

Book notices: *Review of Basic Georgian*

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Basic Georgian. By Tamar Makharoblidze. (LINCOM practical language courses 1.)
Munich: LINCOM Europa, 2008. Pp. 350. ISBN 9783895861154. \$76.30.

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Until fairly recently, Georgian language learning materials were hard to come by. The few volumes available tended to be short, inadequate, dense, overly academic, and error-prone; those that were not in Georgian or Russian were in problematic English or were not easily available outside of Georgia. During the past decade and a half, however, LINCOM Europa has published several volumes on Caucasian languages. Tamar Makharoblidze's *Basic Georgian*, the first in the LINCOM practical language courses series, is one of the few introductory Georgian texts available in the West.

The volume opens with background material on Georgia and the Georgian language of the type commonly found in Georgian tourist literature. There are twenty-eight lessons consisting of a list of new vocabulary in Georgian script with English translations, a list of phrases, e.g. 'He shouldn't do this', a detailed section on grammar, and a reading text, finished off by translation and other exercises.

One strength of this book is that the lessons are carefully graded in difficulty so beginners can work through them smoothly, without sudden leaps to material too difficult to handle. The vocabulary featured in the clearly-written texts is useful, e.g. family relationships, foods, colors, furniture, animals, the seasons, and common adjectives. There are four pages of common phrases in table form in the back of the book, but no glossary or index.

The book calls for improvement in two areas. First, it would be helpful to have an introduction outlining the work and how to use it. Second, the English in the instructions, translations, and exercises should be carefully edited and corrected. A typical English translation: 'I wish I paint as you are painting' (153). In addition, the volume is rather expensive, but that is perhaps to be expected of relatively low-circulation academic texts.

A useful comparison can be made between this book and another of the same title by Nana Danelia published by Universali (Tbilisi, 2006). Danelias work does have an introduction on how to use the book and English explanations and translations of the vocabulary. It uses less English overall than M's volume, in part because there are no English-to-Georgian translation exercises. There is an appendix of vocabulary organized by topic. No mistakes in the English were spotted. It is not, however, easily available outside of Georgia.

Though there is now considerably more information on Georgian available than two decades ago, there is not enough yet that one can reject any book for minor flaws in format or English. This book is thus a valuable addition to the growing body of Georgian textbooks. One hopes the publishers will revise it by adding an introduction and glossary, to increase its value and utility to learners of this complex and fascinating language.