

**INTERPENETRATION PECULIARITIES OF GEORGIAN  
AND RUSSIAN CULTURES IN THE DON REGION  
(END OF XX- BEGINNING OF XXI CENTURY)**

*E.E. Nesmeyanov*

*Don state technical university. Rostov-on-Don, Russia*

[science-almanac@mail.ru](mailto:science-almanac@mail.ru)

It is considered various aspects of the interpenetration peculiarities of Georgian and Russian cultures in the Don Region. The given issue is discussed in two aspects: a) the influence of Georgian humanitarian culture on Don intelligentsia in the period from 1970-s to 1990-s. of XX century; b) peculiarities of Georgian culture transmission in Georgian expat community activity on Don since the end of 1990-s. of XX century to nowadays. Thus it can be underlined that in modern times interpenetration of our people cultures the leading role comes from scientific intelligentsia to the activity of social organizations and Orthodox Churches of Georgia and Russia (of Don region in particular) positively influencing on the cultural connections processes.

Key words: Russia, Georgia, Don Region, intelligentsia, culture, penetration.

The declared subject is rather broad. One should pay attention to two peculiarities of our cultures interaction:

1. The influence of Georgian humanitarian culture on Don intelligentsia in the period from 70-s to 90-s. of XX c.
2. Peculiarities of Georgian culture transmission in Georgian expat community activity on Don since the end of 90-s. of XX c. to nowadays.

1. Don human sciences and art intelligentsia especially sensitive conceive Georgian culture; with more expressed interest and benevolence than cultural centres in Russia. This is connected not only with regions geographic location, but first of all with historical memory and traditions of our people joint residence on the territory of “Don Forces” since XVIII c. till nowadays. Herewith the Georgians live compactly (there were “Georgian rural areas” till the middle of XIX c.) saving language, customs and mentality of native culture. The large amount of Georgian families entered into Cossacks class, naturally perceived military and household cultures of Don and Kuban Cossacks.

In contradistinction to many other people, who in XVIII-XIX c. inhabited lands between Don and Kuban, the Georgians are perceived as aboriginals as “orthodox coreligionists” with concurrent system of intellectual values and as fellows in arms in fight with Russian enemies. This fact overbalanced all ethnical and language distinctions and defined the relation of our cultures and people. The indigenous population of Don region clearly distinguishes on ordinary-household level Georgian and other Caucasian ethnoses, living near the Russians.

The tradition of Georgian national culture positive perception was saved and reproduced (but on the other ideological bases than today) in Soviet time. The certain shift in the process of mutual influence of our cultures occurred on Don since 70-s. XX c., when in the result of sociocultural connections development and activity of Georgian and Russian intelligentsia, noticeable shift from cultural mutual influence to their “harmonious” combination took place (that was continually mentioned by the leading culturologists of the country).

From a large amount of works of this theme one should refer to the writings of Mikhail Samuilovich Kagan who clearly said “About amazing organicity of our people cultural connections...(which)...were closer with Russian culture, than with other people of Caucasus, and of Georgian cultural connections were closer, than with neighboring Azerbaijan and in some relations even with Armenia and North Caucasus people”. One of the reasons of this phenomenon M. S. Kagan considered the general psychological features of our national intelligentsias among which he

emphasized “Width of character provided especially close mutual understanding...(but on the household level)...learning of Georgian tableful principles organization in Russia” [3, p. 138].

