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**NEW UNPUBLISHED MATERIALS FROM THE PERSONAL  
FUNDS OF GEORGIAN PROMINENT URARTOLOGIST GIORGI  
MELIKISHVILI:  
G. MELIKISHVILI AND ARMENOLOGY**

G. Melikishvili during his lifetime and what is known from the posthumously published collection of his memoirs, thoughts, articles in periodic press, etc., the huge, still non-archived funds of the prominent scientist is at real time preserved at the K. Kekelidze Georgian National Centre of Manuscripts. With the special permission of the senior administration of the mentioned academic institution, the author of these lines conducted studies in the unpublished funds of G. Melikishvili.

**KEYWORDS:** Giorgi Melikishvili, archive, Armenology

**G** Giorgi Melikishvili – one of the most outstanding and world famous Georgian scholars particularly specialized in Urartology and the history of ancient Asia Anterior, in a broader perspective can also be considered as an Armenologist, since Urartu with almost of its 250-years of existence presents one of the richest eras of the history of the Armenian Highland. This perception linked to G. Melikishvili becomes more and more convincing especially starting from the 1950s and after the collapse of the USSR when numerous new editions and academic papers were published, introduced to and discussed among scientific circles. In that sense the corpus of Urartian cuneiform inscriptions<sup>1</sup> published in 1960 by G. Melikishvili was an unprecedented scholarly success in Urartology which served as a primary source in the form of a compiled voluminous elaboration for those who were engaged in the study of the history of Ancient Near East, Transcaucasia, in particular Urartu, Assyria and other powers of ancient world.

In addition to the printed materials of G. Melikishvili during his lifetime and what is known from the posthumously published collection of his mem-

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<sup>1</sup> Меликишвили Г. А. Урартские клинообразные надписи. — М.: Изд-во АН СССР, 1960. — 504 с.

oirs, thoughts, articles in periodic press, etc.<sup>1</sup>, the huge, still non-archived funds of the prominent scientist is at real time preserved at the K. Kekelidze Georgian National Centre of Manuscripts. With the special permission of the senior administration of the mentioned academic institution, the author of these lines conducted studies in the unpublished funds of G. Melikishvili<sup>2</sup>. In the result of the research activities we encountered amount of letters, reviews, handwritten copy-books, newspapers, invitations and other kind of materials which are directly related to Armenia and Armenology<sup>3</sup>. At that, we should mention that the funds of G. Melikishvili are at real time processed by Manuchar Guntsadze – a researcher at the K. Kekelidze Georgian National Centre of Manuscripts and therefore documentary material presented in this study still lack any fund enumeration.

First and foremost, we should note that one of the most important and interesting discoveries was the autobiography of G. Melikishvili written by his own hand on a yellowish piece of paper which was found in one of his copy-books, where the Georgian scholar presents his surname as Ksenofontov and not Melikishvili<sup>4</sup> (Photo 1). Here, he mentions that he masters Old Hebrew, Assyro-Babylonian, Urartian, Ancient Greek, French, English, German. Although there is no information that G. Melikishvili mastered Armenian, since he never mentioned about it and one can hardly find anything on that, in some of his handwritten copy-books, among other notes, albeit infrequently, we can find a skilled handwriting of Armenian. In that aspect it may be assumed that the very handwriting belongs to Melikishvili's wife, Armenologist Elene Dochanashvili who probably helped her husband by copying and translating certain passages from the works of Armenian scholars, among them – Hr. Acharyan, G. Ghapantzyan, T. Avdalbegyan, Archbishop Mesrop Smbatyants, Gh. Alishan, K. Basmajyan, Nicholas Adontz, Archbishop Husik et al (Photos 2-5). Most of these works are devoted to the Urartian inscriptions and the history of their discovery published earlier, even either in the 19th c. or the beginning of

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1 GIORGI MELIKISHVILI 100: Memoir, Historical Etudes, Thoughts, Articles in Periodic Press, Correspondence with Georgian and Foreign Scientists: eds. N. Melikishvili, S. Sarjveladze, Korneli Kekelidze Georgian National Centre of Manuscripts, Tbilisi, 2019 (in Georgian).

2 We extend our deepest gratitude towards Mr. Z. Abashidze – the Director of the Korneli Kekelidze Georgian National Centre of Manuscripts for the permission to conduct research in the non-archived funds of G. Melikishvili, researchers of the same institute B. Kekelia and M. Guntsadze for their kind support, as well as enterpriser B. Melkonyan and Candidate of Medical Sciences Z. Khojabaghyan for their financial and moral encouragement.

