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THE EFFECTS OF NEW TECHNOLOGIES ON CULTURE

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ABSTRACT

The new technologies have given rise to new forms of culture and changed attitudes towards reality and identity. Typography, woven into the urban fabric, together with architecture, presents us with the appearance of a modern city and describes the state of culture represented in this city. Typographic patterns on the streets, sometimes strictly structured, sometimes chaotically combined, tell us about the values and inclinations of subcultures in different layers. Typography as a visual narrative of the modern globalist city of Tbilisi is of paramount importance, reflecting socio-political, economic, legal, aesthetic, ethical, and cross-cultural contexts. The power of typography lies in the ability to imprint; this is the “stamp.” Because it needs to become "familiar," or identical, the evolution of a sign's visual form must be replicated everywhere in the same manner, imprinted. Comparative analysis methods reveal differences between the specific cultural patterns of different groups. Culture lies in the middle of these two extremes, researching stable elements of culture. Every cultural dimension has two opposing sides, each with unique characteristics, as demonstrated by the psychology and perception points of view in cultural research. For signs and typography, both graphical and in-depth analysis techniques are applied.

Keywords: Urban Typography, Culture, Alphabet, Imprint.

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INTRODUCTION

The relevance of the topic stems from the study of the processes taking place in this field, which is the most important direction of cultural creativity, modern design, within the framework of modern aestheticism. Examining Georgian typography and writing's present and future in light of emerging global issues. How Georgians' sociopolitical, economic, and artistic predicament represented in typography.

How do modern Georgian typography and writing reflect emerging global issues? The capital's urban typography, it turns out, reflects the socio-political, economic, and aesthetic dilemma of the nation. It is feasible to sketch the general features of a new local cultural regime based on introspection. The features of local culture are under a lot of pressure from new technologies in today's globalized world. A "superstructure" imposed on culture by foreign aesthetics, which impose their own standards. We have two processes in Tbilisi's urban typographic landscape: an internal process that comes from the organic growth of local writing and an external, global process that comes from fonts made based on the identity and motifs of Latin, Arabic, or other scripts. There are two major trends in the nation: fonts made locally and fonts inspired by the Arabic or Latin designs of foreign cultural representatives.

THE PROBLEM OF GEORGIAN TYPOGRAPHY TODAY

The existence and development of writing has always depended on new technologies. Moreover, the development of writing is unthinkable without technological innovations. At least, Gutenberg's printing press testifies to this fact. New technology based on a strong economy. First, this is "branding," where the company's logo needs to be displayed using the same typeface and design in every nation. In this situation, the brand's framework must use to accommodate the local writing and font. In such a case, the local writing and font placed in the framework provided by the brand. The graphic features in the framework affect the local alphabet and change its appearance and shape. On the one hand, local typography tries to keep up with global brands; on the other hand, designers and typographers cannot adapt the local version to foreign brands, which harms local writing, which represented in a degraded way in urban space.

Representatives of different cultures perceive a specific Western font differently. The design of the same font may be modern to a Georgian, but outdated to a European. When crossing cultures, the perception of images is different. Therefore, it is important to know how we perceive our own graphics so that we can understand the representation of our culture.

It is true that the Georgian alphabet and script, like the Western one, written from left to right and therefore all visual communication strongly influenced by this direction. In Georgian, as in Western culture, in general, any visual information red from left to right. However, the Georgian mythological scheme realized in a circle, roundness, and arc, while the Western one is realized in an angle and a square. Is it possible to find a middle ground between these two extremes? The Australian School and Theo van Leuven try to identify the unifying principles of the fundamental oppositions of the curve and the angular, the square and the circle. The circle and the curve denote the organic, i.e., mystical world. The square and the angular denote the

inorganic, the technological, and the rational, which, unlike the mystical, you can grasp, "understand." The organic world is not our creation. Therefore, it is an element of mystery. Curved shapes are characteristic of people who think in terms of organic growth, which is more natural than artificial. In the realm of art, this is known as "biomorphic abstractionism". These are the “technological” and “natural” poles, and their values differ. The square, a symbol of power and progress, denotes technology either positively or negatively—that which oppresses us, “imprisons” us (e.g., a prison).

If the pressure continues and local designers and typographers fail to overcome conceptual challenges and find a visual “salvation,” the Georgian script will face obstacles. Namely, it will no longer resemble itself, lose its connection with its own characteristics, and become alienated.

A global brand such as H&M, which represented in the urban space of the Georgian capital, does not have an exact correspondence between the Georgian and Latin versions (Photo 1.). In the case of H&M, the typographer translated the ampersand (&) into Georgian, thus making the brand “domestic.” For instance, Indian typographers have similar reservations about Devanagari. They believe that Devanagari is not a secondary design of the Latin script. It is a more complex script than Latin. Simplifying it to match Latin, of course, makes identification difficult.

