

BOOK
PUBLISHING
IN GEORGIA
2013



GEORGIAN
PUBLISHERS AND
BOOKSELLERS
ASSOCIATION



MINISTRY OF CULTURE
AND MONUMENT PROTECTION
OF GEORGIA

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and Monument Protection of Georgia.

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THE HISTORY OF BOOK PUBLISHING IN GEORGIA

The roots of book publishing in Georgia go back to the 4th century when Georgia's conversion to Christianity created demand for manuscripts in Georgian. These manuscripts were copied in monasteries across the country. Alongside the translation of the Bible, original texts were also created. These early books were of religious content and written by monks. The first Georgian book – The Martyrdom of Shushanik by Jakob Tsurtaveli – was written in the 5th century.

Although 5th century inscriptions on the walls of churches are maintained, unfortunately no complete books survived from 5th to 6th century save fragmentary pages. One Georgian handwritten book, which did survive to the present day is the Mt. Sinai (Egypt) Bible from 864.

Despite the fact that Georgian books were printed from the 17th century onwards, manuscripts still constituted the largest fraction of Georgian literature until the beginning of the 19th century. And although thousands of books survived through various centuries, even more were allegedly destroyed.

There are about 10 000 titles of both manuscripts and old printed books preserved at the National Centre of Manuscripts in Georgia.

IMPORTANT DATES

- 4 6 8 The first Georgian inscription was made.
- 4 9 5 The first Georgian book “The Martyrdom of Shushanik” was written.
- 9 7 3 The first known Georgian Manuscript of the Four Gospels was created.
- 1 6 2 9 The first Georgian book Italian-Georgian Dictionary was printed.
- 1 7 1 2 The first book was printed in the capital of Georgia, Tbilisi.
- 1 8 1 9 The first Georgian newspaper was printed.
- 1 9 9 5 The law on intellectual property was adopted.
- 1 9 9 5 Georgia joined the Bern Convention.
- 1 9 9 6 The Georgian Publishers & Booksellers Association (GPBA) was founded.
- 1 9 9 7 National ISBN Agency was founded.
- 2 0 0 8 The GPBA joined IPA as a regular member



GEORGIAN ALPHABET

ა - a

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უ - u

ფ - p

ქ - k

ყ - gh

ღ - q`

შ - sh

ჩ - ch

ც - ts

ძ - dz

წ - ts`

ჭ - ch`

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SECULAR LITERATURE

The creation of secular texts began later, namely in the 10-11th centuries. The Knight in the Panther's Skin by Shota Rustaveli - a masterpiece regarded as one of the most important achievements in Georgian culture was written in the 12th century; the poem is preserved in numerous copies of different manuscripts. It is particularly interesting to note that the Knight in the Panther's Skin was often distributed in the form of illustrated manuscripts.



The Knight in the Panther's Skin
Illustrated Manuscript, 1646

THE FIRST GEORGIAN PRINTED BOOK

Due to the complicated political and economic situation in Georgia (the country was at that point totally isolated from the rest of the world) the first ever printed book was the Italian-Georgian Dictionary. It was printed in Rome in 1629. More books were printed abroad – in Italy and Russia – during the 18th century.

The first printing house in Tbilisi was established in 1712 and the very first books printed there were The Holy Bible, The Knight in the Panther's Skin by Shota Rustaveli and The Georgian Dictionary, as well as the history of Georgia compiled from old manuscripts.

During the 18th century 19 titles were printed in Georgia.

The Tbilisi printing houses closed down and were reopened several times, but in total 21 titles were printed during the period between 1629 and 1800.

BOOK PUBLISHING DURING 1801–1921

After the annexation of Georgia by Russia in 1801 and the abolition of the Georgian Kingdom, Georgia remained a Russian Province until 1918 when an independent republic was declared. During that time, Georgian was not a state language. Moreover, until 1805, teaching Georgian at schools was also prohibited and books were distributed only in handwritten form until 1805. The total number of the titles published from 1801 to 1918, the year Georgia declared its independence, equals to 5395. The total number of the titles published from 1918 to 1921 comprised 896.

After the Soviet occupation in 1921, book publishing was monopolized by the state and subjected to heavy censorship and control. Moscow ruled over the system as it did in all other Soviet Republics. Publishing regulations were governed by a special Committee and were obeyed by all publishing and printing houses. The total number of titles published during the period between 1921 and 1991 was 40 000.

**DIT'TIONARIO
GIORGIANO
E ITALIANO.**

COMPOSTO DA STEFANO PAOLINI
con l'aiuto del M.R. P. D. Niceforo Irbachi
Giorgiano, Monaco di S. Basilio.

