

INSTRUMENTALIZATION AND IMAGINATION OF ETHNICITY: KARTVELISM AS AN INVENTED TRADITION

Maxim KIRCHANOV

*D.Sc. (Hist.), Associate Professor,
Department of Regional Studies and Economics of Foreign Countries,
Faculty of International Relations, Voronezh State University
Federal State Budgetary Institution of Higher Professional Education
(Voronezh, Russian Federation)*

ABSTRACT

The author analyzes the problems of Kartvelism as an invented political tradition in modern Georgia. This article is an attempt to use inventionist approaches for the analysis of the history and actual trends and tendencies in the developments of Georgian nationalism and Georgian identity. Methodologically, the article is based on the principles, proposed in 1983 by British historians Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger in their classic book *The Invention of Traditions*. The present author presumes that Kartvelian myth has become an important and influential intellectual tradition, an element of cultural practices and social strat-

egies. The author analyzes various forms of Kartvelism as an invented political tradition, including the language and ideas of the national mission.

He states that the secondary school and the university humanitarian historical and philological education has become the important channel for development and actualization of Kartvelism as an invented tradition. The centralized system of studying, teaching and popularizing the Georgian language, history and literature, as the basis of ethnic identity, promotes the regular actualization of Kartvelism as an invented political tradition in contemporary Georgia. The

Georgian language, history and literature and actualization of their Kartvelian character are important structural elements and parts in the development of invented political

traditions, which Georgian intellectual and political elites use to develop Georgian identity as both political Georgian and ethnic Kartvelian.

KEYWORDS: *Georgia, Kartvelism, ethnicity, invented traditions, modernism, instrumentalism, instrumentalization of ethnicity.*

Introduction

The modern political nations, which symbolize the states of Europe in particular and the Western world in general, are the products of an extremely brief history of social, political, economic and cultural transformations that embraced Europe in the 18th century and turned its traditional agrarian and predominantly rural groups into political and imagined communities of nations and nation-states. The processes of social and cultural transformations were universal, but their political rates and speeds in different regions and peripheries of Europe, including its geographical centers and edges, were too different and uneven. The countries of early modernizations co-existed with the states of secondary modernization, where the processes of transformations of traditional groups into the nations developed slower. Georgia was among those countries and it became visible on the political maps of Europe later than other nation-states.

The Relevance of the Article

The political history of Georgia, on the one hand, is one of the topical problems in Russian historiography. However, the number of works dedicated to the modern history of Georgia, Georgian identity and nationalism, written by Russian authors, is extremely low. Historiographic failures and lacunas are filled with the translated texts from English and other European languages, but these attempts to popularize Georgia, Georgian history and culture do nothing to improve the situation radically. On the other hand, the actual political history of Georgia provides its historians with several examples of successful political reforms. The successes of the Georgian reforms make the Georgian experience relevant to other post-Soviet states. Therefore, Georgia will be at the center of the author's attention in this article.

Formulation of the Problem

The development of Georgian political and ethnic nationalisms has significant features, therefore the history of Georgian nationalism provides its scholars with opportunities to single out this case of national construction and the development of the nation from other transformations of traditional rural and archaic communities into nation-states. The author presumes that it will be logical to analyze the main strategies and vectors of Georgian nationalistic transformations in the context of the modern-

ist and constructivist approaches, which form the most influential theories of nationalism in contemporary interdisciplinary Humanities.

The ethnic uniqueness and stable traditions of articulation of linguistic roots of the modern political nation are among the central features of the history of Georgian nationalism. On the one hand, Georgian nationalism, as other European nationalisms, which invented, imagined and constructed their own nations, made the Georgian nation a visible political fact and transformed Georgia from a traditional heterogeneous estate society into a modern nation-state. On the other hand, Georgian nationalism, such as Armenian, Greek or Jewish nationalisms, is one of the nationalisms with visual, visible and bright ethnic roots and backgrounds. The Georgian political nation as a modernist construct and imagined community has emerged in the politicized tradition of ethnicity, since the nationalist intellectuals have excluded ethnic features and attributes from the contexts of heterogeneous folk cultures, as well as revised and reinterpreted them and turned them into the invented traditions as formal or informal institutions of Kartvelian ethnicity.

