

Mount Khvamli – a Cultural-Mystical Product of the Development of Sustainable Tourism in Georgia



Grigol Robakidze
University

Prof. Maka Piranashvili
Prof. Lamara Kadagidze
Prof. Nodar Grdzlishvili



Mankind has always been driven by myths and legends with great interest triggered worldwide stipulated by a subconscious desire and aspiration to uncover, discover and/or recover something unique and unknown.



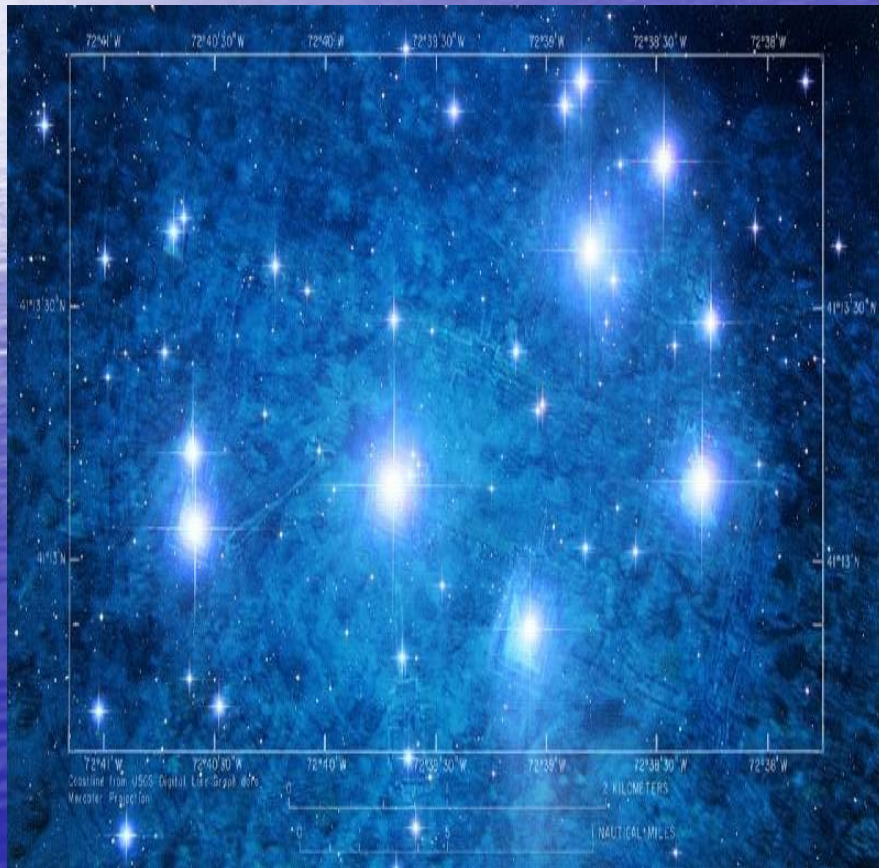
Psychologists assert a human being easily and simply memorizes a strange, mystical and distinguished story arousing certain emotions causing a desire to share it. That is why many countries of the world have started offering mystics related intangible resources as tourist products and we consider Georgia, being notably rich in the sphere, has great prospects to enable cultural-mystical tourism to be pushed forward.



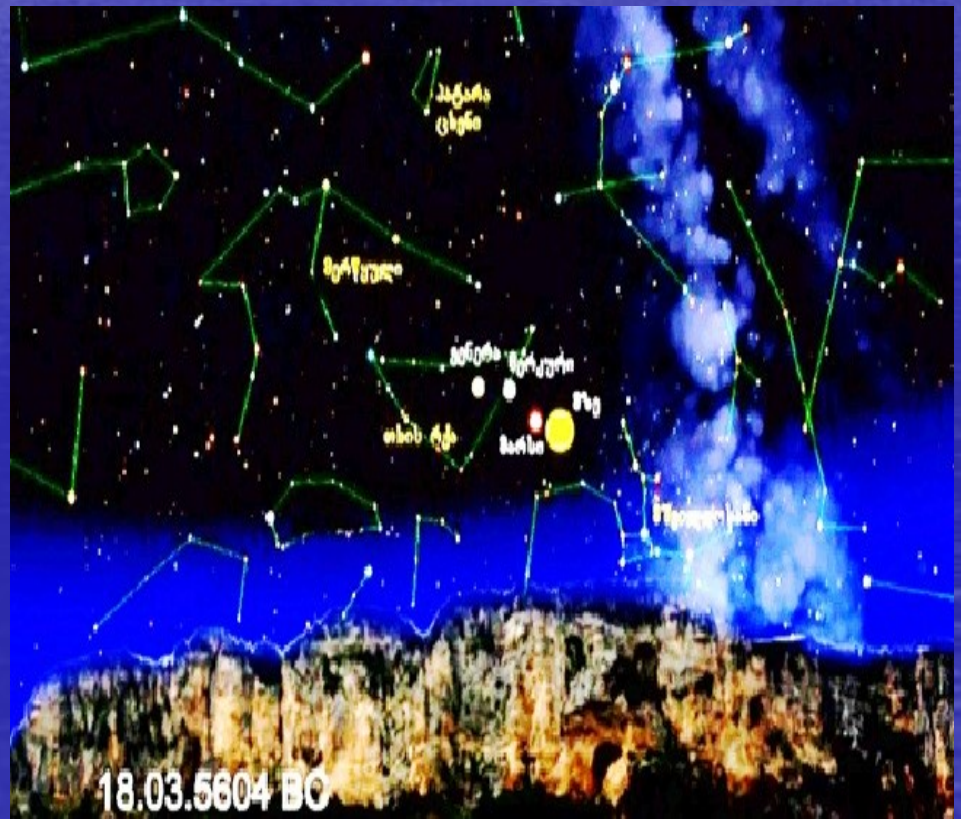
Rock massif of Khvamli is situated in Lechkhumi between the ravines of the rivers Rioni and Tskhenistskali. The highest point above sea level is 2002 meters. The rock massif is grown up off the ground on 300 meters impressing the viewer splendidly. Mount Khvamli of Georgian highlands is a wonder with various mystical narrations related to it. It is said to be the oldest treasuries of kings; the Argonauts Trip and name of Prometheus are also linked with it; it might be Atlanta or the city of Aratta of Sumerians. Locals determine the weather by the mount and respect it as the dwelling place of the god of weather and thunderstorm, etc.