The development of our cultures interpenetration was connected with scientific work of Yu. A. Zhdanov in 60-s-70-s of XX c. Zhdanov Yu. A. created new scientific trend in Don humanitarian science – “Caucasus study”. The creation of “North-Caucasian scientific centre of higher school” in 1973 allowed him to organize the group of scientists from Russia and Caucasian republics, which entered realias of Caucasian culture into scientific turnover. Yu. A. Zhdanov formed conception of culturally-civilization image of Caucasus as “Eurasia solar plexus”, the main point of which can be expressed in “determinant influence” of national Caucasian cultures to ancient Greek mythology, philosophy and history. And the indirect influence on European culture can be expressed through ancient Greek culture. The case is not only in emergence of one more school of theorists of Caucasus along with Leningrad and Moscow schools. The school of Caucasus study of Zhdanov managed to prove significancy of ancient “antique” Caucasian cultures as one of the important sources of European and Russian cultures” [2, p. 282-305]. Not penetrating into details of Zhdanov conception about Kolkhidskaya and Kartveliiskaya cultures (this is beyond the scope of the report) one can mention that Zhdanov returned problematic, which was raised by academician Marr in USSR and academician Herman Wirth in Germany in 30-s. Zhdanov did not directly quote their writings (according to certain reasons), but it well-known that he took them into account (and some ideas were renewed) in a new context<sup>1</sup>. Later in 90-s the ideas of Marr, Herman Felix Wirth, Guenon, Illich-Svitych were rehabilitated in the writings of Georgian scientists: Rismag Gordezian; Gamkrelidze-Ivanov; Zv. Gamsakhurdia; on the West Fournet (France); and in Russia A.G. Dugin and others.

Yu. A. Zhdanov especially marked Georgian culture in Caucasian culture, calling it as one of “the most important constituents of the Caucasus culture”. He emphasized the peculiarities of Georgian intelligentsia mentality in the next words “I can tell literally that Georgian intelligentsia representatives, whom I have to met, are differed with high culture, refinement, gloss. Evidently it is connected with historical tradition and with educational level, exceeding the other republics of the country” [1. p. 398]. Zhdanov repeated his high estimation in the other context: “Georgia...is the place where the most refined intelligentsia, where is the highest cultural tradition, where is the highest level of education” [1, p.400-401].

Yury Andreyevich was in love with Georgia, not once he visited Georgia, where he had a lot of contacts with scientific and creative community of republic (before the performance, I wrote out the names of scientists and representatives of culture, with whom Zhdanov carried on a correspondence, or which pieces of work he discussed in his writings.

There is an incomplete list:

–The Presidents of Georgian Academy of Sciences: Ilya Vekua; Yevgeny Kharadze.

–Scientists: Konstantin Tskhakadze – chemist and musician, the author of Tbilisi university hymn; Ramaza Gakhokidze – chemist; Abuladze – physiologist; Vianor Pachulia – geographer.

–Workers of culture: Nikolaz Baratishvili; David Guramishvili (poets); Zakharia Paliashvili (“the great musical master”); Vladimir Kandelaki; sisters Ishkhneli (singers). Zhdanov adored the music of Dolidze (operetta “Keto and Kote”).

“The culture of Georgia as Yu. A. Zhdanov writes – is Rustaveli, Chavchavadze, Baratashvili, Guramishvili, Vazha Pshavela, Pirosmeni; Paliashvili, Khorava, Taktakishvili, Janashia, Muskhelishvili and other artists and scientists” [at the same place, p.409].

I, being a philosopher by education, want to pay attention to two little-known facts of Georgian philosophical thought promotion in Don philosophical community. One speaks about an outstanding writing of Keta Megrelidze (who died in repressions) – “The basic problems of mentality sociology”. The writing was published in 1965 in Tbilisi, and in 1966 it was presented for the State Prize of USSR and recommended for university students as study guide by the philosophy department of Rostov state university. Few people know that Iosif Megrelidze (the brother of the scientist) gifted the book to Yu. A. Zhdanov with such dedication “To one of the first dignified connoisseurs

---

<sup>1</sup> The ideas of Caucasian location of Atlantis, myth about Prometheus and others.

of the genuine book, presently accepted in philosophical world”. Also, hardly anybody knew, that an outstanding Georgian philosopher – Merab Konstantinovich Mamardashvili read the courses of his lectures on methodology of science and history of European philosophy in IFT RSU in 1981 for philosophers of Don at the invitation of Yu. A. Zhdanov. Resting on the materials of these readings later some writings of Mamardashvili were published, for instance “Cartesian reflections” and “As I understand philosophy”. The writings of Mamardashvili, Megrelidze, Uznadze were the basis of courses, read to the students of philosophical department of RSU since 70-90-s. of XX c.

I bring these details with a single purpose. The activity of Georgian and Don intelligentsias brought to the fact that Georgian culture and science naturally came into scientific and artistic culture of Don. One can say that it “became Russified”, i.e. became necessary and imprescriptible constituent of Russian culture of 60-s-80-s of XX c.

