the founders of Kartvelology in this regard is invaluable. However, in this direction, fundamental problems at almost all levels in the study of the Georgian-Kartvelian languages to some extent overshadowed the excellent opportunities for synchronous research identified in separate articles.

This is how the third stage was being prepared, which was supposed to give an optimal synthesis of theoretical findings of the synchrony and diachrony.

According to the same general assessment: "In the history of linguistics, the second half of the twentieth century is characterized by a special interest in historical linguistics, which implies a return to the problems of classical comparative linguistics... The antinomy between synchrony and diachrony, characteristic of the previous period, has been overcome ... This new trend has replaced the antihistoricism and synchronic structuralism characteristic of the first decades of the twentieth century" [3,4].

As is known, by some coincidence, almost simultaneously, the second brilliant representative of Kartvelology – Givi Machavariani – creates the first masterpieces of comparative studies. His important structural-comparative study "Three Series of Sibilant Spirants and Affricates in the Kartvelian Languages" belongs to this category. The prospect of a new comparative approach was already clearly outlined in these works, especially the possibilities of internal reconstruction, based on precise structural regularities; the light was shed on a number of unexplained problems.

It seems the very mission of these two outstanding scholars dictated them to finally combine their scholarly interest in the implementation of such a fundamental idea, which, if we consider the scale of research, was implemented in a very short time under the title "The System of Sonants and Ablaut in the Kartvelian languages."

The monograph was published in 1965 [5] and it immediately became a sort of a measure of not only linguistics, but generally, Georgian scholarly thought, its visiting card on the international arena. The time of the appearance of this work turned out to be a kind of milestone in the development of modern Georgian science. It is really impossible to overestimate the scholarly value of this work, although the scientific idea itself is more or less shared by someone. This book is one of the most visible, complete masterpieces in terms of setting up and implementing new scientific thought.

In this work [6], at the stage of Common Kartvelian, three main classes of phonemes are postulated:

- a) phonemes functioning as syllabic elements only, i.e. a class of **vowels**.
- b) phonemes functioning as nonsyllabics only, i.e. a class of **consonants** proper;
- c) phonemes functioning both as syllabics and nonsyllabics according to their syntagmatic position, i.e. as syllabics in some phonetic environments; as nonsyllabics in others. They are called **sonants**.

The syllabic nature of sonants and the conditional alternation of syllabic and non-syllable allophones, according to the above theory, are connected with the mechanism of such functional (morphophonemic) vowel alternation, known as ablaut. Ablaut alternation of vowels at the stage of Proto-Kartvelian, together with affixation, led to the emergence of certain types of verbal and nominal bases during the disintegration of the Proto-Kartvelian language.

The main canonical form of the PK root morpheme is represented in the shape of CVC, where C may be replaced by S. Thus, we have four variants of the basic structure: CVC; CVS; SVC; SVS.

The root is built on the basis of this basic structure with addition of prefixes CV- and suffixes VC-. On the basis of such combinations of stems and affixes all those morphophonemic processes unfold that ultimately led to the formation of the historical stems and roots of separate Kartvelian languages ...

The scholarly value of the mentioned work has been more than once assessed, primarily in the foreword of the editor of the book, academician G. Tsereteli: "Here is presented a completely new theory about the proto-Kartvelian language system and its diachronic transformations, as a result of which the historical Kartvelian languages were formed. In fact, this work is the basis of the comparative-historical grammar of the Kartvelian languages. It creates a new stage in Kartvelian diachronic linguistics, and we think that all further research in this area will be carried out in this direction, since this opens up brilliant prospects for science" [7].

According to another review, this work presents the highest standard of accuracy of the scientific language, the optimal formalization of reasoning. In fact, at this stage in the development of Georgian scientific thought, a new metalanguage was created that completely abandoned the elements of the subjective style.

In connection with this fundamental research, one of the striking features of academician Thomas Gamkrelidze should be mentioned. The scholar gave history many wonderful examples of mutual collaboration. For the implementation of several large-scale research projects, he found and attracted worthy researchers and cooperated with them until the final results were obtained. At the same time, to his credit, it is worth mentioning the examples of such scientific cooperation as the co-authorship of Gamkrelidze-Machavariani, Gamkrelidze-Gudava, Gamkrelidze-Ivanov. Unless this commitment to great scientific ideas and respect for scientific thought or high professionalism, there is no doubt, such a fruitful co-authorship could not have taken place.

It is quite natural that in order to present a new idea of the proto-linguistic and cultural situation of the Indo-Europeans, it was necessary to overcome a scientific task of a special scale.