AD VSO DE' MISSIONARI II
della Sagra Congregazione de Pro-
paganda Fide.



IN ROMA,
Nella Stampa della Sagra Congr. de Propag. Fide.
C I D C X X I X.

CON LICENZA DE' SUPERIORI.

Figural	Nome.	Potestid.
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ქ	ქა	Cha ch,
ყ	ყარ	Car c,
ღ	ღან	Gan g, Ital. ga, go, gu.
წ	წინ	Scin sc, Ital. scia, see, sci, scio, sciu.
ჩ	ჩიენ	Ciuen ci, Ital. cia, cio, ciu.
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ჯ	ჯარ	Chhar chh, come il ʒ Arab.
გ	გან	Gian g, Ital. gia, gio, giu.
ჰ	ჰოი	Hhoi hh,



ფიგურა

1992 – 2010

The first half of the 1990s was marked with vitally important changes for Georgia. The civil war led to total collapse of book publishing. Almost no books were published during the period from 1992 through 1994. A small revival took place in 1995 when several private publishing houses emerged fully replacing the state-owned publishing houses within few years. After this privatization, the majority of state institutions closed down or stopped publishing books.

A very important step in the development of book publishing in Georgia was the creation of the Georgian Book Publishers and Booksellers Association. The Association initiated the creation of an ISBN agency in 1997 and in the same year, the first Tbilisi Book Fair was held.

A positive role was played by the Open Society Georgia Foundation by funding several visits of Georgian publishers to the Frankfurt Book Fair as well as arranging numerous training schemes and seminars for publishers. The Translation Support Program successfully operated for many years. The publishing business had gradually become more sustainable, so that the most of publishers could survive and develop without support and grants from foundations/donor organizations operating in Georgia.

CHARACTERISTICS, CHALLENGE AND FUTURE PROSPECTS OF THE GEORGIAN BOOK MARKET

In 1996, four Georgian publishers representing three independent publishing companies, participated in the Frankfurt Book Fair. It was not just their first personal attendance at this fair, but the first ever participation of Georgian publishers in the Frankfurt Book Fair. The four were among a few independent publishers who set up publishing companies in the turbulent years immediately following the regaining of independence by Georgia in 1991. They presented all twelve new publications on a four square-meter Georgian collective stand in the huge Hall 9.2 at the Frankfurt Book Fair. At that time, around 500 titles were published throughout Georgia; the maximum print-run for a novel stood at 500 copies.

Seventeen years have passed since then and it would seem that those difficult times are long over.

Today, there are around 70 regular publishers, 100 bookshops and up to 10 wholesalers in Georgia. Most of them regularly take part in Tbilisi Book Festival, which is organized annually by the Georgian Publishers and Booksellers Association (GPBA). The number of independent publishing companies and new publications is gradually increasing also resulting in growth of turnover of publishers.

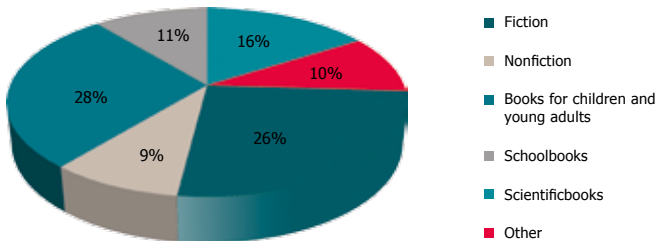
Book publishing has increased significantly during the recent years also resulting in growth of turnover of publishers. However in parallel to increase of turnover average book price slightly decreased.

Book publishing in Georgia in 2007-2012		
Year	Number of printed Copies (Thousand)	Turnover (Thousand, USD)
2007	2,313	8,068
2008	2,392	8,801
2009	2,989	11,475
2010	4,573	17,385
2011	7,736	26,822
2012 (I quarter)	1,769	5,961
2012 (II quarter)	1,828	5,315

Source: National Statistics Office of Georgia

Major publishing priorities of Georgian publishers focus on books for children and young adults (28%) and fiction (26%). Another important piece of attention goes to the schoolbooks (11%) which are published once a year and belong to the main and specific focus of several publishing houses.

