


Astronomy in Georgia – Past, Present and Future

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Initiative group of Georgian Astronomers

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Astronomy has history of millenniums in Georgia,

but when we talk about the Georgian astronomy we usually mean the activities and investigations at the Abastumani Astrophysical Observatory from 1932 (Now Georgian National Astrophysical Observatory – GeNAO).

Tbilisi State University was founded in 1918. Astronomy was one of the subjects of teaching from its establishment.

Georgia is situated between Europe and Asia



Astronomy was popular in Georgia centuries ago

- Georgians are friendly and tolerance with representatives of all nationality and religion.
- Arabian invaders cause a disaster in Georgia. This notwithstanding, Tiflis and the observatory on Narykala became the place of meetings of Arabian astronomers and educated persons during the XII-XIII centuries.
- Georgian Kings and nobles also often held debates with Arabian educated persons on scientific themes.
- Europe revealed interest concerning some of these themes a few centuries later.

The Arabian observatory existed in Tiflis
on a hill of Narykala (IX-XIII c)



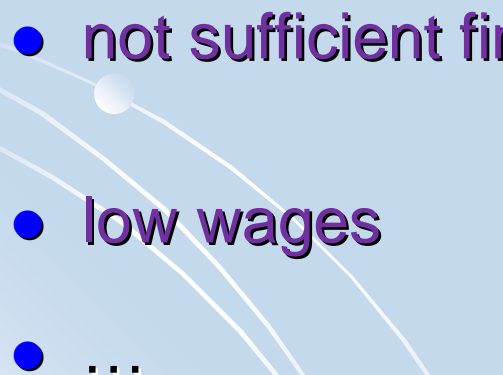


Gelati and Ikalto Academies with Observatories - XII century.

If not our hard history we could
have two University cities from
the XII century in Georgia.



But now, for the beginning of the new millennium we, Georgian astronomers, have the same problems as have astronomers from the states of the Eastern Europe

- educational problems in secondary schools and universities
 - not sufficient financial support
 - low wages
 - ...
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Our traditions and heritage

- Georgian astronomers traditionally were rather active in IAU commissions and international programs.
- Representatives of different countries have got astronomical education in Abastumani. The most known is Richard West – former head of education and public relations in ESO.
- We have original Georgian astronomical text-books from 1918.
- Plate Library of GeNAO; about 70000 units. VO Group.
- These observations were made using 40 cm Zeiss Refractor, 44 cm Schmidt Camera, 70 cm Meniscus Telescope, 40 cm Zeiss Double Astrograph and Solar telescopes (1932-1993).

We think that kind of problems related with astronomy can be solved by astronomical society and not by any official structure. The initiative group started care for restoration of the Georgian Astronomical Society, which must solve the following problems:

- Establishment of the Georgian VO
- new astronomical place – Mta Arjevani !
- TSU: astronomy department was closed
- Integration of GeNAO and the new university. Astronomical education in the near future
- Training of school-teachers
- Publications – Bulletin of AbAO

The initiative group raises a question to EAS and the National Societies:

- Is it possible to prepare 4-5 students as future astronomers and two software developers in your universities and observatories for Georgia?
- We promise to give you observational time at our New Astronomical Place and even offer a place for EAS telescope.

And also:

- We hope to held international conference in October dedicated to the 75 anniversary of the observatory and 100 anniversary from birth of founder of the observatory, Eugene Kharadze.

Acknowledgements

- And finally I want to express my acknowledgements to the GNSF, which supported my trip. This foundation gives us hope to trust that everything will be OK in the Georgian Science and Education System.
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THANK YOU!