A long-term study carried out with the aim of reconstructing the Indo-European roots and proto-culture was presented in a two-volume work "Indo-

European and Indo-Europeans. A Reconstruction and Historical-typological Analysis of a Proto-Language and a Proto-Culture” [8].

To solve the traditional problems of historical-comparative linguistics, the use of the data of typological linguistics and the universals of linguistics has yielded significant results in this well-known work, in which the authors propose a complex method of systemic-typological reconstruction as a general Indo-European linguistic model, the so-called synthesis of the genetic tree and wave theory. This theory gave a very impressive result from the viewpoint of the early settlement of proto-Indo-Europeans: “For the proto-Indo-European society, the entire set of features of culture and socio-economic structure, reconstructed from the vocabulary, is typologically characteristic of the early civilizations of the ancient Near East. Common Indo-European culture belongs to a number of typologically archaic Eastern civilizations” [9].

This theory has given us a very impressive result in terms of the early settlement of the pre-Indo-Europeans: “For the proto-Indo-European society, the whole complex of signs of culture and socio-economic structure reconstructed according to vocabulary is typologically characteristic of the early civilizations of the ancient Middle East. Common Indo-European culture belongs to a series of typologically archaic Eastern civilizations. The common Indo-European culture belongs to a series of typologically archaic Eastern civilizations” [9].

The proposed reconstruction of common Indo-European consonantism, known in comparative linguistics as the Glottalic Theory and which laid the foundation for a broader historical-typological analysis and reconstruction of Indo-European protolanguage and protoculture, creates a new paradigm of comparative Indo-European linguistics as pointed out by Gamkrelidze himself in an article published in 1987.

Most importantly, this hypothesis radically changes traditionally established picture of the migration of Indo-European tribes and considers

the region of the ancient Middle East as the starting point for their spread, where the proto-Semites and proto-Kartvelians must have settled in the vicinity of the proto-Europeans. It can be said that this fundamental work by T. Gamkrelidze and V. Ivanov was perceived as a serious "tectonic shift" of that time (the second half of the twentieth century) on the seemingly broad and representative "landscape" of the finally ordered Indo-Europeanism, and, obviously, was a new impetus for scientific ideas.

This fundamental work highlighted yet another distinctive feature of T. Gamkrelidze as a researcher. Despite such large-scale and comprehensive results of research, the scholar had never been categorical in announcing final conclusions. This is an expression of a high, true scientific culture, namely, a situation in which the researcher knows that the scientific "truth" is more or less relative, and that first and foremost, it must be methodically grounded and inconsistent with the internal logical system.

Thomas Gamkrelidze was an open, unbiased researcher who could listen to his opponent and look for a rational grain in any discussion. He, a thorough connoisseur of ancient philosophy, regularly used the heuristic method of searching for truth in the light of circumstances and was ready to put forward, at first glance, judgments that were not so difficult to understand, as if trying not only to make them understandable, but also to acquaint the scientific community with innovative thinking, new theoretical postulates.

At the same time, the impression was often created that the researcher was in no hurry to bring his own scientific observations to light, and often the problem, so to speak, “matured” over the years. An example of this is a monograph on the Georgian alphabet, that appears to have been created for decades and the author of which seems to have set himself a goal to create a solid academic foundation in the field that is most of all is an arena of pseudo-scientific endeavors. In the monograph “Alphabetic Writing System and Old Georgian Script. Typology and the Origin of Alphabetic Script” [10], he

analyzes the structural features of the Georgian Asomtavruli, and determines its typological place among the pre-Christian scripts (Coptic, Gothic, Ancient Armenian, Ancient Slavic) which were created within the Eastern Christian culture. In this work, Thomas Gamkrelidze embraces all previous views and finally states that "the old Georgian Asomtavruli alphabet is considered to be the Christian script defining the period of its creation in the 4th century AD, when Christianity was declared the state religion in Georgia" (Gamkrelidze 1989: 196). At the same time, "the old Georgian Asomtavruli script may not even be the first attempt to create a script for the Georgian language, and even older written traditions are likely to have existed in pre-Christian Georgia" (Gamkrelidze 1989: 197).

To the credit of Georgia and national science, it must be said that academician Thomas Gamkrelidze occupied a prominent place in the avant-garde of the world linguistic community in the second half of the last century and the beginning of this century, and often it was his vision that determined the direction of new scientific ideas in the field of modern linguistics. He is a founder and active supporter of all scientific innovations, and his works became the basis for new research initiatives in descriptive and comparative linguistics, mathematical linguistics and typology, philosophy of language and linguoculturology, etc.