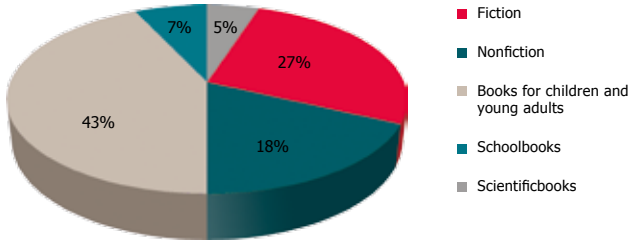
PUBLISHING PRIORITIES OF GEORGIAN PUBLISHERS



Source: Survey of Georgian Book Publishers, conducted in the frames of the project "Book Platform", December 2012.

Breakdown of categories of sold/distributed books in 2012:

CATEGORIES OF DISTRIBUTED/SOLD BOOKS



Source: Survey of Georgian Book Publishers, conducted in the frames of the project “Book Platform”, December 2012.

Nowadays, about 30 publishing companies focus on school textbooks, which account for 20 percent of the total book market. Children’s books and novels each make up nearly 18 percent. The market is not very diverse – there are still numerous gaps or niches which can be expected to be gradually filled.

According to the information provided by the National Library book production during 2009-2011 produced the following results:

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Published titles	3141	2590	2757	3322	3420
Fiction titles	774	416	501	1064	1126
Average Print-run	900	700	750	700	800

STARTING A PUBLISHING BUSINESS: EASY TO START

The World Bank publishes an annual report “Doing Business” which provides objective measures of business regulations for local companies in 185 economies. Georgia’s ranking in Doing Business during last 2-3 years is among top 15. In 2013 Georgia’s general rank is 9, while the rank for Starting Business is 7 (www.doingbusiness.org). To start a publishing business is as easy as any other. Everyone can register a publishing company of any legal form (Plc, Ltd, Joint Stock, Individual enterprise, etc) without any license. Only application and a charter is requested; no starting capital, no stamp needed. The registration process takes a day and a company is registered as soon as a registration document is published online at www.napr.gov.ge. Everyone can search and print out a document certifying that the company is registered from the above online database as well.

TAXE SAND LEGISLATION: EASY TO GO

There is no VAT applicable to books in Georgia. Other taxes to be paid are Income Tax 20% (will be reduced to 15% beginning of 2013); Profit Tax 15% (will be reduced to 10% beginning in 2013); there is no Import Tax and the customs clearance procedures are rather simplified. Since September 2011, companies and individuals can declare the import of goods via Internet Portal.

Companies can also declare their monthly and yearly revenues electronically and are able to define themselves whom to provide annual Financial Audit – an official revenue agent or a private audit firm. Internet banking is widely practiced and wire transfer can be simply made online to the accounts of foreign companies in any bank worldwide according to the invoices alone.

SCHOOL TEXT BOOKS

In 2005/2006, the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia embarked on the

preparation of new curricula for schools. The school textbook market opened up to all publishing companies capable of providing quality textbooks in line with the new curricula. Just a year before, there was a choice of only two textbooks per subject and per grade. Strong competition has developed between school textbook publishing companies, which will certainly intensify in the future.

CHILDREN'S BOOK AND NOVELS

The publishing of the children's books ranks the second after school textbooks, but the average quality of contents and illustrations is not very good. It is to be hoped that increasing competition on the children's book market will lead to an improvement in the quality of illustrations. Literary competitions and awards can also play an important role when it comes to inspiring children's books authors and authors of fiction for adults. There are several literary competitions and prize presentations every year in Georgia. They have all been created over the last decade by various independent organizations and publishers.

LITERARY PRIZES AND COMPETITIONS

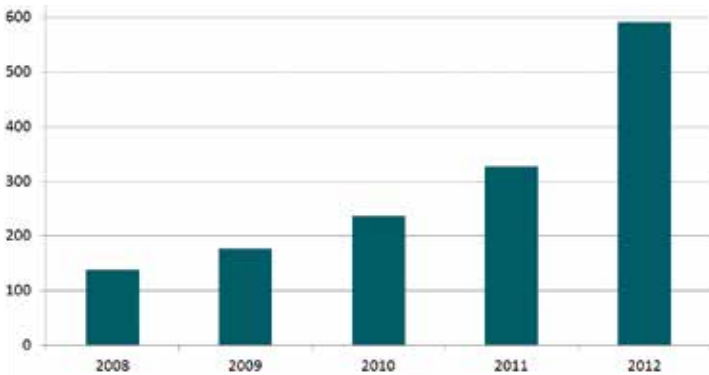
There are literature competitions of various forms and structure such as the annual "Alubloba" for young writers aged 15+, online competition "Tsero" for debut writers and "Pen Marathon", which reveal new names and works every year. But the most prominent two events are: literature award Saba and Gala annual awards. Saba was founded in 2003, by The TBC Bank, Georgian Pen Club and daily newspaper "24 Hours". Every July, Saba sums up the "literary harvest" of the year in seven nominations and awards monetary prizes to the authors.