A targeted survey conducted on the visual nature of brand signs in urban spaces revealed that adolescents (15-17 years old) and students believe that the “Zara” font is rather aggressive (Photo 2). Artists, teachers of the Academy of Arts, also believe that the “Zara” lettering is not friendly. The reason for this may be the additional strokes that accompany the lettering. Only two of the surveyed artists believe that the “Zara” typography is artistic, which is a completely different characteristic. A font can be both aggressive and artistic at the same time.

One of the main issues today is the compatibility of Georgian and Western alphabets and the linguistic, typographical, and ethical problems of their joint use.

Unlike the bilingual Georgian and English signs on other streets of Tbilisi, a large part of the signs and inscriptions of urban artisans contain Russian (Cyrillic) inscriptions. The reason for this is the older generation of artisans, among whom there are many of Armenian or Russian origin. This is the only segment in Tbilisi that uses Cyrillic in urban space. Artisans’ hands create signs and inscriptions that stand out for their vibrant graphic lines. However, these samples undoubtedly represent a colorful, characteristic niche of the urban life of the capital.

At the same time, we must take into account that the "transformed" identities created by Soviet scientists towards the alphabet and writing still have an impact today and continue to influence various foreign and Georgian contemporary scientific circles.

Modern Georgian typography has emerged as a living connection between the alphabet and our capital's current visual environment. This research led to the creation of a visual narrative of the city that reflected Georgian culture. From this, we can point out the perspectives of the modern Georgian alphabet and writing. We must comprehend the fundamentals of Georgian typography in order to comprehend the problem more fully.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE ALPHABET AND TYPOGRAPHY

The ideas on the origin of the alphabet from antiquity to the present day constitute a bibliographical chain, including the Georgian alphabet. As assumed, writing and the alphabet played an important role in the formation of the Georgian nation and its culture, and due to the scarcity of early epigraphic monuments and historical references, a sequential analysis of the creation of writing and its formation into a unified culture is difficult. The question of whether a cultural discourse on the Georgian alphabet and writing is feasible or not is also up for debate, given the archaeological evidence that discovered recently.

In her 2022 book, "The History of the Alphabet," University of California researcher Joanna Drucker notes, "the spread of the alphabet over time and geography makes it one of the most important inventions of humanity. However, when confronted with the forces of normalization and colonization, it turns destructive. Education is power, and oppression, as well as liberalization. The alphabet is a way of organizing information and knowledge within a framework of standards that becomes so organic that the problem of its acceptance disappears. Nevertheless, the alphabet's durability and flexibility are easily noticeable features of its identity.

In the modern era, when writing has moved into the space of technology (external machines) (computer fonts), the fact is that the alphabet, which is also a technology of writing, has acquired a new dimension, and the technique of writing itself has become possible only through an external technological process. This form of communication with the alphabet and the technology of recording made it obvious that there was a need to study new forms of visual signification. Calligraphy (which had been elevated to the height of graphic art) replaced by computer fonts, which also became the field of activity of artists and designers.

As Darker observes, in the context of current developments, where the decolonization of knowledge is a familiar theme, the alphabet no longer considered a neutral technology. More clearly, the alphabet is a complex system of culture, the control of which is partly instrumental, partly accidental, and sometimes purposefully exercised with positive or negative effects. Any regime of literacy grants or takes away power. Nevertheless, the right to the alphabet will endure as long as cultures are engaged in memory and communication — because what is precious, unique, and universal preserved by the existence of the alphabet. The alphabet as an artefact has coexisted with many global systems over a long historical period. The letter-sign as a "seal"(stamp).

The development of the visual form of the sign, which must be repeated everywhere in the same way, is imprinted, because it must become "familiar," identical. The identity of the letter-sign determined by typography. It creates a set of "stamps," a frame in a once-established form, which does not change when imprinted on different media, be it paper, wood, or digital media— where today we have a sea of digital "stamps" placed. Digital media has increased the space where "imprints" are placed, making the volume "boundless."

What is a "stamp," an "imprint" in its essence? The mirrored, "inverted" form, which is characteristic of graphic art, and organic for such graphic fields as engraving, etching, lithography, and others, implies the mirrored execution of the imprinted image on the material; the "printing" form, created and "stored," becomes representable, repeatable. The "printing,"

like a mother, can endlessly give birth to a new version of its “child,” an inverted copy, an image, or an artistic composition, which is its mirror analogue. That is, the idea stored on the “matrix” “awakens,” is born only because of consumption, “awakening.” Specifically, a mirror-like, inverted version of the creator's composition is engraved on the selected material (wood, linoleum, or zinc), covered with typographic (printing) ink, placed in an easel, covered with paper or cardboard, and held under the easel's press, "imprinting" this "inverted version" onto the sheet.

