

## **KARTVELIAN LANGUAGE – HISTORICAL ISSUES (LAZETI)**

### **ABSTRACT**

The study of the history of Georgia and the Kartvelian language without taking into account Lazeti (as well as Tao-Klarjeti, Samtskhe-Javakheti, Tusheti, Khevsureti, Kartli, Svaneti, etc.) is impossible as such inquiry would not deliver correct and comprehensive findings.

The review of outstanding works of historians and linguists reveals that systemic, structural and lexical data of Megrelian, Laz and Svan are barely examined while exploring the history of the Kartvelian language. It is not uncommon to find conclusions of historians incomplete or incorrect when the issues of language remain overlooked. It is imperative to continue the comparative study of the data of the old Georgian ecclesiastical and literary language and word formation and derivation of forms in Megrelian, Laz and Svan, though initiated by Arn. Chikobava, the endeavor subsequently discontinued.

For example, the plural suffix -es in Megrelian and Laz has been fully maintained to the present day, while the change has occurred in the Georgian literary language as well as in other dialects. A binary system of demonstratives (tena “this ” -tina “that (”in Megrelian and Laz is an archaism; cf. a trinomial system in literary Georgian (es (this), eg (that (close to 2p), is (that (near 3 p); besides, Megrelian and Laz maintain a one-stem feature, while a two-stem feature occurs in literary Georgian which is a secondary finding; Megrelian and Laz still have archaic forms such as čkimda towards/for me,,) “for meḡ ,(“očišot “towards/for a man“)”for a man (“and so on.

Compatibility of modern Megrelian and Laz and the Old Kartvelian text data, on the one hand, and the preservation of lost or modified elements of the literary language in Megrelian and Laz, on the other hand, provide the opportunity to argue that Eastern and Western Georgia have never been disunited in terms of language, nationality, culture and religion in the course of the entire history of Georgia. Such unity was not disrupted even during the simultaneous reign of two and even three kings.

**Keywords:** Kartvelian language, Megrelian dialect, Laz dialect, archaisms.