

TINATIN BOLKVADE

LANGUAGE STANDARDIZATION AND DIALECTS

The very first written monuments of the 5th century AD, which have come down to this day are created in a strictly standardized language. Standardization is a common feature of the very first Georgian epigraphic or other written monuments discovered both in the centre peripheries or beyond the boundaries of the country. So far scholars have found it impossible to study the standardization of the Georgian language on its initial stage due to the absence of the necessary sources. It can be presumed that as anywhere else in Georgia too the standardized Georgian language was an urbanistic phenomenon; but it is difficult to say which language or which type of the Georgian language was overpowered or replaced by standardized Georgian. It is also difficult to convincingly say whether it was based on the speech of the "educated middle classes" or on the "nucleus of the city intelligentsia"; their speech is usually considered to be the bases of the standardized language.

At the turn of the 5th century the Georgian language was already a written language which was taken great care of. At the time the Georgian language already possessed features of integration and unification necessary for large-scale communication. It was a modernized language, accepted and acknowledged by the Christian elite of Kartly. The Georgian language was already equipped with the special lexicon associated with Christianity and the discourses suitable for the Christian religion - the translated books of the Old and New Testaments, hagiography, hymnography, both original and translated and theological literature supplied with commentaries.