Aims and Objectives of the Article

The present author will try to analyze both tactics and strategies, which Georgian intellectuals use for the articulation of various forms of Kartvelian identity and collective ideas about it. He will examine how the invented tradition of Kartvelian ethnicity exists in various social, cultural and political discourses of contemporary Georgia. This article has several purposes, including an analysis of the articulation of Kartvelian ethnicity as the basis of Georgian identity in secondary and higher humanitarian education, the reproduction of folk and ethnic forms of culture, and the combination of secular and religious trends in the mechanism of the constant reproduction of ethnicity.

Historiography

The problems of the history of Kartvelism in the context of the invention of traditions and the invented traditions, on the one hand, belong to the number of practically unexplored issues in the contemporary historiography of nationalism, in spite of the fact that some authors¹ try to analyze the history of Georgian nationalism and identity in the context of modernist and constructivist approach-

¹ See: M.V. Kirchanov, “Politika proshlogo’ v sovremennoi Gruzii, ili kak SMI i publichnye politiki formiruiut kollektivnye predstavleniia o proshlom,” *Dialog so vremenem*, Issue 56, 2016, pp. 374-395; Idem, “‘Europe’ and ‘the West’ in Georgia’s Political Imagination and Nationalist Discourse,” *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, Vol. 11, Issue 2, 2010, pp. 158-167; Idem, “The Main Development Vectors of Georgian Nationalism in the Context of Political Instability: Between the Traditions of the Political Nation and the Challenges of Radicalization,” *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, Vol. 11, Issue 3, 2010, pp. 126-137; Idem, “Russia as a Subject of the Ideology of Georgian Nationalism,” *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, Vol. 12, Issue 1, 2011, pp. 150-157; Idem, “The Church in Georgia’s Political Life: Problems, Contradictions, and Prospects,” *The Caucasus and Globalization*, Vol. 8, Issue 1-2, 2014, pp. 85-90; Idem, “The Caucasian and Russian in Contemporary Georgian Nationalism,” *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, Vol. 14, Issue 4, 2013, pp. 101-109; Idem, “Religious Parties in Georgia: Political Platforms and Ideological Transformations,” *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, Vol. 15, Issue 2, 2014, pp. 94-100; Idem, “Kartvelism as a Development Paradigm of Georgian Ethnic Nationalism,” *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, Vol. 16, Issue 1, 2015, pp. 102-113; Idem, “Independence as an ‘Invented Tradition’ in Georgia’s Political Identity (2014-2016),” *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, Vol. 17, Issue 3, 2016, pp. 47-55.

es. On the other hand, the theory of the invention of traditions,² proposed in the first half of the 1980s,³ has retained its influence, since it has become an intellectual stimulus that inspired inventionist and imaginalist practices as private cases of a constructivist turn in the interdisciplinary historiography of nationalism.

Linguistic and Ethnic Imagination in the Invention of Traditions

The language and linguistic components of nationalistic imagination play one of the central roles in the development of modern Georgian Kartvelism, Georgian being one of the most vivid dimensions and forms of the ethnic uniqueness of the modern Georgian nation. Nationalists actively use the language in their attempts to imagine invented Georgian traditions, since the Georgian language does not belong either to Indo-European or Turkic language families unlike the neighboring Armenian and Turkish ones. Intellectuals,⁴ imagining and inventing Georgian ethnicity as a Kartvelian one, actually instrumentalize it. The transformation of Georgian language into one of the pillars of identity and the invented tradition was inevitable, since academic studies of the language⁵ inspired its development, strengthened language norms and transformed the language into one of the systemic foundations of national identity. This ideological fate of the political language in Georgia was also inevitable, since the language actualized ethnic and linguistic unique features of the Georgian nation.

The Georgian language in the nationalistic and romantic historiographies, which developed in the ethnocentric coordinate system, has become one of the central attributes of national identity.⁶ Georgian nationalists confirmed the myth about the unique nature of the language as the main inspiring impetus for the preservation and development of identity despite numerous foreign aggressions and conquests. Using the unique national alphabet⁷ also contribute to the transformation of the linguistic features of Georgian nation into the invented tradition. Active studies of the history and gram-

² See: A. Miller, "Izobretenie traditsii. Georgievskaja lencochka i drugie simvoly v kontekste istoricheskoi politiki," *Pro et Contra*, May-June 2012, pp. 94-100; N. Koliagina, "Izobretenie traditsii," *Uroki istorii. XX vek*, 14 October, 2010.

