

## PREFACE

While offering this Book to the reader, we must emphasize that it is the first attempt at a complete description of Svan grammar and lexics (with a dictionary published separately), that our description is concise, not exhaustive, and that our work is essentially independent of the current investigations of Svan carried out in Tbilisi by Th. Sharadzenidze, Z. Chumburidze, I. Chantladze, A. Oniani, K. Gagua, I. Melikishvili, a. o.

The first informers of Svan were J. A. G ü l d e n s t ä d t in 1787, 1791 and J. K l a p r o t h in 1814. The pioneer of the study of Svan was G. R o s e n with his „Ossetische Sprachlehre nebst einer Abhandlung über das Mingrelische, Suanische und Abchasische“ (Berlin, 1846) followed by the grammatical outlines of P. U s l a r in 1887, A. G r e n and M. Z a w a d z k i in 1890, etc. A. T s a g a r e l i, H. S c h u c h a r d t, A. D i r r, a. o. considerably contributed to the study. N. M a r r, who had defined the dialectal division of Svan, opened up a new epoch of scholarly (and anti-scholarly) studies which acquired precise substantiation only after the appearance of modern kartvelology due to the works of A. S h a n i d z e. The latter's "Umlaut im Suanischen" (1925) must be regarded as the first sample of modern svanology. One of the founders of the Georgian University (1918), A. S h a n i d z e was initiator of the recording of Svan folklore and of its systematic publishing. A complete description of Svan was started by V. T o p u r i a but he had time to publish only the first fundamental part – "The Verb" (1931, 2nd ed. 1967). The other parts have not appeared yet although in the preface to that book he writes: "... we have no complete survey of the Svan language". Nor 16 years after 1967, when we are writing these lines, have the things essentially changed, and this fact worries many scholars because of the great importance of Svan for the research of the genesis of the Kartvelian phenomenon: "In conclusion, may I suggest some necessary tasks for the future /.../: a) detailed investigation of Svan with the aim of compiling a historical grammar of this relative-chronologically conservative language" (K.-H. S c h m i d t, 1978).

The present Book, prepared by us in the spring of 1982 in Vilnius, may not be such a detailed investigation, yet it may serve as a model for it. Thus we had neither time, nor conditions to investigate the interesting problem of Svan prosody. However, the question has been already set in this Book.

The said Tbilisian scholars, although sometimes representing diametrically opposite views, usually follow one or another standard, once settled and accepted as traditional and unshakable. Such standards will be, for instance, "the mixed character of Svan"

(N. Marr, A. Chikobava), the five types of Svan declension (Th. Sharadzenidze), the description of the verb according to the opposition of subjective persons to objective persons (A. Shanidze). Let nobody be offended, these are just the views we have repudiated here. Being independent, we endeavoured to evade the influence of any authority and to take a detached view of the language which, by the way, is vernacular to one of us: The paradoxical result of this impartiality is that we have accepted the views of Th. Gamkrelidze and G. Machavariani on the pure Kartvelian character of Svan and its phonology, the view of Th. Gamkrelidze on the verbal valency in Kartvelian and the view of M. Machavariani on the dominant opposition of communicant and non-communicant persons in the verbal system, on the category of version, reflexivization and voice. All this has been applied in the linguistic description of Kartvelian for the first time.

All grammatical examples in this Book were provided or checked up by Miss Ch. Gudjadjani, as well as the grammatical analysis of the Texts and their semantical interpretation. She is the author of the essentially new definition of the screeves 8, 9, 10, erroneously defined by V. Topuria as two screeves identical with the real screeve 8. Sections 1 and 2 (Phonetics) as well as the definition of the declensional types, the description of the Verb in accordance with the theory of M. Machavariani, and the morphemal division of the Texts belong to L. Palmaitis, who is also the author of sections 5 (Derivation), 6 (Lexics), and of the Comments. The English language of the Book has been improved by Prof. L. Valeika, Vilnius University.

One of the Authors being an inveterate diachronist, it was impossible not to touch upon diachrony. In all the sections of the Grammar, except the last, some diachronical remarks are presented in the foot-notes; however, the last section, Lexics, is entirely diachronical.

The Book is dedicated to the memory of M. Kaldani, a unique Svanolog, author of the large Dictionary of all the four dialects of Svan (in print), an honourable scholar and an engaging teacher whose lectures we have enjoyed attending at the State University of Tbilisi. We should like to express our gratitude to our other teachers of Kartvelian, Svan and the Caucasian languages and to all who have supported and made our common work possible, including the kartvelological probation of L. Palmaitis in Georgia in 1976-1980: Acad. A. Shanidze, Acad. Th. Gamkrelidze, Acad. K. Lomtadze, Acad. Sh. Dziridzuri, Prof. Z. Chumburidze, Prof. M. Shanidze, Prof. G. Rogava, Prof. Th. Sharadzenidze, Prof. S. Djorbenadze, Prof. E. Babunashvili, Prof. I. Kavtaradze, Prof. G. Kartozia, Prof. E. Dochanashvili, Prof. M. Chartolani, Acad. M. Andronikashvili, M. Machavariani, A. Oniani, Ts. Chartolani, G. Bziava, M. Nedospasova, A. Nedospasova, A. Romelashvili, E. Eliashvili, Ts. Chikvaidze, U. Turashvili, D. Tserediani, N. Tserediani, S. Tserediani, R. Naveriani, T. Djaparidze, V. Saghiani, M. Karumidze, K. Khvelediani, Prof. Z. Sardjveladze, I. Melikishvili, Prof. Y. Zysar, Z. Kiknadze, Acad. V. Mažiulis, Prof. H. Zabulis, Acad. J. Kubilius, Prof. A. Bikelis, Prof. A. Girdenis, J. Bernotas, V. Timinskaitė, G. Carr-Harris. L. Palmaitis also thanks his father, who has made many travels possible, the Rev. A. Talačka, who also supported these adventures materially, and he bows to his wife, who has endured them all.

Vilnius - Mestia, May 1983.