2. In after-reform period in Russia (90-s of XX c. till nowadays) the processes of mutual penetration of our cultures were changed as in connection with political processes in our governments, so in connection with short-sighted liquidation of North-Caucasian scientific centre of higher school by Southern federal university. The direction “Caucasian study and school, created by Zhdanov, lost its positions. Today Russian-Georgian cultural connections are under supervision of Georgian community on Don – “Vardzia” under the noticeable influence of Georgia Orthodox Churches in the person of the Holiest Catholicos- Patriarch of Georgia Ilia II and Don metropolitanate of ROC (Moscow patriarchy) in the person of Mercury the Most Reverend Don metropolite, archbishop of Rostov and Novocherkassk.

- Community was formed in 1992. Some alterations were made in 1993 and today it – is Rostov regional, Georgian national cultural association – Autonomy “Vardzia”. Community unites about 45 thousand of Georgian constantly living in Rostov region, 15 thousand of them live in Rostov-on-Don. Professor Meskhi B.Ch. – rector of one of the biggest universities of the South of Russia – Don state technical university (DSTU) manages the community. The main aim of the community – “Preservation and spreading of culture, language, customs and traditions of Kartvelians” seems interesting and topical. The community closely collaborates with the leadership of Georgia and Russia Orthodox Churches. This expressed confessional career of our cultures relations has a huge significance for Don region, where from 82% to 85 % of population position themselves as “orthodox christians” citizens. Today Orthodoxy acts as central fastener and basis of spirit identity of our people.

It is also necessary to mention some moments: there were built two temples of Saints Nina and Tatiana who are equal to the apostles (the latest is situated on the territory of DSTU). The new temple complex, designed as culturally- enlightenment centre, which contains the museum of Georgian culture, library and Sunday school. The department of orthodox culture basis of DSTU in 2014 realized the research according to Georgia and Russia relation of young people to orthodox cultural values. This work gave interesting scientific results, and showed that the young people of Russia (studied Rostov region) and Georgia in overwhelming majority didn’t accept the postmodern type of modern eastern culture and postmodern important values, which deny all norms and traditions, existing in Russian and Georgian cultures, moral and religious paradigms. The young people of Don and Georgia positively treat with orthodox values and see in them the basis of national self-identification.

The creation of new scientific journal “Science almanac of Black sea region countries” became one of the most promising scientific projects, advanced for 2014-2015. This network international journal, issued in English language, is opened with help of universities and scientific organizations – partners with participation of academies and universities of Georgia, Moldavia, Rumania, Bulgaria and Russia. The senior scientific editor is B. Ch. Meskhi – professor, Ph.D. of technology.

The large resonance in Rostov-on-Don university community was called by the report of G. I. Kvesitadze, read in the context of 85 celebration of DSTU in September 2015. The report was dedicated to topical problems of region ecological security and was met with a great interest as by specialists, so by scientific youth of our universities.

To conclude:

1. During the long historical period our people had large secular and confessional system of education, including bilingualism; the common orthodox religion and culture, including similar lifemeaning values. This fact is irremovable and it defines cultural interrelation of our people.
2. The relation of Russian and Georgian cultures looks as weighty dialogue “their harmonic combination” (M.S. Kagan). In modern times interpenetration of our people cultures the leading role comes from scientific intelligentsia to the activity of social organizations and Orthodox Churches of Georgia and Russia (of Don region in particular) positively influencing on the cultural connections processes.
3. The position and our people intelligentsia activities neutralized transient negative political circumstances, interfering with scientific and cultural contexts reconstruction of Georgia and Russia. We look forward with hope.

### *References*

1. *Zhdanov Yu.A.* About the theory and history of cultural building. Rostov-on-Don, 2014.
2. *Zhdanov Yu.A.* Look in the past: the memoirs of eyewitness. Rostov-on-Don, 2004.
3. *Kagan M.S.* To the question about interrelation research of Russia and Georgia cultures in coll // *Russia and Georgia: Dialogue and connection of cultures.* St.Petersburg, 2003.

*August, 25, 2015*

---