The fields of classical graphics (rightfully) bear the typographic principle. Because the "creation of letters and characters," typography, traditionally includes graphics, graphic design, and graphic art in its essence. Moreover, it is an integral branch of graphics.

The graphic artist creates a “typeface,” a “font,” which is directly the construction of a letter-sign, the artistic appearance of letter. While the typographer “arranges” the letter-signs in relation to each other, creating a single order, where the developed rule is repeated in the forms of letters and between them, turning into a law of general expression (for example, the thickness of the font lines is 1.3 mm), which creates a common style. The artist-designer-typographer is that sectoral bond of graphics in which the letter-sign passes before its “birth,” before its “birth” on the easel or in digital space. Putting each letter-sign within visual boundaries, frames is equivalent to turning it into a seal, and we very often encounter or “encounter” the set of seals in everyday life and “read” them, perceiving them mainly as verbal information. In many cases, we have a reduced ability to perceive typographic patterns graphically, to understand visual information. The reason for this reduction in ability is the education system, which reorganized from a verbal to a visual representation system. In order to train the “reduced” ability to perceive visual information, students of the Tbilisi State Academy of Arts’ Graphic Arts Department given an exercise: to alienate themselves from the meanings of letters and symbols and their verbal meanings, which can only be achieved by analyzing numerous examples and artistic searches.

The “seal” stores information, the encoded content, in the material and form in which it was created. As soon as the seal print used for its intended purpose, that is, as soon as imprinted, the visual information is revealed, the purpose of the seal is fulfilled, but its decoding, what content the image carries, is almost impossible without prior preparation. The “captured” code that the seal stores revealed only to the entrusted, the initiated, who can read it, receive it.

In today’s profane world, at first glance, the number of "initiates" corresponds to the mass, but in reality, this is not the case. The new task for the initiate is to read and "collect" the codes scattered in the sea of information, i.e., to process and clean the verbal-visual flood of information, to separate the code from the unnecessary mass, and to "leave it." Thus, the sunken or scattered codes are "retrieved" from the bottom of the information ocean.

Therefore, the power of the coded "seal" is distributed over large spaces, while at the same time the "candidate" is on the path of "initiation." To increase its power, he can imprint the code within himself, figuratively speaking, only by swimming in the waters of the information ocean.

The “seal” placed in a homogeneous and “colorless” mass, multiplied and distributed in the digital sea. It is simultaneously simple and difficult to understand because it is built on “algorithms” (an algorithmic game?).

The digital seal does not have any distinctive form or character. It is as uniform as the masses of people for whom it is intended. The digital seal is available to anyone who can access digital machines. Nevertheless, it cannot be decoded by just verbal reading. It is a kind of paradox; the simplest is the most difficult—picking out a sea of decoded seals is like walking a mythological path.

In the old days, we had a rare device that operated through a mechanical process—a printing press. Today, at the Tbilisi Academy of Arts, the printing presses in the graphic direction perform the same task in principle, although we do not have the seals cast in the form of letters and symbols, which also had to be placed in a mirror image in the press to obtain a “correct” image. The letter seal is associated with the signet, a visual icon, a modern "image," one of the original purposes of which was to mark the owner's product, equivalent to a laconic and minimalist signature, with the message "I created this (I create this)," where it would gain "recognition" (earthenware, coin, etc.).

Let me give you an example of branding again: gaining recognition for a brand remains a relevant and primary task today. Therefore, in today's "branding," which serves to gain a niche of distinction and uniqueness, an irreplaceable role is played by a seal, in the form of a logo, and a set of letter seals, which are specially made for the brand name. Graphic designers and typography art masters create letter seals. The goal of their creativity is to identify the graphically and typographically developed brand name among many thousands of other companies, where the form is revealed along with the content. Simply put, create a different style and appearance based on the mission and concept of a given brand. For example, a new technology company presents with a different typography than a construction, clothing, or other industry company.

Handwriting and the use of paper led us from monumental “Asomtavruli” to “Mkhedruli” script. Fact approved by performing a simple graphic exercise. Since the typography freely allowed in Georgian urban space excludes handwriting and is closer to carving (using new technologies and materials), urban script, to some extent, “returns” to the principles of monumentalism. As a universal script existing through the open air, it displays itself through monumental execution.

