

# Proto-Kartvelian language

The **Proto-Kartvelian language**, or **Common Kartvelian** (Georgian: წინარეკართველური ენა, *tsinarekartveluri ena*), is the hypothetical common ancestor of the **Kartvelian languages** in the **Caucasus**, which was spoken by the ancestors of the modern **Kartvelian peoples**. The existence of such a language is widely accepted by specialists in linguistics, who have reconstructed a broad outline of the language by comparing the existing Kartvelian languages against each other.<sup>[1]</sup>

## 1 Influences

See also: **Proto-Indo-European language**

The **ablaut** patterns of Proto-Kartvelian are highly similar to those of the **Indo-European languages**, and so it is widely thought that Proto-Kartvelian interacted with Indo-European at a relatively early date. This is reinforced by a fairly large number of words borrowed from Indo-European, such as the Proto-Kartvelian *m̃kerd* (breast), and its possible relation to the Indo-European *kerd* (heart). Proto-Kartvelian \*tēp “warm” may also be directly derived from Indo-European \*tēp “warm”.<sup>[1]</sup> It is also asserted that the name of wine in Indo-European languages is borrowed from Proto-Kartvelian \*γwino, implicating quite close relations between these languages.

## 2 Relation to descendants

The modern descendants of Proto-Kartvelian are **Georgian**, **Svan**, **Mingrelian** and **Laz**. Of these, Mingrelian and Laz are often considered dialects of a single language, called **Zan**, although the two are not inherently mutually intelligible. The ablaut patterns of Proto-Kartvelian were better preserved in Georgian and (particularly) Svan than in either Mingrelian or Laz, in which new forms have been set up so that there is a single, stable vowel in each word element.<sup>[1]</sup>

The system of **pronouns** of Proto-Kartvelian is distinct on account of its category of inclusive–exclusive (so, for instance, there were two forms of the pronoun “we”: one that includes the listener and one that does not). This has survived in **Svan** but not in the other languages. Svan also includes a number of archaisms from the Proto-Kartvelian era, and therefore it is thought that Svan broke

off from Proto-Kartvelian at a relatively early stage: the later Proto-Kartvelian stage (called **Karto-Zan**) split into **Georgian** and **Zan** (Mingrelo-Laz).<sup>[1]</sup>

## 3 Phonology

### 3.1 Vowels

### 3.2 Consonants

## 4 References

- *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 15th edition (1986): *Macropedia*, “Languages of the World”, see section titled “Caucasian languages”.
- Fähnrich, H. (2002). *Kartwelische Wortschatzstudien*. Jena: Friedrich-Schiller-Universität.
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- Gamkrelidze, Th. & Machavariani, G. (1965). *The system of sonants and ablaut in Kartvelian languages (in Georgian and Russian)*. Tbilisi.
- Klimov, G. (1998). *Etymological Dictionary of the Kartvelian Languages*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.

## 5 Notes

- [1] Britannica
- [2] Gamkrelidze & Machavariani (1965)
- [3] Klimov (1998a), p. X
- [4] Gamkrelidze (1966), p. 70, 73, 80
- [5] Gamkrelidze (1966), p. 70
- [6] Fähnrich (2002), p. 5

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