Universal education and a broad scientific outlook allowed the scholar to turn to the fruitful interdisciplinary integration of the latest ideas, to link linguistic ideas organically with important achievements in the natural and fundamental sciences. For example, there has been widespread interest in the hypothesis that N. Marr's four-element theory was explained as an intuitive manifestation of the law of universal structuring observed in the organic world, for instance, in the construction of the genetic code, in the isomorphism of linguistic and genetic structures, etc. (However, at the same time, this did not prevent a positive assessment based on Chikobava's

criticism of the theory of four elements). The scholar concludes: "All these symbolic semiotic systems (especially the Chinese 'transversal system' with binary elements yang and yin, as well as the linguistic model of N. Marr) are remarkably consistent, even quantitatively, with the structure of the genetic code." It seems that the latter represents an unconscious model basis (substrate) for the creator of the mentioned system" [10].

From the viewpoint of linguistic semiotics, the article published in the journal "Language" as early as the 1970s, which dealt with the conventionality of a linguistic sign and Niels Bohr's "complementarity principle" has not lost its importance. He clearly defined his own attitude on the essence and nature of a linguistic sign which is the most important issue in the general theory of linguistics and the sign system – semiotics. According to the scholar, two opposing views prevailing in modern linguistics – the linguistic sign is conventional and the linguistic sign is motivated – do not exclude each other, but complement each other in the sense of Niels Bohr's term [11].

Actually all of Thomas Gamkrelidze's scholarly works carry new, innovative ideas; he was a constant supporter and active founder of scientific innovations, his views used to become a new trend for development. Recently, the interests of the scientist have shifted as much as possible towards the use of digital opportunities in the study of linguistic data, in particular, the idea of a large-scale project "Thesaurus of the Georgian language" (historical dictionary), aimed at filling the gaps of the missing section in Kartvelology, on the bases of modern technologies and theories and which, under his leadership, laid the foundation for the "Rustaveli Commission" at the National Academy of Sciences of Georgia.

Many of Thomas Gamkrelidze's works are distinct for consistency and purposefulness, the pathos of constant development. He has always looked ahead to the future, being a true evaluator and founder of innovation. But at the same time, he

did not deny his predecessors, and was able to correctly assess their achievements. An excellent example of this is the completely non-standard letters about scientific predecessors – Akaki Shanidze, Giorgi Akhvlediani, Arnold Chikobava and Giorgi Tsereteli.

It is also noteworthy that, being an adherent of rigorous scientific methods and deep theoretical generalizations, at the same time, he always felt a vibrant pulsation in relation to general human or specific national interests. What is even worth the idea of the ecology of culture, the priority of which belongs to him: “The disappearance of languages and cultures is as much a disaster from the viewpoint of cultural and ecological pollution as the pollution of the outside world from the point of view of physical and biological ecology” [12].

Academician T. Gamkrelidze made a significant contribution to the management of Georgian science. In 1973-2005, he held a position of a director of Giorgi Tsereteli Institute of Oriental Studies at the Georgian Academy of Sciences, then Honorary Director and Chairman of the Scientific Council; from 1966 he headed the TSU Department of Structural and Applied Linguistics (since 1999 – the Department of General and Applied Linguistics, and now – the Institute of Theoretical and Applied Linguistics). In 2005-2013, he was the President of the Academy of the Georgian National Academy of Sciences, and from July 1913 he was the Honorary President of the same Academy; he headed one of the scientific structures of the Academy – “Rustaveli Commission”.

An impressive picture is created by the list of recognition of academician Thomas Gamkrelidze’s merits:

In 1967 he was elected a corresponding member of the Georgian Academy of Sciences and in 1974 academician;

In 1984 – academician of the Russian Academy of Sciences;

Honored Scientist of Georgia (1979).

In addition, academician Thomas Gamkrelidze was a member of many world famous academies and scientific societies:

Foreign Member of the American National Academy of Sciences (Washington, DC);

Honorary Foreign Member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences (Cambridge);

Member of the European Academy of Sciences (London);

Foreign member of the British Academy (London) and the Austrian Academy of Sciences (Vienna);

Honorary Member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (Budapest);

Foreign member of the Saxon Academy of Sciences (Leipzig);

Foreign member of the Latvian Academy of Sciences (Riga);

Member of the European Academy of Arts and Sciences (Salzburg);

Honorary Fellow of the American Linguistic Society (Washington, DC);

Member of the European Linguistic Society (was the president of this European Society in 1986);

Honorary Member of the Indo-European Society (Federal Republic of Germany).

