

The aim of the Bulletin is to introduce to the wider public the scientists working in geography and cartography in Georgia, as well as important scientific events.

**This issue of the Bulletin is dedicated to the memory of Alexander Aslanikashvili – world-renowned scientist in the field of cartographic theory, and one of the founders of cartosemiotics.**

## Alexander Aslanikashvili – 110

Founder of Cartosemiotics

### Brief Biographical Information

Alexander Aslanikashvili (1916-1981) was a Georgian geographer and cartographer, PhD in Geography, Professor at Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University (TSU), Head of the Chair of Cartography at the Vakhusti Bagrationi Institute of Geography, and Director (1979-1981) of the same institute. He was also a Corresponding Member of the Academy of Sciences of Georgia, Vice President of the Georgian Geographical Society.

In 1930s, Alexander Aslanikashvili began working as a cartographer in the Transcaucasian Geodesy Department. From 1935 to 1939, he studied at the Faculty of Geography and Geology of TSU. After graduating with honors in 1939, he was appointed an assistant at the Chair of Cartography and Topography.

During World War II, he worked in the Cartography Department of the Transcaucasian Military District, where he participated in the compilation of topographic maps. He also compiled topographic maps at various scales for Turkey, Iran, and Syria.

From 1945 to 1951, Alexander Aslanikashvili also worked at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia. During this period, he worked on the 16th-century Ottoman manuscript *“Great Book of Gurjistan Vilayet”*, the Georgian translation of which was prepared by Sergi Jikia. Using a retrospective mapping method, Aslanikashvili compiled a map at a scale of 1:300,000. The map was published in 1953.

From 1951 to 1981 Alexander Aslanikashvili worked at the Vakhusti Bagrationi Institute of Geography. Under his leadership, several atlases and thematic maps were produced and published during this period.



In 1951, he completed and defended the thesis, titled *“On the Theory of Cartographic Generalization”*, thereby contributing to the development of cartographic theory.

From 1953, he began working at TSU, where he was appointed to lead cartographic and geodetic disciplines. From 1972 to 1981, he was Head of the Chair of Cartography and Geodesy.

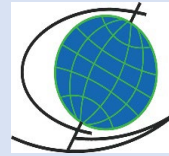
In 1966-1975, Alexander Aslanikashvili served as Head of the Editorial Board for the Cartography section of the Georgian Soviet Encyclopedia. He was also the author of numerous articles and maps included in the encyclopedia.

The strong international interest in Aslanikashvili's theoretical work in cartography led to the holding of two major union forums in Tbilisi: the 5th Union Conference on Thematic Cartography (1973) and the 6th Congress of the Union of Geographical Societies (1975).

Alexander Aslanikashvili was awarded the Order and Medal of the “Badge of Honor.”

# Bulletin # 1(1), 2026

Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University: Department of Geography, Vakhusti Bagrationi Institute of Geography; Alexander Javakhishvili Geographical Society of Georgia



*Alexander Aslanikashvili's Paintings*

## Contribution to Cartography

Alexander Aslanikashvili made a significant contribution to the development of methodological foundations for the **construction of block diagrams**. He was the first to elaborate a systematic method for producing block diagrams based on topographic maps. These theoretical and methodological issues were presented in his monograph *“Geomorphological Block Diagrams and Their Methods of Construction”* (1955).

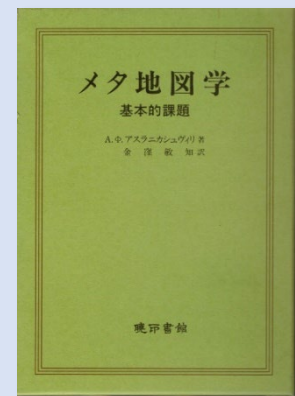
The main field of scientific work of Alexander Aslanikashvili was the **theory of cartography and map-making**, which is reflected in his fundamental works *Cartography. Issues of General Theory* (1968) and *Metacartography. Main Problems* (1974). These works laid the foundation for the concept of metacartography and for the scientific principles of cartosemiotics. In these studies, he fundamentally explored the subject matter of cartography, as well as the method and language of the map, and developed its theoretical foundations. He integrated forms of logical thinking such as comparison, abstraction, generalization, analysis, synthesis, and modeling with cartographic representation. These works have retained their significance and remain essential reference texts for cartographers.