In 2007, Tbilisi Assembly initiated a new award called "Gala," founded by the writer Zaal Samadashvili. Gala also has seven nominations including illustration, Children's book, Screenplays and Drama and the best publishing project.

TRANSLATIONS

In most cases translations cannot be produced without financial support. Even world bestsellers fail to achieve high sales figures in Georgia. Funding from foreign foundations is very important for Georgian publishing companies and many apply to different institutions worldwide.

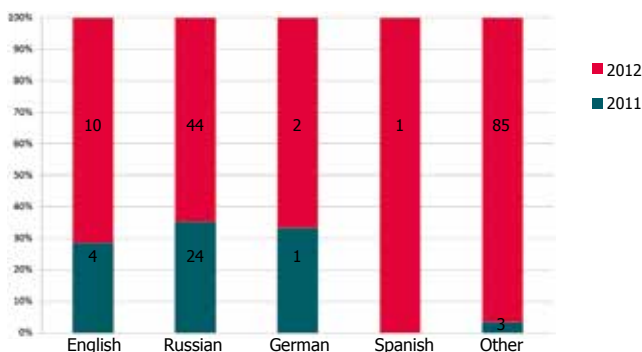
Several years ago, The GPBA submitted a proposal to the Ministry of Culture and Monument Protection of Georgia (www.mcs.gov.ge) to establish a Georgian foundation for the promotion of translation of Georgian literature into other languages. In 2010 Ministry of Culture launched a Program in Support of Georgian Book and Literature (www.book.gov.ge). Among the priorities of the program is the translation grant for foreign publishers willing to translate Georgian fiction.



Source: Survey of Georgian Book Publishers, conducted in the frames of the project "Book Platform", December 2012.

41.4% of Georgian publishing companies gave positive answer to the question if they published books translated from Georgian into other languages during the last two years. In 2011-2012 the main languages to translate books from Georgian were: Russian, English, German, Spanish and other languages, namely Hebrew, Azeri, Armenian, Turkish, Latin, Czech, Arab, Dutch etc. Majority of books which were translated into Russian, Armenian and Azeri languages, were schoolbooks.

NUMBER OF TITLES TRANSLATED FROM GEORGIAN INTO OTHER LANGUAGES IN 2011-2012



Source: Survey of Georgian Book Publishers, conducted in the frames of the project "Book Platform", December 2012.

LIBRARIES

There are five big and about 5853000 medium and small libraries in Georgia. The largest and the oldest among them is The National Parliamentary Library (www.nplg.gov.ge) with some 5 million titles including press and patents. The Tbilisi State University Library and the National Scientific Library follow with 3.5 million titles each. The National Scientific Library also contains the large collection of press (2.5 mln), patents (20 mln) and rare books (1530). The Library of Ilia State University contains 3 million titles, while the State Book Chamber – 2 mln titles.

LIBRARY STATISTICS

1900 – Secondary school libraries containing 1000 books, on average.

590 – Public libraries around the country (average library collects 25,000 books in capital and about 5000 books, on average, in regional libraries which are currently merging with local public schools.

100 – Accredited academic libraries.

150 – Specialized libraries including ministry libraries, different foundations & NGO libraries.

THE GEORGIAN PUBLISHERS AND BOOKSELLERS ASSOCIATION

The Georgian Publishers and Booksellers Association (GPBA) was founded in 1996. The GPBA is a business association which plays an important role in the development of book sector in the country. With around 40 regular members the GPBA unites all active publishers and distributors in Georgia. The association organizes professional seminars and workshops, assists the members in dealing with the government and protects their rights in general. Since 1997 the GPBA has been organizing the Tbilisi International Book Fair, which is held annually in the month of May. The Tbilisi International Book Fair is supported by the Ministry of Culture and Monument Protection and is one of the key cultural events in the book sector, incorporating around 80 exhibitors. The festival is a gathering place for publishers, writers and readers, it is a lively event combining book presentations, meeting with the authors and various cultural activities. The four-day festival is open to public and the entrance is free.

The GPBA is a partner of the Book Platform project (www.bookplatform.org), which is supported by Eastern Partnership Culture Programme of the EU. The project idea is to support the role of culture in the region's sustainable development and promote regional cooperation among public institutions, civil society, cultural and academic organizations in the Eastern Partnership region and with the European Union.

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