

Chapter 1


Cultural Heritage

in Georgia:

Opportunities for Its Protection


and International Cooperation

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ABSTRACT

Georgia, due to its geographical location, which is at the crossroads of Europe and Asia, preserves its ancient roots and cultures, drawing the attention of both European and Asian countries. Thus, we can say that the issue of cultural heritage is distinguished by great diversity. Another important fact is that 20 percent of Georgian territories are occupied, and the existing cultural heritage is under threat and danger. The work describes the essence and general meaning of cultural heritage, it examines how the Georgian Government tries to protect its cultural heritage in occupied territories and its cooperation with international organizations, the protection of intellectual property in Georgia, and the country's international cooperation in the mentioned sphere.

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INTRODUCTION

Cultural heritage is the wealth that we all own, handed down from our ancestors, with which we live in the present and which we pass on to future generations, allowing us to define our identity. Cultural heritage determines the country's development opportunities in social, economic, and cultural terms; it is also a source of inspiration for creativity and innovation, which contributes to the creation of future cultural products (Darchashvili, 2020).

Cultural heritage contributes to the creation of social capital and creates a sense of individual and collective belonging, which helps to maintain social cohesion in society while expanding the potential for tourism development. The development and protection of cultural heritage in Georgia originates from the early period. Already in the 19th century, the protection of monuments began to form as a separate field (Association for Modern Scientific Research, n.d.). Building on this, Georgian scientists and public figures were actively involved in protecting cultural monuments, which led to the formation of various associations and organizations. In this case, we have to say that the collection and preservation of antiquities are fundamentally important for the development of any nation, as well as for Georgia (Darchashvili, 2021).

Cultural heritage can face significant threats, not only in the face of natural cataclysms but also in the background of socio-political and economic changes. The accompanying factors of modern globalization are also considered a serious threat. The problem of cultural heritage protection is especially acute in the occupied territories. In this case, we should mention the territory of Abkhazia, since it is well known for its archaeological literature. About 1,000 archaeological objects of different periods and contents were discovered in this area. Therefore, each of them is still not completely studied. The study of the territories of Abkhazia began in the 20s of the 20th century. Until this period, it was believed that there were no archeological objects in the mentioned region that predate Antiquity and belong to the Bronze Age. In 1926, V. Strazhev published a brief history of the Bronze Age monuments on the territory of Abkhazia. Information about Dolmens was also provided by him to the general public. The archeological study of the Abkhazian territory and the adoption of relevant scientific conclusions are related to V. Ivashchenko. The second stage of the archaeological study of Abkhazia began in 1934 and is connected with the archaeological expedition of the All-Union Academy of Sciences (Baramidze et al., 2013).

Abkhazia, like other territories of Georgia, is rich in historical, archeological, and religious cultural sites and monuments. Georgians have created unique examples of culture in this area, although it should be noted that many of them have been destroyed over time, historical monuments have been destroyed, and churches and

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