Alexander Aslanikashvili **compiled numerous maps** and edited a number of cartographic works. Among them, the *Physical Map of Georgia* at a scale of

1:1,000,000 was published in 1957 under the editorship of Alexander Javakhishvili and Alexander Aslanikashvili. It was regarded as one of the best examples of relief representation.

In 1956, at the 18th Congress of the International Geographical Union held in Rio de Janeiro, one of the key tasks of geography was identified as the preparation and publication of national atlases of the world's countries, which led to the establishment of the National Atlas Commission. In response to this initiative, the first comprehensive atlas of Georgia was created.

The works of Alexander Aslanikashvili **have been translated into several languages**. The high scientific value of his research is evidenced by the fact that, in 1999, the renowned Japanese cartographer Toshitomo Kanakubo, Vice-President of the International Cartographic Association (1991-1995) and Chair of the Commission on Theoretical Cartography, published Aslanikashvili's *Metacartography. Main Problems* in Tokyo in Japanese (translated from Russian into Japanese).



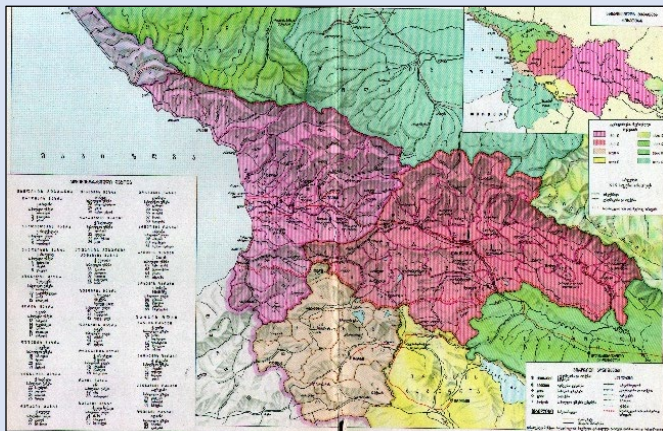
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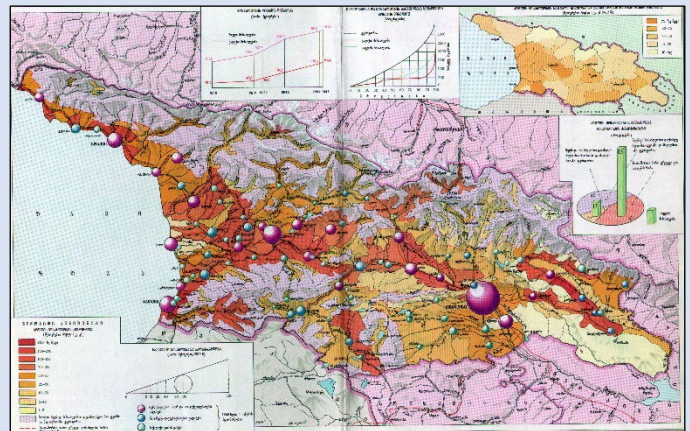


