



## Mtskheta

### About Mtskheta

Former capital of East Georgia (Iberia) from the 3rd century BC to the 5th century AD, Mtskheta is indeed a social and cultural phenomena. Mtskheta sites show the high artistic and cultural level attained by the ancient kingdom of Iberia (East Georgia) - one of the first states in the world to adopt Christianity as its state religion in AD 337.

Mtskheta (Georgian: მცხეთა, Romanized: *mtskheta* [mts<sup>h</sup>χet<sup>h</sup>ɑ]) is a city in Mtskheta-Mtianeti province of Georgia. Currently a small provincial capital, for nearly a millennium until the 5th century AD, Mtskheta was a large fortified city, a significant economic and political center of the Kingdom of Iberia (East Georgia). Due to the historical significance of the town and its several outstanding cultural monuments, Mtskheta's contribution to the world's civilization is invaluable. Not only the town of Mtskheta, but also the whole territory of the Mtskheta municipality's administrative districts are loaded with unique historical, cultural and religious monuments. Each of them is unique in its antiquity and importance.

### Old Fortress - On the way to Great Silk Road

Try to connect Silk Road, Scandinavian God Odin, Zoroastrianism and Georgian bread "Shotan" with Armazi name. Mtskheta is the place that can solve this puzzle. The Silk Road, which had started in China and ended in Rome, had been crossing Georgia. The Silk Road encompassed the world's civilizations of that time and the trade among them. Georgia consisted of two states: Iberia - Eastern Georgia and Kolkheti - Western Georgia. Mtskheta was the capital of Iberia, combining Eastern and Western cultures since ancient times. The word phrase "since ancient times" in Georgian sounds like "*Oditganve*", that is, from the period of "Odin", the Scandinavian god. The second cult of Mtskheta is "Armazi" - ahura - mazda, the wise god, which represents Zoroastrianism, Persian culture. The main Sacrifice to Armazi involved bread, which in Georgia is called Shotan bread. "Shotan", the same as "Wotan", Odin's second name, is nickname for Armazi. The cult of Armazi was also a moon deity. Shotan bread is crescent shaped. Shotan bread is also a symbol of Christianity. Bread and wine symbolically embody the blood and flesh of the Savior in communion. Baking Shotan bread at celebrating dates is a ritual even in today's Georgia. There are more than 200 indigenous wheat varieties of Georgian origin.

Common borders. Common solutions.



## Pompey Bridge

Importing Chinese silk cost Rome 100,000 sesterces every year. Gold was also imported from China. Rome and Byzantium had centuries-old wars, first with Parthia, then with Sasanian Iran for the section of the Great Silk Road that passed through the Middle East. In the confrontation of great empires, Georgia, as a connecting bridge, represented a tasty morsel. In scientific literature and local population, the old bridge over river Mtkvari is more often referred to as "Pompey's Bridge" which had existed even before Pompey's campaign. In 65, BC, a large and well-armed Roman army under the command of Pompey invaded Iberia and so suddenly approached the Mtskheta acropolis (Armaztsikhe) that it became impossible to defend it. The king of Iberia hastily moved to the left bank of the river Mtkvari and burned the bridge to stop the enemy. The enemy took Armaztsikhe. The Iberian army offered relentless resistance to the invaders on the left bank, but was still defeated. By a peace treaty, the Romans signed a political "friendship" and a military "alliance" of Rome with Iberia. "Friendship" with the Romans continued in the subsequent period, as evidenced by the Greek inscription carved on a stone found in Mtskheta (75 AD). According to the inscription, the Roman emperor Vespasian strengthened the city walls as a present to the Iberian king Mithridates.

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