³ See: *The Invention of Tradition*, ed. by E. Hobsbawm, T. Ranger, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1983; E. Hobsbawm, "Mass-Producing Traditions: Europe, 1870-1914," in: *Representing the Nation: A Reader*, ed. by D. Boswell, J. Evans, Routledge, London, New York, 2007, pp. 61-86.

⁴ See: Z. Abashidze, *Georgia and Georgians*, Favorite Style, Tbilisi, 2015; N. Khaniashvili, *Georgians' Sumerian Ancestors*, Tbilisi, 2013; M. Kasabi, *Ottoman Georgians*, Istanbul, 2012 (all in Georgian).

⁵ See: Th. Gamkrelidze, "A Typology of Common-Kartvelian," *Language*, Vol. 42, No. 1, 1966, pp. 69-83; Th. Gamkrelidze, G. Machavariani, *Sonant System and Ablaut in Kartvelian Languages*, Tbilisi, 1965 (in Georgian); H. Fähnrich, Z. Sarveladze, *Etymological Dictionary of Kartvelian Languages*, Tbilisi, 2002 (in Georgian); O. Kageja, *Megrelian-Georgian Dictionary*, Vol. 1, Nakeri, Tbilisi, 2001 (in Georgian); G. Kartoza, *Lazetic Language and its Place in the Georgian Language System*, Nakeri, Tbilisi, 2005 (in Georgian).

⁶ See: D. Kiziria, "The Georgian Language is the Eighth Wonder of the World...," available at [<http://www.georoyal.ge/?MTID=5&TID=40&id=514>]; "Georgian Language is the Oldest Language in the World," available at [<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ABgpa4gveoc>]; G. Dzigauri, "Our Language is Georgian," *Georgian Sword*, April 1998, available at [<https://iberiana.wordpress.com/iberiana/jigauri/qartuli/>]; Idem, "Georgian Language Day," *Nathlavte*, April 1993, available at [<https://iberiana.wordpress.com/iberiana/jigauri/qartuli/>]; Idem, "Is It Again? No, Worse!" *NOW*, October 1996, available at [<https://iberiana.wordpress.com/iberiana/jigauri/qartuli/>]; "History of Georgian Language: Origin and Interesting Facts," available at [[http://qartuliarkhi.ge/History of the Georgian-Language-history/](http://qartuliarkhi.ge/History%20of%20the%20Georgian-Language-history/)] (all in Georgian).

⁷ See: T. Chkhenkeli, "The Georgian Alphabet and 'The Life of the Kings'," available at [<http://georoyal.ge/?MTID=5&TID=40&id=1602>]; "The Georgian Alphabet in the Eyes of the Aliens," available at [<http://georoyal.ge/?MTID=5&TID=40&id=1689>] (both in Georgian).

mar of Georgian language⁸ and other Kartvelian languages by foreign scholars help actualize the linguistic component in the Georgian invented traditions, and foreign authors, in fact, have become popularizers of the linguistic dimension of the modern Kartvelian myth.

From Language to Myth, from Myth to National Mission

Language components play one of the most important roles in the development of Georgian national identity and collective attempts of intellectuals to actualize its Kartvelian nature, but the language has transformed into one of the political myths of modern Georgian identity in the contexts of Georgian historical development and its political uniqueness. Soviet Georgian intellectuals⁹ suggested the main ideas and principles of Kartvelian myth, but they could not realize its potential of the invented political tradition and actualize its instrumental character,¹⁰ since Georgia did not have political independence and state sovereignty.

Zviad Gamsakhurdia's lecture "Spiritual Mission of Georgia" ("sak'art'velos sulieri missia"), read on 2 May, 1990,¹¹ became an important and determined attempt to systematize the spiritual, political and historical missions of Georgia and to map messianic ideas in Georgian intellectual history. Zviad Gamsakhurdia tried to generalize the main points of Kartvelism as a synthetic form of political and ethnic myth and to prove that Georgians were the most ancient nation and inhabited the vast territories of Europe. Instrumentalism of modern invented political traditions in Georgia manifests itself in the aspirations and attempts of intellectuals to prove the autochthonous nature of Georgians and the continuity of their historical and political existence and development in the regions populated by groups that speak Kartvelian languages. Georgian nationalists actualized the instrumental functions of the language¹² in the beginning of the 20th century, which sanctioned its transformation into a political tradition, as well as inspired ideologization and stimulated politicization of language discourse. The language became a form of political and ideological myth, which inspired politicization and radicalization of the Kartvelian idea and actualization of its messianic tendencies.¹³

