The Georgian language remains an enigma for many linguists. Some debate whether it belongs to the Iberian-Caucasian family of languages; others suggest that Georgian together with its relative languages Svan, Mengrelian, and Laz creates South Caucasian family of languages; and a few still adhere to the idea of its linguistic ties with the equally enigmatic Basque language. Through the centuries the Georgian language has remained a steadfast symbol of national identity, beauty and hope for the people who consider it their native tongue.

Georgian literature boasts a history of well over a thousand years. From the oldest written texts of the early 5th century to the works of contemporary writers, the Georgian literary heritage presents an impressive body of religious and secular writings. Its masterpieces are equal to the most admired creations of world literature. Although the study of the Georgian language has been expanding, Georgian literature is still relatively little explored outside the land of its origin.

The conference will present the papers that explore various aspects of Georgian language and literature in their historical development and wide cultural context, such as the following:

- The origins of the Georgian language, its connection with other Kartvelian (Svan, Mengrelian and Laz), North Caucasian or Indo-European languages
- Medieval Georgian Hagiographic and Historical texts (Chronicles) Georgian folklore
- The development of secular genres in Georgian literature
- Georgian prose and poetry - past and present
- Attitudes of Georgians to Georgian Language
- The methodology of teaching Georgian as a second language
10:00 am – 11:10 am: Morning Session A

Opening Remarks
Catharine Nepomnyashchy, Director, Harriman Institute, Columbia University

Welcome
Irakli Alasania, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Georgia to the United Nations

Introduction
Ghia Nodia, Minister of Georgian Education and Sciences.

Keynote Address by Dr. Elguja Khintibidze, Professor of Tbilisi State University
*Georgian Literature in the General Context of Medieval Studies*

11:10am – 11:30 am: Coffee Break

11:30 am – 1:00 pm: Morning Session B

Chair: Tinatin Bochorishvili

Kevin Tuite, Université de Montréal
*The Ibero-Caucasian Hypothesis and the Post-Colonial Turn in Caucasian Studies*

Bela Tsipuria, Research Scholar, Georgian Ministry of Education and Sciences, Consultant
*Literature in Transitive Society*

Dodona Kiziria, Professor Emeritus Indiana University
*History as Literary Artifact and Political Drama*

Bert Beynen, Free Library of Philadelphia
*Dionysus, Rostom and Tariel: the Panther as Controlled Aggression.*

1:00 pm - 3:00 pm: Mid-day Break

3:00 pm - 4:20pm: Afternoon Session A

Chair: Elguja Khintibidze

Alice H. Harris, SUNY Stony Brook
*Why Linguists Love Georgian*

Tinatin Bolkvadze, Professor of Tbilisi State University
*Sociolinguistic Attributes of Georgian Language*

Eka Tchkoidze, Post Doctoral Fellow, Program in Hellenic Studies, Princeton University
*Georgian National Consciousness during the Middle Ages (According to the Materials of the so-called Georgian Athonite Hagiographic Texts)*

4:20 pm – 4:40 pm: Coffee Break
4:40 pm - 6:00 pm: Evening Session B

Chair: Bela Tsipuria

Ramaz Kurdadze, Fulbright scholar at New York State University at Stony Brook, *Towards the methodology of a practice book on Georgian as a foreign language*

Manana Jinjikhashvili, Georgian Language Instructor at LinguaListek *How much grammar is too much grammar?*

Tinatin Bochorishvili, Director of Rustaveli Foundation *Preserving the Mother Tongue*

**Announcement of the winners of the Award for Best Graduate and Doctoral Student Paper**
Catharine Nepomnyashchhy, Director, Harriman Institute, Columbia University

Closing Remarks

6:00pm - 7:30 pm: Reception

The reception features Georgian hors d'oeuvres

For details please contact Maka Dvalishvili at md2540@columbia.edu
RSVP appreciated but not required at md2540@columbia.edu