During the expedition to Mount Khvamli some pictograms were discovered on the walls of the castle-cave with the images of zodiac signs: “Aquarius”, “Capricorn” Mercury on a horse and Venus the same Isis and Osiris or “Archer”, a small horse and a warrior with a spear or the same Mars, the symbol of the Sun and the key drawn in a square resembling Ankh or the key of the Nile (breath of life).



The scientists and explorers from the expedition exploited a special astronomical program and restored the image of stars on the sky of 5604 BC when the organization of Mercury, Venus, Mars and Archer precisely coincide with the scheme of the Khvamli cave pictogram. The noted year also matches with the last flood occurred on the Earth and the start-off of Sumerians and Georgians until up-to-date or the birth of Christ. The fact generated an assumption that the image on the wall depicts a new astronomical picture of the period after the flood. The documentary filmed by the expedition reveals and asserts to confirm the noted fact.



Even today nobody knows precisely what was behind the German move when in 1942 the government of Germany implemented an unjustified maneuver and landed troops in the Caucasus Mountains. One version claims they were searching for secret relics in the mountains. If we consider Hitler's attitude towards mystical venues the opinion will seem appropriate. Based on an unofficial report in 1939 delegated by Stalin a famous mountain climber Aliosha Japaridze headed to survey the Khvamli cave accompanied by 2 workers but it is unknown what he saw there. Mount Khvamli, on top of all the above mentioned, hides one more mystery of either vanishing or dying of several explores.



There is one more legend connected to the river “Verdzistava” (meaning the head of the Ram) taking its premise from Mount Khvamli. The legend says once shepherds threw the head of the sacrificed ram on the top of the waterfall. The waterfall streams in the gorge of the Rioni River for 6 months and in the gorge of the Tskhenistskali River for the other 6 months. Old Lechkhumi dwellers also narrate that the waterfall changes its direction because the Dev (a giant ogre) lies in the premise and changes the sides while sleeping.



Moreover, Lechkhumi region (nearby Mount Khvamli) may attract catholic Christians along with Orthodox ones, since the grave of St. Maxime is also the subject of interest for pilgrim tourists. All the above mentioned will foster the development of cultural-mystical and religious tourism in Georgia and increase the image and popularization of the country.



Therefore, it is inevitable to carry out excavations enabling Mount Khvamli to be enlisted next to the discoveries of the old world history such as Troy, Jericho, Göbekli Tepe.



Highlands of Georgia are considered to be a treasure of the world cultural heritage in terms of architectural monuments, models of community life, crafts or unique samples of folklore. Therefore they can be regarded as the sphere of sustainable tourism. Its diverse natural resources enable the development of adventurous tourism for climbers, hikers, cliffhangers. Besides Mount Khvamli there are Askhi and Svaneti highland gorges. Rafting is also possible on the rivers Rioni and Tskhenistskali; as well as camping, hunting, fishing. The routes and itineraries need to be processed, hiking tours to be organized and hotels and other accommodation means need to be constructed in order to provide tourists with adequate shelters according to the level of comfort and their personal desire.



Lechkhumi region highlands of Georgia have more than 250 churches and historical-cultural monuments along with 3 museums of country studies offering vast information to tourists about the history and culture of the region. We think development of mystical, sustainable or adventurous tourism will foster the rational utilization of natural resources; will increase the employment range, growth of revenues and bring new investments as soon as all these resources are entirely assimilated and implemented.



Thank you for your precious attention!