⁸ See: W. Boeder, "Speech and Thought Representation in the Kartvelian (South Caucasian) Languages," in: *Reported Discourse. A Meeting-Ground of Different Linguistic Domains. Typological Studies in Language*, Vol. 52, ed. by T. Güldemann, M. von Roncador, Benjamins, Amsterdam, Philadelphia, 2002, pp. 3-48; Idem, "The South Caucasian Languages," *Lingua*, Vol. 115, No. 1-2, 2005, pp. 5-89; H. Fähnrich, *Kartwelische Wortschatzstudien*, Friedrich-Schiller-Universität, Jena, 2002; G. Klimov, *Etimologicheskii slovar kartvelskikh iazykov*, Moscow, 1964; Idem, *Einführung in die kaukasische Sprachwissenschaft*, Buske, Hamburg, 1994; Idem, *Etymological Dictionary of Kartvelian Languages*, Mouton de Gruyter, Berlin, 1998.

⁹ See: S. Pirtskhalava, *Ancestors of Georgians and their Relative Tribes in Asia in 40-6 BC*, Origami, Tbilisi, 1948; G. Melikishvili, *To the Problem of the Ancient Population of Georgia, the Caucasus and the Near East*, Tbilisi, 1965 (both in Georgian).

¹⁰ See: R. Topchishvili, "Ethnic History of Georgians in Historical and Ethnographic Lands," available at [http://www.amsi.ge/istoria/div/ToFCiSvili_saqarT.html] (in Georgian).

¹¹ See: G. Gamsakhurdia, "Spiritual Mission of Georgia. The Lecture Read at the Idriat Festival in Tbilisi on 2 May, 1990," available at [<http://www.amsi.ge/istoria/zg/missia.html>] (in Georgian).

¹² See: G. Kikodze, "Language and National Energy," available at [<http://www.georoyal.ge/?MTID=5&TID=41&id=793>] (in Georgian).

¹³ See: G. Leonidze, "Georgian Messianism," available at [<http://www.georoyal.ge/?MTID=5&TID=41&id=1450>] (in Georgian).

Georgian intellectuals propose a political triad of *mamuli* (მამული), *ena* (ენა), *sartsmunoeba* (სარწმუნოება),¹⁴ perceiving it as an invented political tradition. This triad of politically imagined and constructed values has been transformed into an invented tradition of *k'art'uli messianizmi* (ქართული მესსიაზმიზმი).¹⁵

Georgian intellectuals¹⁶ insist that *k'art'uli messianizmi* differs radically from other national ideologies, because it does not have aggressive and imperialistic orientations, but actualizes the ethnic Kartvelian and religious Christian foundations of the Georgian nation. Ethnocentrism,¹⁷ which continues to dominate in Georgian historiography and determine the main vectors of its development, has become one of the most influential invented traditions. The ethnic aspects, the extraordinary antiquity of Georgian nation, the autochthonous nature of the Georgians, and the permanent living of their Kartvelian ancestors in the territory of modern Georgia, all in absolutized forms, have become common for Georgian ethnocentric national historiography and appeared as politically invented traditions, which actualize the instrumentalist and practical roles and functions of the historical imagination.

Nationalists invent *mamuli* as a universal and inevitable value, they seek to actualize its ancient and inevitable nature, but this actually political and social category belongs to a number of relatively new ideological products and inventions, since state narratives entered the political dictionary of Georgian language relatively late and only after the traditional Kartvelian groups and communities had been transformed into a political nation. Despite its formal antiquity and numerous ancient and medieval texts in this triad, *ena*,¹⁸ the Georgian language, has also become the product of an era of political and social modernizations and radical transformations. The attempts of nationalists and intellectuals to actualize the antiquity of Georgian language were very revealing in the contexts of various tactics and strategies of the invention of political traditions. The language allowed the nationalists to simultaneously actualize the values and principles of political and ethnic nationalisms.

The linguistic imagination is the central and determining factor in the construction of images of regional Kartvelian groups¹⁹ and their integration into the greater Georgian national context.

¹⁴ See: G. Mamaladze, "Vertical and Horizontal Postulates of National Ideology (Homeland, Language, Faith + Nation, Name, Family)," available at [<http://www.georoyal.ge/?MTID=5&TID=41&id=766>] (in Georgian).

¹⁵ See: G. Mamaladze, "Giorgi Leonidze's 'Georgian Messianism'," available at [<http://www.georoyal.ge/?MTID=5&TID=41&id=1450>] (in Georgian).

