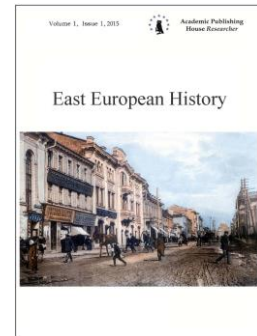


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Historical Russian Studies in Georgia

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Abstract

Throughout nearly 2 centuries Georgia was a part of the Russian state space. Despite it, the research of the problems of actually Russian history was never the priority direction in the Georgian historiography. Historians of Georgia presented several theses relating to especially Russian topics, but, their achievements in the field of the Russian history very modest and the main thing, in Georgia the school of sciences of historians-specialists in Russian studies having any weight in science was not created. The Georgian historians nevertheless found the niche – they were engaged in exploring of the Georgian-Russian relationship and, having created powerful scientific heritage in this area, enriched considerably the knowledge not only specifically in the field of the Georgian-Russian relations, but also in the scales of foreign policy of Russia in the Caucasian direction in general.

Keywords: historical russian studies, Georgia.

1. Introduction

Relationships of Russia and Georgia have the roots to the past. Once being equitable to the mutual political and economic interests of these states – Georgia saw in Russia the alliance partner, and later and the patron in fight against foreign conquerors, and Russia looked for in Georgia a support for distribution and maintenance of the influence not only in the Caucasus, but also in the Middle East– these relations, subsequently, due to certain circumstances, had led to establishment of the Russian imperial domination in Georgia (1801), and then the Soviet totalitarian regime (1921) which was only formally recognizing sovereignty of the Georgian Soviet Republic.

For nearly two centuries Georgia was a part of the Russian state space. It's a fact that in Georgia there were developed and discussed the historical questions of various countries and regions as (Armenia, Azerbaijan, the North Caucasus, Turkey, Iran, the Arab world ...), and more isolated as (France, Germany, England, the USA, etc.). On this background achievements of historians of Georgia in the field of the Russian history obviously pale.

2. Discussion and results

In this regard, it should be noted that for its part the russian historical science has practically not engaged in historical kartvelologia. At a time when the french, the germans, british, americans and even japanese scientists have been engaged in studying of the history of Georgia, russian historical science, which, as a rule, has always occupied a leading position in the development of such branches of science as orientalism, byzantinistik, etc., exhibited inexplicable indifference. Given the presence of Georgia within the Russian Empire, who, if not Russian scientists in the first

place, not the French, the Germans or the British, should have set the tone in the field of research of Georgian studies. However, while in various European countries, dozens of scientists subject of his scientific research has made the history and culture of Georgia, for 200 years Russia has given in fact the only professional Georgian historian. It is a prominent Russian orientalist, corresponding member of the USSR Academy of Sciences, Professor Anatoly Petrovich Novoseltsev ([Metreveli, Papaskiri, 2004](#)). Of course, this does not mean that in the writings of Russian historians, was completely absent from the Georgian theme. In the XIX century the particular interest in this regard showed such prominent scientists as P.G. Butkov, S.A. Belokurov, N.F. Dubrovin, A.P. Berger, etc. The certain aspects of the history of Georgia were touched on in passing in the works of academicians F.I. Uspensky, V.V. Bartold, etc. Moreover, in the 50-ies of XX century O. Markova dedicated to fundamental research Kakhnetian uprising of 1812. However, none of these historians cannot be called a Georgian scholar.

Departments of the Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University, The Abkhazian State University, Goris state university and The Batumi Shota Rustaveli State University, The Georgian National Academy of Sciences (GNAS) dealt with the problem of studying of the Russian history. At the same time, the research of problems of actually Russian history, was never the priority direction in the Georgian historiography.

The most indicative is the fact that historians of Georgia presented only several theses concerning to especially Russian topics. First of all, these are dissertations of Sukhumi historians: professors of The Abkhazian State University (since 1979. Sukhumi/Abkhazian/ state university) Valeryana Chaniya ([Chaniya, 1972](#)) and Hazarata Argun ([Argun, 1974](#)) – during the Soviet era, and also the professor of the Sukhumi branch of Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University (now-The Abkhazian State University*) Evstafiya (Tengiz) Antelava, defended at the Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University at the beginning of this century ([Antelava, 2001](#)). By the way, master's theses E. Antelava ([Antelava, 1980](#)) and the associate professor of the USSR history of the Sukhumi state teacher training institute of Murman Beria ([Beriya, 1969](#)) were dedicated to the Russian topic. Despite it, it is impossible to tell that the called researchers became professional historians-specialists in Russian studies, although some of them (E. Antelava, M. Beria) for many years taught the USSR (Russia) history courses.

