

**Proto-Kartvelian and Proto-Indo-European Plant-Names**  
**(the conifers: fir, fir (-tree), pine (-tree))**

**Marine Ivanishvili**

(G. Tsereteli Institute of Oriental Studies, GAS)

[m\\_ivanishvili@yahoo.com](mailto:m_ivanishvili@yahoo.com)

**The Table of Proto-Kartvelian and Proto-Indo-European**  
**Plant Names**

<b>Botanical Species</b>	<b>Kartvelian Stems</b>	<b>Indo-European Steams</b>
<b>Trees</b>		
“The alder (-tree)” ( <i>Alnus Gaertn</i> ) («ольха»)	*txam-/*txm̄el-, “The alder (tree)”;	*eliso-/*aliso-, *uer-n-, “The alder (-tree)”;
“The apple” ( <i>Malus pumila Mill</i> ) («яблоня, яблоко»)	*wašl̄- “The apple”;	*āblu-, *āb(a)lo-/*aplu-, *ap(a)la-, *šam(a)lu-, “The apple”;
“The ash” ( <i>Fraxinus L.</i> ) («ясень»)	*ipn-, “The ash”;	*Hos-, “The ash” (In Greek and maybe in Albanian happened the transfer of meaning from `the ash" → ”to the beech", what recalled the range of semantic movings;
“The aspen” ( <i>Populus tremula L.</i> ) («асина») “The poplar” ( <i>Populus nigra L.</i> ) («тополь»)	*werxw-, “The aspen”, “The poplar”;	*(H)osp <sup>[h]</sup> -, “The aspen”, “The poplar”;
“The beech” ( <i>Fagus silvatica L.</i> ) («бук»)	*çip-, „The beech”	*b <sup>[h]</sup> erHk̄o-, “The beech”;
“The birch” ( <i>Betula L.</i> ) («берёза»)	*ç̄i aq̄i -, “guilder rose”, “snow-ball-tree”; («калина») “The birch”	*b <sup>[h]</sup> erHk̄-, “the birch”, “the skin of birch”, “the elm” also: “lights”, “shines”, “brights”.

<p>“The conifers”: “fir(-tree)”;  “silver fir”; “fir”; “ pine  (-tree)” (Picea L.), (Abies Mill),  (Pinus L.)  («ель», «сосна», «пихта»)</p>	<p>*naʒw-, “fir (-tree)”,  soč- “silver fir”,  pičw- “pine (-tree)”;</p>	<p>*p<sup>[h]</sup>eu̯k<sup>[h]</sup>/*p<sup>[h]</sup>u̯k<sup>[h]</sup>/*p<sup>[h]</sup>it<sup>[h]</sup>-, “silver fir”,  “pine (-tree)”;  *ed<sup>[h]</sup>lo-, “the conifers”,  “fir (-tree)”;</p>
<p>“The cornel(-tree)", ”the cherry”  (Cornus mascula L.), (Cerasus  avium L).  (Prunus cerasus; Cerasus vulgaris  Mill.)  («кизил», «черешня, вишня»)</p>	<p>*šüind-/ *šind-,  “The cornel (-tree)",    *bal-, “The cherry”;</p>	<p>*k<sup>[h]</sup>mo-, “The cornel (-tree)",  “cherry”;</p>
<p>“the elm” (Ulmus foliacea Gilib.)  («вяз», «ильм», «берест»)</p>	<p>*ca-, “The elm”;</p>	<p>*wýg-, *Vlmo-, “The elm”;</p>
<p>“The hazel”, “nuts”  (Corylus avellana L.),  («ореховое дерево, орех»)</p>	<p>*txil-, “nut”;  *kaḳ-al-, “walnut”;</p>	<p>*k<sup>[h]</sup>os(e)lo-, “nut”,  “walnut” (plant),  *q<sup>[h]</sup>ar-, *k<sup>[h]</sup>neṷ-, (Fruit);</p>
<p>“The hornbeam”  (Carpinus L.)  («граб»)</p>	<p>*kṛcxeml̥-, “The hornbeam”,  “rcxila (modern Georgian)”;</p>	<p>*(s)k`rōb<sup>[h]</sup>o-“The hornbeam”;</p>
<p>“The lime(-tree),” “linden”  (Tilia) («липа»)</p>	<p>*ʒacxw-, “The lime (-tree)",  “linden”;</p>	<p>*lenta□-, *le□ipa□- “The lime (-tree)",  “Linden” (doubtful stems);</p>
<p>“The maple”  (Acer L.) («клен»)</p>	<p>*ne-kerčx-a-, “The maple”;</p>	<p>*KL-n-, *klen-,  *akvmo-, “The maple”;</p>
<p>“The mulberry(-tree)"  (Morus L.)  («тутовое дерево»)</p>	<p>Tuta-, (bžol-(a) in dialects) “The  mulberry" (-tree);</p>	<p>*mōro-, *yṛd<sup>[h]</sup>o-s-  “The mulberry (-tree)”;</p>
<p>“The tree”, “the oak”  (Quercus L.)  («дерево», «дуб»)</p>	<p>*ʒ̥iel-, “tree”, “oak”;  *c̥i.qan-, “oak”;  muxa- in old and modern Georgian  substituted stem “oak”;  *kṛḳo- ,rḳo’ – ‘acorn’ (in some  dialects ‘oak’) («желудь»)</p>	<p>*t`e/oru-, *t`re/ou-, “tree“, “oak“ (inact.  cl.)  *p<sup>[h]</sup>erk<sup>[h]</sup>ü/*p<sup>[h]</sup>eru-, “oak“,  “forest“ (act. kl.);  *aik-, “oak” (substituted stem);  *kelH- “acorn” (fruit); Comp. Ital. Kērkus:  Lat. quercus; Ven. Qarquēni;</p>