¹⁶ See: G. Absandze, *Fundamentals of Georgian Spirituality and Statehood: Spiritual Growth, Mission, Role, Civilization*, ed. by K. Mikadze, Tbilisi, 2006, 459 pp. (in Georgian).

¹⁷ See: N. Tsulukidze, *Georgian Mythos and Indian Roots*, Lampari-99, Tbilisi, 2014, 192 pp.; R. Topchishvili, *Ethnic History of Georgians and Georgian Historical-Ethnographic Parts*, ed. by D. Muskhelishvili, Memorial, Tbilisi, 2002, 127 pp.; *Ethnogenesis*, ed. by D. Muskhelishvili, Memorial, Tbilisi, 2002, 276 pp. (all in Georgian).

¹⁸ See: D. Kiziria, op. cit.; G. Mamaladze, "Geronti Kikodze's Language and National Energy," available at [<http://www.georoyal.ge/?MTID=5&TID=41&id=793>] (in Georgian).

¹⁹ See: A. Chikobava, *Chan Grammar: Analysis with Texts*, Tbilisi, 1936, 152 pp.; Idem, *Principles of Name and Verb Analysis in Georgian Language*, School Publishers, Tbilisi, 1998, 56 pp.; Idem, *General Description of Georgian Language*, Georgian Language, Tbilisi, 1998, 96 pp.; Idem, *What is the Morphological Object in Old Georgian?* Tbilisi, 1928; Idem, *Chan Texts*, Tbilisi, 1929; *Svan Language: Prose Texts*, Vol. 1, Tbilisi, 1939, 490 pp.; A. Oniani, *Svan Language*, Tbilisi, 1998, 284 pp.; *Svan Texts and Vocabulary in Georgian Translation*, Tbilisi, 2003, 222 pp.; A. Chikobava, *History of the Study of Ibero-Caucasian Languages*, Education, Tbilisi, 1965, 412 pp.; K. Gagua, *Verb Conjugation in Svan Language*, Science Publishers, Tbilisi, 1976, 242 pp.; *Svan Language*, Tbilisi, 1978, 368 pp.; *Svan Language: Prose Texts*, Science Publishers, Tbilisi, 1979, 293 pp.; M. Nikolaishvili, *Structural Analysis of Vowel Reducing*, Tbilisi, 1984, 122 pp.; *Svan Language: Grammar Reviews, Texts, Dictionaries*, ed. by G. Chumburidze, Petit, Tbilisi, 2007, 388 pp.; T. Mibuchani, *The Secret of Bichila. Sumerian Georgian (Svan) Parallels. Discovery of the Language of Mankind*, Sumer, Tbilisi, 2008, 120 pp.; V. Topuria, *Svan Language: Textbook*, Tbilisi, 2008, 240 pp.; M. Nikolaishvili, *Phonology and Morphology Issues in Svan Language*, Tbilisi, 2009, 200 pp.; S. Margiani-Subari, *Some Aspects of Morphosystem Analysis of Elite Dialects*, Mtsghbariri, Tbilisi, 2008, 252 pp. (all in Georgian).

The place of *sartsmunoeba* in this triad of nationalist traditions is the most controversial and debatable, because the most modern European nationalisms develop in a secular system of political coordinates and their theorists and ideologists prefer to ignore religious values and principles, which they perceive as too archaic. The *sartsmunoeba* exists in the contexts of Georgian invented political traditions in two forms, including Orthodoxy and ethnic paganism.²⁰ While Christianity actualizes political European choices, the invented traditions of paganism (*qvanasmts'emlobismts'emloba*) in the main develop and exist as an academic construct, which actualizes Kartvelian dimensions and forms of modern Georgian identity. Kartvelian myth as a political tradition, represented in this cultural situation by *mamuli, ena, and sartsmunoeba*, has a predominantly compromise character, since intellectuals tend to integrate both archaic traditions and the postmodern cultural practices and strategies of imagination and invention of traditions into modern collective concepts and meanings of political imagination.

Visualization of Kartvelian Ethnicity

Visualization of ethnicity has different forms and dimensions, it plays a special role in the development of Georgian Kartvelism as an invented tradition. Georgian folklore groups and ensembles, including Sionioni, Paloni, Khaobioba, Vavi, Kika and Amblambli Arara, simultaneously promote visualization and popularization of Kartvelian ethnicity. The activity of folk music groups is a form of the invention of traditions and museumification of Kartvelian ethnicity, an attempt to integrate it into the modern contexts. Folklore groups are active in the invention of folk songs, dance and costumes as ethnic expressions and elements of archaic ethnicity.