The Russian subject is partially dealt with in fundamental work of the famous Georgian historian- Givi Zhordaniya ([Abashidze](#)), professor of the Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University, dedicated to the Russian-French relations ([Zhordaniya, 1959](#)). However, G. Zhordaniya was not historian-specialist in Russian philology, he specialized on history of France and as the specialist in French history he developed the Franco-Russian relations that, of course, does not reduce the value of it, undoubtedly landmark work and for the history of Russian studies. The same can be told about Shota Basilaya' master's thesis of one more professor of the Sukhumi state teacher training institute who investigating history of the Commune of Paris, stopped attention to the Russian government policy for France of that period ([Basilaya, 1954](#)) and professor Ilya Tabagua whose work is devoted to studying of the Franco-Russian relations during the World War I ([Tabagua, 1960](#)). And these historians specialized on Modern and contemporary history of the European and American countries and only mentioned indirectly actually Russian history.

Among the Georgian historians there were those who passed the school of historical Russian studies. First of all, it is Oleg Zhuzhunadze who possesses the work on social and political history of Kievan Russia which was presented as the master's thesis at the Kiev state university of Taras Shevchenko ([Zhuzhunadze, 1964](#)). First of all, it is Oleg Zhuzhunadze who possesses the work on social and political history of Kievan Russia which was presented as the master's thesis at the Taras Shevchenko national university of Kyiv. The master's thesis of Nodar Nakashidze ([Nakashidze, 1955](#)) (professor of the USSR history department of the Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University) was devoted to studying of foreign policy communications of the Moscow state in the second half of the XVI century. At the same department the special course of Russian social history was taught by the prof. Irakli Antelava who published the course of lectures ([Antelava, 1971](#)) in Georgian. He published the monograph about participation of the Georgian officers in Patriotic war of the Russian people of 1812 ([Antelava, 1983](#)). The same subject was affected in article of the

* This university was founded after the division of the Sukhumi (Abkhazian) state university in 1989 on a national basis. Since 1993, the university is in exile and operates in Tbilisi.

associate professor of this department Boris Sokhvadze ([Sokhvadze, 1998](#)). The questions connected with Decembrists were investigated in Georgia. In this regard, it should be noted the monographs of prof. Otar Zhordania ([Zhordaniya, 1990](#)) and the famous Abkhazian historian, Corresponding Member of the Georgian Academy of Sciences, prof. Georgy Dzidzaria ([Dzidzariya](#)), and also B. Sokhvadze ([Sokhvadze, 1972](#)) candidate's thesis.

The USSR history department (from 1992 to 2006 – Russian history department) of Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University in Soviet period (and during the Post-Soviet period also) directly was engaged in teaching Russian history and specialized in this direction. This circumstance pushed to creation of educational literature on Russian history for students of historical department in Georgian. The whole generations of the certificated historians of Georgia grew on the textbooks and education resources of this department professors as Yasa Tsintsadze ([Tsintsadze, 1968](#); [Tsintsadze, 1971](#)), Acacius Surguladzei ([Surguladze, 1963](#); [Surguladze, 1964](#)) and their pupils (Merab Vachnadze and Vakhtang Gurulii and others) ([Vachnadze, Guruli, 2004](#); [Vachnadze, Guruli, 2003](#); [Vachnadze, Guruli, 2005](#); [Vachnadze, Guruli, 2006](#); [Goderidze, 1999](#)). From the publications of recent years, it should be noted lecture courses on the Russian Church ([Vachnadze, Guruli, 2007](#); [Vachnadze, Guruli, 2009](#); [Vachnadze, Guruli, 2008](#)) history, as well as a monograph on I.V. Stalin's life and activity ([Guruli, 2014](#)).

Perhaps, it is all about the general subject of the Russian history. As we see, achievements very modest but the main thing that the scientific school of historians-specialists in Russian studies, which has any weight in science, was not created in Georgia. Even those researchers who began the scientific activity as experts of history of Russia and specialized in this sphere in large scientific centers of Moscow (N.T. Nakashidze) and Kiev (O.G. Zhuzhunadze) subsequently withdrew from development of the Russian subject.

Nevertheless, the Georgian historians found their own niche – they were engaged in studying of the Georgian-Russian relationship and, having created powerful scientific heritage in this area, considerably enriched knowledge not only specifically in the field of the Georgian-Russian relations, but also about scales of Russian foreign policy in the Caucasian direction in general. At the root of the development of this problem was a distinguished French orientalist, the founder of European Georgian studies, the academician Marie Brosset, who prepared and published a corpus of documents reflecting the correspondence of Georgian kings with Russian leaders ([Brosse, 1861](#)). The work in this direction was continued by the famous Georgian philologist, professor of the St. Petersburg university Alexander Tsagareli ([Tsagareli, 1890](#); [Tsagareli, 1891](#); [Tsagareli, 1902](#)). At the beginning of the XX century, very valuable monograph about Georgia's annexation to Russia was published by the eminent Georgian person, the historian and the lawyer Zurab Avalishvili ([Tsagareli, 1890](#); [Tsagareli, 1891](#); [Tsagareli, 1902](#)). From other publications on this subject, it should also be noted the works of Mikhail Heltuplishvili ([Kheltuplishvili, 1901](#)), and Grigory Veshapeli ([Veshapeli, 1917](#)). The vision of Russian policy toward Georgia in the XVII-XVIII centuries was stated by the founder of a modern Georgian historiography, the academician Ivane Dzhavakhishvili ([Dzhavakhishvili, 1998](#); [Dzhavakhishvili, 1998a](#)).

