

## VLADIMERTSVERAVA

### KRISTEPORE KEZHERASHVILI, HEAD OF GEORGIAN PRINTING HOUSE

The first Georgian printing house, established under the initiative of Vakhtang VI, successfully started printing Georgian books. However, for a while, the enemy invasions resulted in a temporary interruption of work at the printing house where works recommenced in 1749. Typographical equipment and specialists were essential for the printing house. Kristepore Kezherashvili, the priest of the royal family, left for Palestine; he had been charged by Erekle II with the mission to study printing industry.

Upon his return from Palestine the agreement was made between K. Kezherashvili and Erekle II: Kristepore was appointed head of the printing house; he was supposed to pay half of the profits to the royal treasury while the king would provide the printing house with paper supplies.

K. Kezherashvili successfully managed to handle his responsibilities. He printed fourteen thousand books in the field of religion. At the same time, he carried out his work as a royal priest. K. Kezherashvili served Erekle II with devotion. By the time the deceased king was taken from Telavi to Svetitskhoveli ("the Living Pillar") Cathedral to be buried there Mtskheta was struck by plague epidemic. No one but Kristepore dared to accompany the deceased King; the priest completed the burial ritual. This episode is described with extreme cordiality in the deed of grant. Kristepore was also devoted to George XII; that is why the King awarded him the deed of grant in 1799 and renewed his noble status.