“the willow” (Salix L.) («ива», «ветла»)	*ʒeç <sub>1</sub> n- “The willow”, “The white willow”;	*s̊(e)lik- “The willow”, “The white willow”;
“The yew” (Taxus) («тис»)	*urtxel-, “The yew”;	*e <sub>1</sub> -/*o <sub>1</sub> (with *-u <sub>o</sub> -, *-k <sup>[h]</sup> o-, *-o- suffixes) “the yew”;
<b>Cultivated Plants and Corn</b>		
“The flax”, “The hemp” (Linium usitatissimum L.), (Cannabis sativa L.) («лен», «конопля»)	*sel-, “The flax”; (*kan-, “The hemp” _ migratory term);	* ĩno - “The flax ”; *san-, *gan-/ *kan-, “The hemp”;
“The grain”, ”the barley” (Hordeum L.) («зерно», «ячмень»)	qndur-, qadur-, “corn” (<”pea”); (Old. Georg. krtil-, Moder. Georg. ker-; Megr. ker-; Svan. çəmin-/k̄er-) “The barley”;	*Hat’-, “corn” *i <sub>e</sub> u <sub>o</sub> -; *g̃ <sup>[h]</sup> (e)rd <sup>[h]</sup> -/g̃ <sup>[h]</sup> rd <sup>[h]</sup> - “The burley”;
“The millet”, “The rye”, “The oats” (Panicum miliuceum L.); (Secale ce- reale L.); (Avena L.); («просо», «рожь», «овес»)	*Petü-, “Millet”; *_ (Georg. çüav -; Megr. çüe-; Svan. manăš-); *_ (Old. Georg. šüriva-/ šuriva-; Modern. Georg. šwria-; Svan. mäčičxu-, zəntx-) “The oats”;	*mel-, “Millet”; *urug <sup>[h]</sup> o - “The rye”; (Lat. auēna, Lit. aviža, Lat. àuza, Prus. wyse, Russ. овьсь, Russ. овес “The oats”);
“The pumpkin” (Cucurbita) («тыква»)	*aqa- “The sort of pumpkin”; *k̄wax “The pumpkin”- (dialect.); (Mod. Georg. gogra-, “gogra”);	*ga(r)gra-, “water vessel”, “churn of butter”, “oil ress”;
“The vine”, “the vineyard” (Vitis) («виноградная лоза», «виноградник»)	*uenaq-, (“The vine”), “the vineyard”;	*u <sub>e</sub> jn-ăk’- (Slaw. vinjaga- “vine”);
“The wheat” (Triticum L.) («пшеница»)	*ipkl-, “The wheat”;	*p <sup>[h]</sup> ūr - “The wheat” (migratory term);

