

International Conference

**PERCEPTION OF CAUCASUS
IN MYTHS AND LITERATURE
FROM ANTIQUITY TILL CONTEMPORANEITY**

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A B S T R A C T S

საერთაშორისო კონფერენცია

**კავკასიის აღქმა მითებსა და ლიტერატურაში
ანტიკურობიდან თანამედროვეობამდე**

პროექტი განხორციელდა შოთა რუსთაველის საქართველოს
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ნეოგრეცისტიკის ინსტიტუტი



Friedrich Schiller University Jena, Germany

ფრიდრიხ შილერის სახელობის იენის უნივერსიტეტი



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and the liberal arts for promoting and fostering a good and virtuous life: *bene beateque vivere*. Here, the *Vivarium novum* has been putting forward a ‘World campus for the humanities’, where students from the five continents, although each one with different background, language, culture and religion, are able to live in a context of *συνουσία* where everyone brings the best of their own culture (that which is truly ‘classic’) and searches along with the others for the common roots of our humanity, hoping to build upon them a future that fosters peace and understanding, and refuses war, conflict and other disharmonious means as a way to relate to one another. In this context, the Caucasus region could offer an important contribution, because of its historical role of cultural crossroad, and its centuries of experience creating an environment where otherness is not felt as a threat for the single, but as a way of enriching the whole.

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Identity Issues of the Kartvelian Peoples

**by the Greek Authors Memnon, Appian, Cassius Dio,
Plutarch and Strabo**

Interest by the West towards the Caucasian region noticeably increased during the Roman Empire, owing to its expansive Eastern foreign policy. Concern with Caucasian politics was immediately

reflected in the accentuated discussion over the political and cultural orientation of populations inhabiting this region, including the ancient Kartvelian tribes.

The aim of this paper is to analyse the geopolitical and cultural identity issues of the Kartvelian tribes of the Roman period as represented by the Greek authors Memnon, Appian, Plutarch, Cassius Dio and Strabo. The research showed that the geopolitical preferences of the Kartvelian people are widely discussed by these authors when writing about the Mithridatic wars. Additionally, Cassius Dio considers the issues of the political orientation of the Georgian kings: (1) in the Roman-Parthian military conflict (AD 35) and (2) during the complicated relationship between Iberia and the Roman Empire (AD II c.); on the other hand, Strabo discusses the various forms of the political relationship existing between Rome and the different Kartvelian tribes.

The study of a cultural identity discourse of the Kartvelian peoples revealed that: (1) the Caucasian region still interested the Western audience as a locus in which the main action of the Argonauts and Prometheus myths took place; (2) the above writers frequently accentuated the themes reflecting the cultural relationship of the Caucasian peoples with Europe as well as the topics discussing the genesis of the Kartvelian peoples and their kinship to other tribes and regions; (3) they displayed a remarkable interest for the elements of material culture as well as ethnic traits and habits / rules of the Kartvelian peoples. We encounter a differential

approach towards the cultural development of the various Kartvelian tribes in representations of these peoples by Strabo.

The outcomes of the paper will suggest useful insights for research into the identity issues of the Kartvelian peoples. Additionally, these insights will facilitate studies of the *Other* in regard to the discourse of *xenostereotypes* – the traits of the alien, other people, different from us.

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**On Some Aspects from the History
of Georgia and Armenia
According to the “Life of St. Nino”**

The *Life of St. Nino* is an important hagiographical and historical narrative containing noteworthy information about the history and culture of not only Georgia, but also Armenia. Out of the surviving versions of the *Life of St. Nino*, I draw on Leonti Mroveli’s version from *Kartlis Tskhovreba* (*The Georgian Chronicles*). A number of scholars find the text of outstanding significance because it appears in the principal historiographical compendium of medieval Georgia. The narrative is conventionally referred to as the *Life of St. Nino*. In Simon Kaukhchishvili’s edition, the part containing stories related to St. Nino is called “Conversion of Kartli by St.