Folklore musical groups participate in the invention of traditions, because they nationalize dimensions of traditional Kartvelian ethnic song, music and dance culture, and integrate them into modern cultural strategies. Folklore ensembles fix various forms of folk, traditional and archaic cultures, charting them on maps of new modern identities. The activities of these groups and choirs help transform local forms of folk culture. The invention of traditions takes the archaic cultural forms out of the contexts of cultural and social periphery. Intellectuals and nationalists invent and imagine these local forms as ancient ethnic and modern national traditions, despite the fact that the invention of political traditions as national ones can be conscious practices and strategies of political imagination. Actually, classical choreography and academic vocals, dressed in ethnic, folklore and traditional Kartvelian robes and vestments, have become the invented traditions. The activity of these groups is important in the contexts of the invention of traditions, since the attempts to integrate traditional culture into modern cultural contexts, on the one hand, promote the preservation of traditions in their archaic and cultural understandings. On the other hand, folklore ensembles have become generators of new meanings of invented traditions because they participate in modernizations and nationalizations of archaic ethnicities.

²⁰ See: V. Bardavelidze, *From the History of Ancient Georgians*, Caucasian House, Tbilisi, 2006, 160 pp.; S. Kutateladze, *Myth Cult in Georgia*, ed. by N. Khazaradze, Tbilisi, 2006, 106 pp.; S. Makalatia, *Jege-Miron's Cult in Old Georgia*, Tbilisi, 1938, 47 pp.; J. Lomashvili, *Ilia Chavchavadze and Pagan Religions of Georgians*, ed. by A. Bendinshvili, Tbilisi, 2007, 54 pp.; M. Mikeladze, *The Ethnic Name of the Georgians in the Light of Archaic Faith Representations*, ed. by H. Kurdovanidze, Tbilisi, 2014, 358 pp. (all in Georgian).

Instrumentalization of the Invented Traditions

National intellectuals have become the creators and founding fathers of Georgian invented and imagined political traditions. The representatives of the political classes, who form the ruling elites, strive to instrumentalize the invented traditions and use them to strengthen and develop the national identity. The mechanisms and tactics of practical realization of the invented traditions are various and heterogeneous. The attempts and aspirations of intellectuals to preserve, study and develop the Georgian language have regular and stable character. The numerous linguistic studies²¹ promote the institutionalization of Georgian language as the imagined political tradition.

The Kartvelian ethnicity of Georgian language, as the basis of Georgian political nation and imagined cultural and ethnic kinship in this intellectual situation, gradually fall into several politically contrived traditions of imagination and invention of ethnic groups, including the Ajarians (აჭარლები),²² Lazians (ლაზები),²³ Megrelians (მეგრელები),²⁴ Svans (სვანები),²⁵ Khevsurians (ხევსურები)²⁶ and their integration into modern Georgian context as parts of the imagined united spatial body of Georgian political nation.

The studies of Georgian intellectuals assist to the institutionalization of the language as a political tradition and its mental migration from a pure academic sphere to collective political representations, political manipulations and national imagination. Mother Tongue Day, traditionally celebrated on 14 April,²⁷ has become an attempt to instrumentalize the Georgian language as one of the foundations of Kartvelian ethnicity, as well as the principles of the political nation.

²¹ See: I. Megreliдзе, *Iakob Gogebashvili and a New Georgian Language*, Education, Tbilisi, 1988, 234 pp.; S. Zhgenti, *Georgian Language Phonetics*, Education, Tbilisi, 1965, 333 pp.; A. Oniani, *Comparative Grammar of Kartvelian Languages (Morphology of Names)*, Education, Tbilisi, 1989, 319 pp.; G. Beridze, *Javakheti and Georgian Language*, Soviet Georgia, Science Publishers, Tbilisi, 1988, 264 pp.; K. Gogolashvili, *Georgian Verb Converting System*, Science Publishers, Tbilisi, 1988, 174 pp.; A. Chikobava, *What are the Peculiarities of the Georgian Language Structure?* School Publishers, Tbilisi, 1998, 124 pp. (all in Georgian).