<b>Bushes and Moss</b>		
<p>“The juniper” (Juniperus) («можжевательник»)</p>	<p>*jüü-, *jüi-, The juniper”;</p>	<p>*ɥei-(*hɥei-) “The juniper”;</p>
<p>“The moss” (mūscus) («мох»)</p>	<p>*putk-, “The moss”, “blister”, “rash”, “drizzled”, “moistened”, Comp. *pu-, “boil”, “fermentation”; Georg. putur(o)- “rotten”, “dump, humid” (Modern Georg. xavs-, “The moss”);</p>	<p>*m(e)us-, “the moss”, “the plant of bog”, “Swamp, marsh”, “mould, moustiness”, «плесень»; Comp. *pñ-tro- &lt; *pñ “rot” (Klimov G., 1994:145);</p>

- (1) Al. Makashvili. Botanical Dictionary (1961): *naɣvi* (*Picea*, *Picea orientalis* L.), Sb. elati, bl. rač. cvela, čan., megr. *nuzu*; svn. *nezvra*, γumir.
- (2) The old Georgian manuscripts: “მოსცა ძელი ნაძვსად და მაშენებელნი ზღუდეთანი და ხურონი ძელისა, რადთა უშენონ მას სახლი” M, I par. 14, 1; “გარდამოიღონ ნაძვსა ძელი ღიბანით” O, I Ez. 4, 48; “მე დამკვდრებულ ვარ სახლსა შინა ნაძვსასა” M, I par. 17, 1; “მიძღუანე მე ძელი ნაძვსად, ფიჭვ და ნაძვ- ღიბანით II par. 2, 8. ნაძოვანი – “კედრონი”; ნაძვებიანი ადგილი; “გამოვიდა მოწაფეთა მისთა თანა წიად ჰვესა მას ნაძოვანსა” DE, – “განვიდა მოწაფითურთ თვსით წიად ჰვესა მას კედრონისასა” C, I. 18, 1.
- (3) Sulkhan – Saba Orbeliani’s dictionary (XVII c., publ. 1928): *naɣû* (naɣvi ZABCbqDE) (tree) (+1, 16 canticum ZAB) ZABCDE. *elati* (tree) *naɣvi* ZABCD.
- (4) P. Charaia’s Megrelian – Georgian dictionary (1997): *nuzu* – fir (-tree), *nuzoni* – fir-wood.
- (5) V. Topuria, M. Kaldani, Svan Dictionary (2000): *nenz* (is, -ar) up. sv. botan. Silver fir, დწჷს ხოშა ნენზ ჩერიდ ხუღჷე (ბზ. 406) – დევს დიდი სოჭი თითისტარად აქვს, Deu has a big silver fir as a spindle. ცხეკისვა ხავ ხოშა ლადლდ ღუმირ, ნენზ ი გგობ (Low. B. 70) – ტყეში მეტწილად არის ნაძვი, სოჭი და ფიჭვი, There are mainly fir, silver fir and pine in the forest.
- (6) H. Fähnrich, S. Sarjveladze., Etimological Dictionary of the Kartvelian Languages (2000): \**naɣû* - : Georg. *naɣu-nazu-i*; *naɣ-ov-an-i*; *naɣv-i* (moder. Georg.). megr. *naɣu-* /*nuzu-*, *nuɣu/nuzu* “fir-tree”; svn. *nezû- nezû-ra* “fir-tree”. Megrelian *nuɣu-* (<\**noɣû-*, o>u by the T. Gudava’s rule (1960, 119-120), *nuzu*<*nuɣu*, desafricatisation and svan. *nezû*.