*State Prize Laureates*

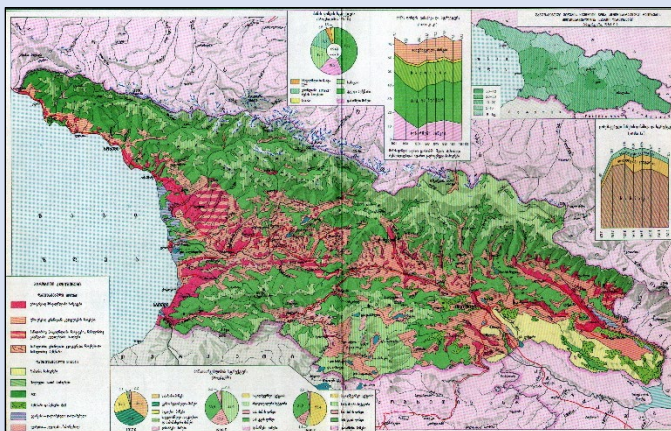
Together with Alexander Javakhishvili, Alexander Aslanikashvili developed the project of the *Atlas of Georgia*, which was published in 1964. He served as Deputy Editor in charge of the atlas, supervised the scientific cartographic processing of source materials, and coordinated the preparation of original cartographic works, all carried out at the Cartographic Department of the Vakhusti Bagrationi Institute of Geography. Due to his significant contribution to the creation of the Atlas, Alexander Aslanikashvili, together with other leading scientists of the Institute of Geography, was awarded the State Prize of Georgia in 1971. Alexander Aslanikashvili called this edition a "Cartographic symphony".



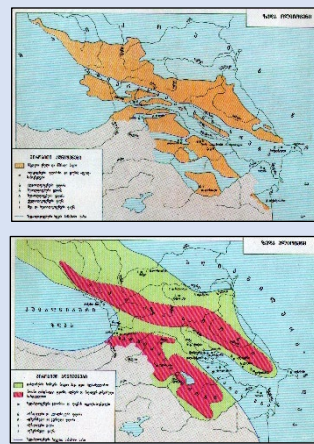
*The Territory of Georgia in the Administrative Division of the Russian Empire at the end of the 19th Century*



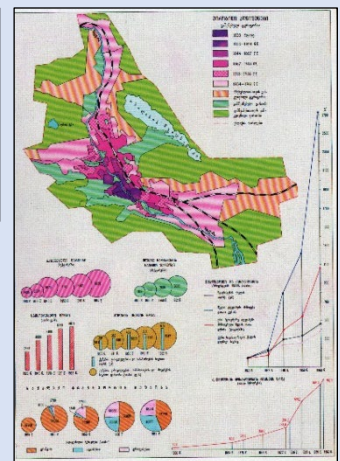
*Population Distribution (according to the 1959 census)*



*Land Fund*



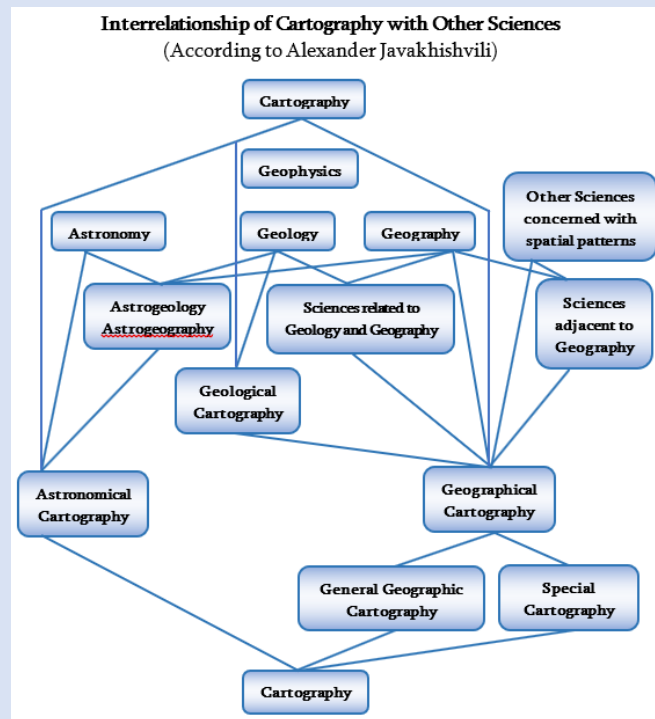
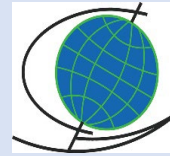
*Paleogeographic maps (Upper Oligocene, Upper Pliocene)*