Honorary doctorate from the University of Bonn and the University of Chicago.

He was awarded the Humboldt International Prize (Germany, 1989); Iv. Javakhishvili Award (TSU, 1992); was a holder of the Order of Honor of Georgia (1999) and the Order of Excellence (2019), a honorary citizen of Tbilisi (2000).

Acad. Thomas Gamkrelidze was active until the end of his life, thinking and caring about the future of Georgian science, discussing the possibilities and perspectives of Kartvelology; participated in the activities of the native University and the National Academy of Sciences, in the cultural and public life of the country. He was the best example of spiritual strength and healthy way of life. His international authority and ties are an important guide for the new generation of Georgian researchers and will remain so in the future.

მეცნიერების ისტორია

აკად. თამაზ გამყრელიძის შთამბეჭდავი გზა მეცნიერებაში

ა. არაბული

აკადემიის წევრი, საქართველოს მეცნიერებათა ეროვნული აკადემია, თბილისი, საქართველო

ჩვენი ქვეყნისა და ეროვნული მეცნიერების საამაყოდ უნდა ითქვას, რომ აკად. თამაზ გამყრელიძის ფიგურა გამოკვეთილად იკავებდა ადგილს გასული საუკუნის მეორე ნახევრისა და ამ საუკუნის დასაწყისის მსოფლიო ლინგვისტური საზოგადოების ავანგარდში და ხშირად, სწორედ მისი ხედვა განსაზღვრავდა ახალი სამეცნიერო იდეების მიმართულუბას თანამედროვე ლინგვისტიკის სფეროში. იგი იყო და არის ყოველგვარ მეცნიერულ სიახლეთა დამამკვიდრებელი და აქტიური მხარდამჭერი და მისი ნაშრომები საფუძველი ხდება ახალი კვლევითი ინიციატივებისთვის დესკრიფციულსა და შედარებით ენათმეცნიერებაში, მათემატიკურ ლინგვისტიკასა და ტიპოლოგიაში, ენის ფილოსოფიასა და ლინგვოკულტუროლოგიაში, „კულტურის ლინგვისტურ პალეონტოლოგიაში“... მეცნიერის შემოქმედებითი ბიოგრაფია შეფასებული უნდა იქნეს ცივილიზებული კაცობრიობის ისტორიის ფართო კონტექსტში, ვინაიდან, როგორც ეპოქის კულტურული და სამეცნიერო ტენდენციები გვიჩვენებს, ქართული ინტელექტუალური სადინარი კიდევ ერთხელ აღმოჩნდა ერთ-ერთი გამტარი მსოფლიოში მიმდინარე კარდინალური პროცესებისა. სწორედ ამ ისტორიულ-კულტურულ კონტექსტში უნდა იქნეს გააზრებული ადგილი და როლი ისეთი მეცნიერისა და მოაზროვნისა, როგორც აკადემიკოსი თამაზ გამყრელიძე გახლავთ. აკად. თ. გამყრელიძის, როგორც მეცნიერისა და მოაზროვნის პიროვნებაში ოპტიმალური სინთეზი მოხდა სამი მნიშვნელოვანი სამეცნიერო სკოლის – ქართველოლოგიის, აღმოსავლეთმცოდნეობისა და ინდოევროპისტიკის – საუკეთესო მონაპოვრებისა. ნიშანდობლივია, რომ თამაზ გამყრელიძის გამოსვლა სამეცნიერო ასპარეზზე ემთხვევა ენათმეცნიერებაში სტრუქტურალიზმის განვითარების მეორე ეტაპის დაწყებას, რაც ენობრივი მონაცემების ატომისტური აღწერიდან მათს სისტემურ გააზრებაზე გადასვლასთან იყო დაკავშირებული. თ. გამყრელიძე პირველთაგანი იყო იმ ახალგაზრდა ენათმეცნიერთა შორის, ვინც საფუძვლიანად შეისწავლა მათემატიკის შესაბამისი დარგები, რათა ზუსტი ენათმეცნიერული ანალიზის ახალი შესაძლებლობები მოესინჯა. დაძლეულ იქნა წინა პერიოდისადმი დამახასიათებელი ანტინომია სინქრონიასა და დიაქრონიას შორის... ამ ახალმა ტენდენციამ შეცვალა XX ს-ის I ათწლეულებისათვის დამახასიათებელი ანტიისტორიზმი და სინქრონიული სტრუქტურალიზმი.

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