- (7) ) G. Klimov, M. Khalilov, Dictionary of Caucasus Languages (2003): Batsbian *naɣw* and Udian *naɣw* – “fir (-tree)” are borrowed from Georgian. Compare Georg. *pičv*-i and similar forms in other Kartvelian languages with Mid. Greek *πιτυζ* ‘pine (-tree)’; Megr. *noč-r*; Svan. *t axra*; Batsb. from Georg. *pičv-r*. In many Caucasian languages the meaning of this root is “lamp”, “candle tree”.
- (8) Ars. Oniani, Trees and Plants Svan Names Dictionary (1917): in Petrograd: *γumūr* lech. “pine or fir”; *γumūlra* lech. “pine tree or fir tree”. *t axtra* lech. “male pine or fir”. *nezūra* lech. “female pine or fir”. *leymur* “where many pines and firs are”. *γumūri t iḵ*, *γumūri x ûem* ღუმურს ხოწიბ მურგუღლ ღარი მუჯღღრა, ღუმური ღწში ღი აღე. კწღს: ჭიჭღბა (ღსღ.) “An oblong, roundish (penis) is hanging on it and this is firs’ seed (cone)”.
- (9) V. Topuria, M. Kaldani, Svan Dictionary (2000): *γumir* (-*mriš* up. Svn., -*mräl* up. b., -*mrär* low. b., -*iš*, -*äl* Int.), *γomir* (-*äš*, -*äl*) up. b., *γumūr* (-*al*) lshkh. – fir. ღახტბად ღუმრი ღიკცხე წწცხწღეს (up. b. 401) – “The brothers preferred to cut off the fir”. გიერგღღ ღომრწ აწსღღღეი ჩტაყტრა (up. b. 314) – “George was lying on the branch of the fir”. ცხეკისგა ხაგ ღუმირ (low. b.. 70) – “There is a fir in the forest”. ნწმეი ღუმურს ხოწღენი (lshkh. 24) \_ “Gum comes out of the fir”. ეხა ეიქან ღიხ ღუმირღწ ცხეკწრ (Int. 4) – “Above it there are fir forests diminutive *jumril*. – ეჯი კოტოღ ღუმრიღ ირი (poetry. 308) \_ “It should be a little fir”. *nezû* (-*iš*, -*är* up. svn., Int., ar - lshkh). *zool* – *nezvi*. *nenz* (-*iš*, -*är*) up. svn., bot. – silver fir (see above). *taxra* (-*rāš*, -*rēl*) lshkh., bot.1. male fir or pine. მუგტად ტახრა ღუმურს ხოხად ი გგგგღს (lshkh. khor. 17) \_ “The male fir and pine also have the pretzel”. 2. Caucasian silver fir.
- (10) K. Dondua, Svan-Georgian-Russian Dictionary (2001): *γumūr* -*iš*= (conifer plant (pine, fir, silver fir), *nezv(r)*, -*iš*, -*ar* – *nezvi* [female pig]. *nezvra* – pine; *t ax(r)* -*iš*, -*ar* – *t axi* [male pig]. *t axra* – fir.
- (11) In I. Nijaradze, Russian-Svan Dictionary (1910): *γumir* - fir; *leymir* – fir – wood;
- (12) On the base of the analysis of given data we can suppose that *γumūr* // *γumir* // *γomir* stems in Svan should have been a common name for conifers. *nenz/nezūra* – “female pine, fir or silver fir”, *t axra* – “male pine, fir or silver fir”. If not the ending suffix-*ra* of plants in Svan, above given stems by form and meaning coincides “*nezvi*” and “*t axi*”, correspondingly denoting female and male pigs’ names.

We think that the accent on the lexical gender is the recall of the very ancient time when trees and among them the conifers were the objects of idolization. Compare the same picture of the distribution for the names of vine: *mamali rkaçiteli* “male rkaçiteli (sort of vine)”, *dedali rkaçideli*: “female rkaçiteli”, *unaqopo vazi* – “avrezi” (fruitless vine) Sb.

So, the Kartvelian roots of conifers saved the oldest memory of the period of mankind culture, which is lost now in many cases. Though, while arising the question about the borrowing roots from Indo-European in Kartvelian or vice versa, beside the pure linguistic facts such kind of philological and cultural evidences help us to choice more exact decision.

(13) Conclusion:

- The ancient imaginations of trees adoration are connected to the Kartvelian roots of “conifers”.
- From all Indo-European dialects isolated stems – the old Iranian *nauča* and the later Persian *nājjū*, also Osetian *næzy*, Batsb *nažv* and Udian *nažw...* are borrowed from Kartvelian languages.
- The Proto-Kartvelian and Proto-Indo-European roots of the common and separate species denoting “conifers” show the similar semantic distribution and removing of the meanings, i.e. is presented the same typological picture for these language families.