*The growth of Tbilisi*

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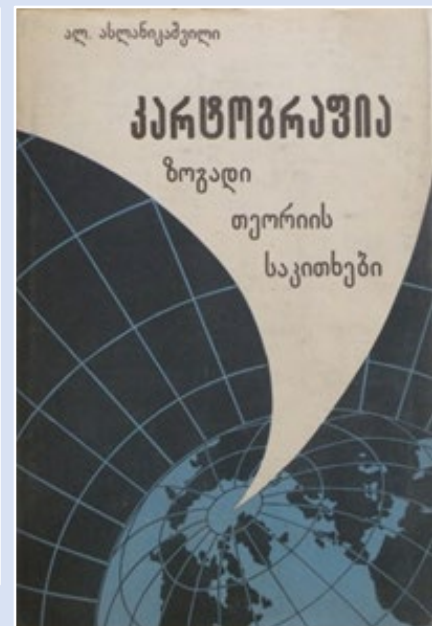
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*Alexander Aslanikashvili wrote: Branches of cartography have emerged on the basis of the interpenetration of geography and cartography. These include geomorphological, climatic, geobotanical, population cartography, and others. Geographic cartography is not limited to this. It always remains "open" to the inclusion of new fields. Geography is the only science that can reveal, and explain spatial regularities within any complex of phenomena, no matter how complicated it is.*

Alexander Aslanikashvili integrated forms of logical thinking such as comparison, abstraction, generalization, analysis, synthesis, and modeling with cartographic representation. These works have retained their significance and remain essential reference texts for cartographers.

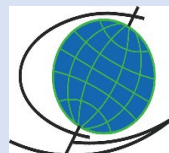


*Alexander Aslanikashvili with his colleagues*



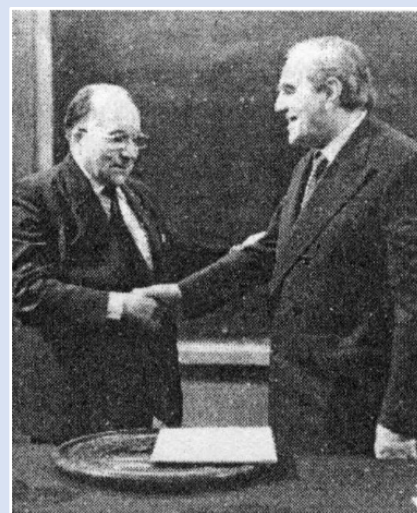
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Alexander Aslanikashvili left a profound and lasting impact on the development of cartography as a scientific discipline. In the scientific community, he was known for his firm and uncompromising positions. His intellectual strength and erudition led the famous cartographer Konstantin Salishchev, founder of a major school of geography-cartography, to express regretful words about his ideological opponent: *“After Aslanikashvili I am saddened in cartography”*. Such relationships of scientific debate and intellectual competition may serve as an example for younger generations.

Much can be said about this eminent and highly accomplished scientist. It is hoped that future generations will fully recognize and appreciate his invaluable contributions.



## *Alexander Aslanikashvili and Konstantin Salishchev*

On March 17, 2026, A jubilee session dedicated to the 110th anniversary of Aslanikashvili’s birth was held at the National Academy of Sciences of Georgia



## Upcoming events

International scientific conference „**Geography and Sustainable Development: Future Perspectives**,“ which will be held on November 4-6, 2026, in Tbilisi, Georgia (Vakhusti Bagrationi Institute of Geography).

<https://vbig.ge/en/conference/about>

The goals of the event are to present the achievements of Georgian scientists; share or exchange knowledge and experience between Georgian and foreign scientists; integrate Georgian scientists into the international scientific space; and strengthen cooperation to set priorities for future research in the field of geography and develop innovative directions.

We look forward to seeing you in, Georgia.

## Important Dates

Abstract Submission Deadline: **1 June, 2026**

Acceptance announcement: **Maximum 2 week after submission**

Full Paper Submission Deadline: **1 October, 2026**

Registration Deadline: **15 October, 2026**

## The organizing team of the Bulletin

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