²² See: J. Nogaideli, *Ethnographic Essence of Ajarian Life*, Tbilisi, 1935, 88 pp.; Idem, *Ajarian Oral Tradition and Theories of Ethnography*, Science Publishers, Tbilisi, 1967, 91 pp. (all in Georgian).

²³ See: B. Sofia, *The History of Our Lazian Migrants*, ed. by J. Shonia, Egrisi, Tbilisi, 2006, 446 pp.; E. Chanturia, *Essays on Reading in Lazian (Chanian) Education History*, Tbilisi, 2006, 454 pp.; A. Shonia, *Lazika: The Great Georgian Pain: Letter to the Brothers!* Tbilisi, 2005, 112 pp. (all in Georgian).

²⁴ See: G. Eliava, *Ethnographic Samegrelo: An Album*, ed. by P. Kirtadze, Martvili, Tbilisi, 1989, 134 pp.; Idem, *Samegrelo: Kolkheti, Odishi. Archeology, Linguistics, History, Architecture and Ethnology*, ed. by F. Antelava, Intellect, Tbilisi, Zugdidi, 1999, 376 pp.; Idem, *Samegrelo: My Viewpoint*, Tbilisi, 1996, 140 pp.; S. Makalatia, *History and Ethnography of Samegrelo*, Uplistsikhe, Tbilisi, 1992, 168 pp.; Kh. Gogia, *Christian Cosmology in Georgian Agriology and Megrelian Traditions*, ed. by A. Alibegashvili, Tbilisi, 2005, 62 pp.; S. Makalatia, *History and Ethnography of Samegrelo: Works of the Society of Local Public Relations*, Tbilisi, 1941, 384 pp. (all in Georgian).

²⁵ See: *Scientific-Practical Conference "Svaneti. Cultural-Historical Heritage and Its Survival Problems" (Mestia, 1995). Program and Reports*, Tbilisi, 1996, 32 pp.; G. Avaliani, *Svaneti Curve in the Mirror: Critical Essay*, Kartli, Gori, 1998, 44 pp.; I. Argviliiani, *Ethnological Searches: Svaneti*, Tbilisi, 2003, 52 pp.; R. Kharadze, *Svaneti Village in Ancient Times*, Tbilisi, 1964, 129 pp. (all in Georgian).

²⁶ See: B. Gamkrelidze, *Khevsureti Village and its Traditions*, Science Publishers, Tbilisi, 1989, 104 pp.; G. Davitashvili, *The Judiciary Court or the "Law" in Khevsureti*, ed. F. Metreveli, Tbilisi, 2001, 100 pp.; S. Makalatia, *Khevsureti*, Tiflis, 1935, 280 pp.; A. Kamarauli, *Khevsureti: The Essence*, Tiflis, 1932, 152 pp.; T. Ochauri, *Khevsureti: Ethnographic Essence*, Tbilisi, 1964, 48 pp.; Idem, *Khevsureti and Khevsurians: The Essence*, Tbilisi, 1977, 135 pp.; M. Chincharauli, *Shatili and Shalilians*, Artuujii, Tbilisi, 2008, 166 pp.; S. Makalatia, *Khevsureti: Ethnographic Footprint*, ed. by A. Chincharauli, Nakaduli, Tbilisi, 1984, 263 pp.; T. Ochauri, *Sermon in Khevsureti*, Ethnographic Heritage Protection Fund, Tbilisi, 2010, 150 pp. (all in Georgian).

²⁷ See: J. Rekhviashvili, "14 April is Mother Tongue Day," *Radio Liberty*, 14 April, 2011; "14 April is Mother Tongue Day," available at [<http://www1.accent.com.ge/en/news/details/13106>]; "14 April is the Day of Georgian Language," available

Mother Tongue Day has become the invented tradition, the attempt to fix the events of 14 April, 1978, and keep them in historical and political memories. The range of events that traditionally take place on 14 April is too diverse. 14 April has been imagined as a collective attempt to actualize Kartvelian ethnicity, language identity and historical memory in the social and cultural spaces of contemporary Georgia. The citizens and residents of Georgia, from children to public politicians, actualize their identity and symbolic connections and ties with the Kartvelian world in general and Georgian ancestors in particular. The public recitations of poems and texts of Georgian classics has become a common practice of cultural communication between the world of Kartvelian ancestors and the modern Georgian political nation. These cultural and intellectual practices and strategies assist to the actualization of invented traditions in their linguistic forms and dimensions. The language has become the powerful factor that stimulates the integration of various Kartvelian ethnic groups, which are historically and linguistically related to modern Georgian nation.