3 The materials presented in the given academic article are published for the first time.

4 It should be mentioned that in the documents and archival primary sources presented on the very first pages of the book posthumously published and dedicated to the 100th birth anniversary of the prominent scientist, the paternal ancestors of G. Melikishvili bore the surname Ksenofontov, rather than Melikishvili. See about this in detail GIORGI MELIKISHVILI 100: Memoir, Historical Etudes, Thoughts, Articles in Periodic Press, Correspondence with Georgian and Foreign Scientists: eds. N. Melikishvili, S. Sarjveladze, Tbilisi, 2019, pp. 19-25 (in Georgian).

the 20th c., some linguistic studies on the etymologies of Urartian and Armenian words and especially toponyms, historical geography, etc. It is notable that Melikishvili particularly examined those etymologies of Armenian words which are probable to have Urartian origin or mentioned in the Urartian texts and have their parallels in Georgian, too. This issue presents one of the main research interests of G. Melikishvili as etymologies and discussions on them in his works occupy a considerable place through which the scientist tries to make historical-geographical and linguistic reconstructions, to localize the territories of dispersion of this or that ethnolinguistic societies and groups.

Among other documents found in the archives of G. Melikishvili which are linked to Armenia and Armenians, the invitations and newspapers of the festive celebration of the 2750th anniversary of Erebuni-Yerevan present special interest and stand out with their abundance (Photos 6-8). The celebration which took place in October 17-19, 1968 was a huge event not only in the life of the residents of Soviet Armenia but also for the Armenians worldwide. It was also one of the significant holidays in the USSR where numerous participants and guests were invited from the 15 fraternal Soviet republics and other friendly countries. On this occasion a scientific session was opened by Academician Viktor Hambarzumyan at the Presidium of the National Academy of Sciences of Armenia where numerous scientists of different spheres participated, among them historians, too. The invitations were sent to G. Melikishvili from the Yerevan City Council, the Jubilee Committee, etc. From the variety of invitations and newspapers, it may be assumed that the Georgian scholar was highly respected and welcomed by the Armenians. On the other hand, the preservation of the very invitations and newspapers by G. Melikishvili speaks about the scholar's kind attitude and unforgettable memories in relation with the inviting side.

The other part of documents are reviews and scientific discussions, letters and correspondence related to the Armenian scholars and their works. Among them are notable the correspondence between G. Melikishvili and his counterpart, Urartologist N. Harutyunyan, V. Mikaelyan – the Editor-in-Chief of the Armenian academic journal “Herald of Social Sciences”, the reviews on the academic papers and dissertations of M. Katvalyan, D. Sarkisyan, etc.

In the handwritten letter (in Russian, dated 09.09.1977, Photo 9) addressed to G. Melikishvili, Armenian Urartologist N. Harutyunyan, having presented his texts to the latter, states that in the professional literature it has been long before proven the Hayassian toponyms and ethnonyms to have some parallels with the Armenian ones. Besides, N. Harutyunyan mentions the fact that the toponymic and ethnonymic material of ancient Georgians and Armenians at a significant level is expressed in the Urar-

tian and Assyrian cuneiform inscriptions. As the author of the letter notes, the same can be said about some commonalities existing between the Armenian and Georgian on the one hand and between the Urartian on the other. In the postscript N. Harutyunyan informs G. Melikishvili about the death of one of the Armenian archaeologists with no mention of his name, saying that Armenia for a long time will not have such an outstanding specialist. Since prominent Armenian archaeologist, the Head of Lchashen Archaeological Expedition Harutyun Mnatsakanyan passed away in 1977 and the letter is dated by the fall of 1977, it may be assumed that the latter is meant in the letter of N. Harutyunyan.

The handwritten reviews (Photos 10, 11) of G. Melikishvili on the article of D. Sarkisyan state that it contains almost no scientific novelty in general repeating already known historical truths and is of a low level of professional language. In the letter (in Russian, dated 18.11.1983, Photo 12) addressed to G. Melikishvili, V. Mikaelyan – the Editor-in-Chief of the “Herald of Social Sciences”, asks to review another article authored by D. Sarkisyan. From the content of the review (in Russian, dated 30.11.1983, Photo 13) it becomes clear that the prominent scholar, through combination of wide range of historical realities, professionally and skillfully substantiates and proves the inexpediency to publish the article in the academic journal.

In the review of G. Melikishvili (in Russian, dated 25.11.1980, Photo 14) on M. Katvalyan’s dissertation entitled “The process of formation of the first united statehood in the Armenian Highland and the consolidation of the aboriginal tribes in the 9th-6th cc. BC”, the scholar points out several weak points of the work, however, on the other hand he considers that M. Katvalyan deserves to get the degree of candidate in historical sciences.

It should be highlighted, that these reviews penned by G. Melikishvili were not always in favor of the author as we can see in case of the review written on the unpublished article of D. Sarkisyan in response to V. Mikaelyan’s request from the “Herald of Social Sciences”. Nevertheless, these written evidences generally testify to the close and friendly ties with Armenian scholars.

The special issues of the newspapers “Evening Yerevan”, “Communist” (Photos 15-18) with leading articles on their front pages presenting the festive celebrations of “Erebuni-Yerevan 2750” as well as the history of the city, particularly the Urartian fortress Erebuni founded in 782 BC by King Argishti I are also an interesting part of the funds of G. Melikishvili which are unique examples of the Soviet press.

To summarize, it should be mentioned that from the perspective of Armenology this is a preliminary study based on some archival documents of the funds of G. Melikishvili, whereas most of the still non-archived materials of the illustrious Georgian Urartologist remains unstudied.