It is an interesting question whether this great turn towards modern "monumentalism" will teach or make possible the semantic overloading of Georgian alphabetic signs, which have long served the service of verbal representation, i.e., liberation from the yoke of the signifier. At the same time, the interdependence (interaction) of Georgian urban typography with Latin typography is in the spotlight and is an object of study. The “tandem” of the two alphabetic systems is today comprehensive, i.e., it is found at every step.

THE FUTURE OF THE GEORGIAN ALPHABET AND TYPOGRAPHY

If we accept that typography is a reflection of culture in a broad sense, it can help us understand where we are and where we are going. The popularity of a certain typeface style is a cultural nostalgia, often accompanied by economic recession. Visual perception is the result of communication. That is the cultural perception of type. Type is a resource that graphic designers use, just as architects use glass, stone, steel, and other materials.

Today, in the age of increasing visual representation, the verbal era is a two-thousand-year-old "tradition." As left behind, and this is precisely what is being discussed. A visual sign also carries connotation, just like a word written in letters and symbols. The new generation of the country, teenagers, receives information mainly not verbally, but visually, and there is no alternative to this path (or influence). It must be said that the advent of the visual era has not yet been reflected in Georgian schools or in universities, including the Tbilisi State Academy of Arts, which has a completely new and key function in the Georgian cultural space transformed in the visual era.

The Georgian alphabet has proven to be a means of Georgian identity and expression that has withstood the test of time. Despite difficulties and some effort, it has found its niche in the digital world. Today, the Georgian alphabet has a mainly verbal purpose. And only because of Western influences we do have visual analogues. In other words, today the Georgian alphabet not fully endowed with a visualization tool (connotative function).

If the verbal era is being replaced by the visual era, and many already agree on this, even numerous opponents who fear that education is in serious danger (“probability” or „what-about-ism“), then we should all think about expanding the purpose of the Georgian script and the functions it can carry. Is there a danger of a decrease in the use of the Georgian alphabet? How much and in what language does a young Georgian citizen read? Are the problems of non-verbal education felt? Questions arise that declare the future of Georgian verbal culture and give rise to concern. According to Georgian scientist Lela Piralishvili, the alphabet is a graphic description of linguistic vibration. The Georgian alphabet is a visible form of the inner voice; this “youself” speaks. When we “recognize” it (read it) with its revived code, we “recognize” and understand our native, and then the entire world. That is, the world in which the will to exist expresses itself is described, expressed for us in Georgian letters-signs. Of course, any other alphabet is also the building blocks of the world.

CONCLUSION

The Georgian alphabet is the instrument, the matrix, that creates, gives flesh to the world we construct. It is the mold through which form—three-dimensionality, the prerequisite for the execution of form and force. What awaits the Georgian alphabet in the era of artificial intelligence? Who will create the modern Georgian font(s), a designer, a typographer, or AI? Rethinking the purpose of the Georgian alphabet as the most powerful key to identity—i.e., the question of whether the Georgian alphabet today is such a powerful tool of visualization that it can join and support the global visual era that is already established in the world, which is not fully realized in the country.

The state of Georgian typography directly reflects Georgia's socio-political problems and the country's place on the regional and world map. Here, the country's attempt to keep up with global processes is clearly visible, despite the fact that it also wants to preserve its own uniqueness. The two extremes, following global trends and conservative approaches, cannot lead us to the horizon of the future if we do not move towards new perspectives of creative search. Accumulated knowledge is the main factor that new technologies and the present have brought. The only problem is that accumulated knowledge equally shares with us the false or true, or superficial or unnecessary knowledge that humanity has accumulated abundantly over

the centuries. Every effort should be focused on gathering and analyzing the necessary historical and contemporary knowledge.



Figure 1. "H&M" Tbilisi



Figure 2. "Zara" Tbilsi

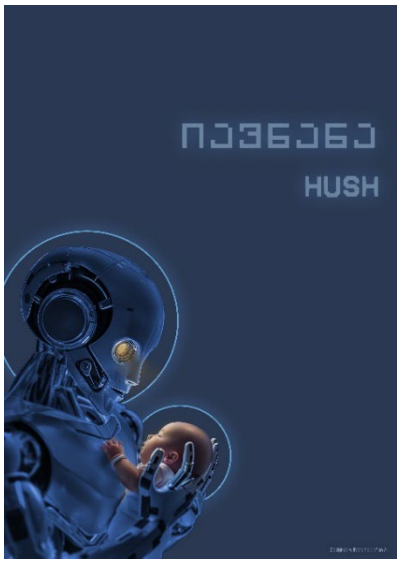


Figure 3. "Hush" author: Ana Lalishvili



Figure 4. "Welcome to the brave new world" by Baia Sikharulidze

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