

## RUSUDAN SAGINADZE

### LANGUAGE OF IMERETI LAPIDARY INSCRIPTIONS (9<sup>TH</sup>-12<sup>TH</sup> CENTURIES)

Lapidary inscriptions are significant among ancient Georgian epigraphic monuments (fresco, engraved metal, mosaic, ceramic, scratches, etc.) that have come down to us. The language, vocabulary and onomastics of the inscriptions allow us to arrive at conclusions that are valuable for the history of the Georgian spiritual and material culture.

The ancient inscriptions that date back to the 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> centuries preserved in various parts of Imereti are the most prominent among the Georgian lapidary inscriptions. The very period is one of the most important periods of history of the Georgian literary language. As is generally known, the language forms of the secular style are the result of innovations occurring in the speech. The language of Imeretian lapidary inscriptions of the 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> centuries (i.e. 11, 10, 1, 13, 21 and 32 inscriptions from Kutaisi, Khoni, Vani, Terjola, Chiatura and Sachkhere, respectively - 88 inscriptions in total) is studied against the background of coexisting versus conflicting old and new norms. It is of particular interest whether there is a conflict between the language system of the inscription authors and the ideal form of the language; whether they follow the norms of religious literature or incorporate new forms that occur in their language system. The article displays the facts that exist on various levels of the language (i.e. phonetic, morphological, syntactic, and lexical) that need to be examined in order to contribute to a thorough study of the history of Georgian.