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THE 19TH CENTURY GRAVES IN ST. GEORGE'S CHURCHYARD ON ARKIELI HILL, KUTAISI

St. George's Church, built in 1890 due to the efforts by Saint Gabriel Kikodze, is situated on Arkieli Hill in Kutaisi. The graves of the same period are found both inside the church and in the churchyard; some of these graves are marked with stone pillars, others with rectangular shaped stones or commemorative plaques fixed into the church wall.

The graves located outside the church are marked with white stones with application of ashlar masonry; inscriptions are faded due to the course of time, however, they are partially readable. Inscriptions on stone pillars are carved in Mkhedruli script; the letters of the alphabet are used to indicate dates. The stelae are approximately two meters high. Inscriptions on regular grave stones are also in Mkhedruli script with Arabic numerals. On one of the graves the first letters are in Mkhedruli script, while the date of death is carved with Arabic numerals. Stones of the graves inside the church as well as the commemorative plaques fixed into the wall are made of black granite, the inscriptions are bilingual (Russian – Cyrillic script, Georgian – Mkhedruli script). Dates are still given in Arabic numerals.

The contents of the epitaphs on the outside the church differs from those inside the church.

It could be concluded from the inscriptions that the location of graves of those buried in St. George's Church as well as in the churchyard in the 19th century, the quality of stones, inscriptions' content and even the script provide clues about social differentiation.