Conclusions

The Kartvelian nature of Georgian political nation is beyond doubt and the Georgians got a reputation of the ancient nation with its unique features. The present author, in his turn, presumes that Kartvelian ethnicity has become a political and ideological construct, which is late from the social and cultural viewpoint. Kartvelism as an invented tradition has become the social and cultural institution of modern Georgian society. The invented traditions have obvious social, ideological, cultural, and political functions. Kartvelism has become the politically invented and ideologically motivated symbol of Georgian society; it supports and stimulates national and ethnic consolidations. The invented traditions as institutions generate political and cultural meanings and also reproduce, invent, imagine and revise ethnic elements in contemporary Georgian political and historical memories.

Georgian intellectuals are aware of the mobilization potential of ethnic Kartvelism and therefore they actively use it. Modern Kartvelism as an invented tradition is extremely heterogeneous, however it has mainly instrumentalist functions. The development of Kartvelism as an invented tradition has become a process of its ritualization and formalization, while constant socially motivated repetitions have contributed to the deep integration of Kartvelian myth into the tissues and dimensions of the national historical and cultural memories. Kartvelism as an invented tradition is heterogeneous, and therefore Georgian intellectuals provide Kartvelian myth with ritually necessary and symbolically meaningful attributes of sacrifice. Kartvelism as a politically invented tradition has become politically motivated and ideologically stimulated social and cultural practices of actualization of the collective sacrifices of Georgian nation and its political and state spatial continuities. The invented tradition of Kartvelism manifests itself in the Georgian language, which actualizes both Kartvelian character of the nation and its unique place among other nations of the region, since Georgia belongs to the few modern nations that use their unique alphabet.

at [<http://ick.ge/rubrics/society/17908-i.html>]; "14 April is the Mother Tongue Day in Georgia," available at [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PEab8RcDH_Q]; "14 April is Mother Tongue Day," available at [<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dCVXV-lsafY>]; "14 April is Mother Tongue Day," available at [<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IELev-z26kI>]; "Mother Tongue Day: What did Happen on 14 April, 1978," available at [<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0ERtSUw6QEG>]; "14 April is Mother Tongue Day—36 Years Ago Protests against the Soviet System Took Place," available at [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D_HIWmJAw1U]; "14 April is Mother Tongue Day," available at [<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BxNHhJbACCY>] (all in Georgian).

Socialization begins with the language, and ethnic Kartvelian specificity has become the determinative factor in developments of Georgian society, since Kartvelian motifs, as invented traditions, invisibly present in all spheres of life of modern Georgian society. The language and linguistic identity are among the important intellectual bases of Georgian Kartvelism as an invented tradition. Linguistic studies, the popularization of Georgian language, studies of ethnic and ethnographic history, the search for ethnic ancestors in Europe, and attempts to prove the autochthonous nature of Georgians and their wider territorial presence some centuries earlier have become forms of social reproduction of Kartvelism as an invented tradition. Secondary schools and universities in Georgia have come to be social landscapes, where Kartvelian myth is developing, because the education system is one of the ethnocentric social institutions. The ethnic components of Kartvelian myth are inevitably actualized in the academic studies of Georgian language and history.

The system and organization of teaching and learning of Georgian language, history and literature have developed into an institutionalized invented tradition. Georgian intellectuals, engaged in the studies and teaching of Georgian history and literature, instrumentalize the invented traditions, actualize their applied character, and provide political classes with opportunities to reproduce them during socialization and nationalization of new generations while in secondary and higher school. The political, cultural and social histories of Georgia, written in the Kartvelian coordinate system, have also become important invented traditions, which reproduce collective ideas about history and guarantee its reproduction in the ethnocentric Kartvelian system of coordinates.

Kartvelian myth has turned into one of the most successful and effective invented traditions, since it is so deeply rooted in ethnocentric forms of Georgian identity that ethnocentric practices have prevailed finally in the national history's writing. Modern Georgian ethnicity is the result of the development of Kartvelian myth as a Georgian form and a version of romantic ethnic nationalism. In these intellectual situations, Kartvelian ethnicity of Georgian political nation has emerged as the result of social constructivism. The Kartvelian idea has become one of the numerous invented traditions that use ancient and medieval ethnic heritages, transform them into the political attributes of the modern nation, and imagine them as invented traditions.