During the Soviet period the research of the Georgian-Russian relationship became the most important direction of the Georgian historical science that, naturally, besides purely scientific, was dictated also by opportunistic reasons. The fact that Georgian-Russian relationship became a subject of studying of one of leaders of the Georgian historiography, the academician Nicko Berdzenishvili who defended the doctoral dissertation on this problem in the early forties ([Berdzenishvili, 1944](#)). It should be noted that this work was the first doctoral dissertation in this branch. During the same period the doctoral dissertation on the Russian-Georgian relations was defended by Yasa Tsintsadze (the professor of the Tbilisi State University) who investigated Russian-Georgian relationship thoroughly for the first time since the most ancient times (10th century) till the 16th century ([Tsintsadze, 1956](#); [Tsintsadze, 1962](#)). Single questions of the Russian-Georgian communications of the 10-12th centuries were taken up only in publications Mose Dzhanchashvili ([Dzhanashvili, 1897](#); [Dzhanashvili, 1900](#); [Dzhanashvili, 1912](#)) and the Bishop Kirion (Sadzaglishvili) ([Episkop Kirion, 1910](#)).

Success achieved by the Georgian scientists in the specified direction was a consequence of the systematic and purposeful research work which was widely developed at the Tbilisi state university from 20th years of the 20th century. Under the leadership of the Russian scientist-

historian, the prof. Mikhail Poliyevktov. Besides that, the scientist explored the Russian-Georgian diplomatic contacts in the 17th century (Polievktov, 1940; Polievktov, 1926; Polievktov, 1928; Polievktov, 1937; Polievktov, 1932) and left quite solid heritage, he actually is a founder of the whole school of sciences on studying of the Russian-Georgian relationship. This school was represented by professors: Yasa Tsintsadze, Georgy Paychadze, Valeryan Macharadze, Nodar Nakashidze, etc.

Tsintsadze explored materials of the Russian archives and created a source study of the Russian-Georgian relationship in the 17-18th centuries (Tsintsadze, 1952; Tsintsadze, 1951; Tsintsadze, 1955; Tsintsadze, 1965; Stateinyi spisok posol'stva, 1969; Stateinyi spisok posla, 1970; Tsintsadze, 1960; Tsintsadze, 1970). Shota Meskhiya and Yasa Tsintsadze, published more extensively sketch about the history of the Russian-Georgian relations in which the general review of these relations is from the most ancient times to the 19th century (Meskhia, Tsintsadze, 1958). The great contribution to the development of the Georgian-Russian relationship in the 17-18th centuries was made by: Alexander Pirtskhalaishvili (Pirtskhalaishvili, 1955; Pirtskhalaishvili, 2000), Valeryan Macharadze (Macharadze, 1967-1994; Macharadze, 1976), Georgy Paychadze (Paichadze, 1965; Paichadze, 1960; Paichadze, 1970; Materialy po istorii..., 1974-1979; K istorii gruzinskoi..., 1982; Paichadze, 1983; Paichadze, 1989), Nodar Nakashidze (Nakashidze, 1968), Tamar Tivadze (Tivadze, 1977), Nodar Asatiani (Asatiani, 1973; Asatiani, 1998), Davy Kacharava (Kacharava, 1968; Kacharava, 1997).

In 60th and 80th of the 20th century the new researches and on the Georgian-Russian political relationship history during an era of Kievan Russia and the Moscow state appeared. First of all, it Oleg Zhuzhunadze (Zhuzhunadze, 1964; Zhuzhunadze, 1968), Roin Metreveli (Metreveli, 1988; Metreveli, Papaskiri, 2011; Metreveli, Khoshtariya-Brose, 1992), Zurab Papaskiri's (Papaskiri, 1977; Papaskiri, 1981; Papaskiri, 1982) publications, and the works of well-known specialist in the field of international law, academician Levan Aleksidze (Aleksidze, 1962; Aleksidze, 1963). It is also necessary to note the works on the Russian-Georgian communications history in the cultural and educational sphere which authors are Tsetsiliya Kalandadze (Kalandadze, 1979; Kalandadze, 1984) and Pridon Sikharulidze (Sikharulidze, 1990; Sikharulidze, 1991).

After the collapse of the Soviet Union the Georgian historians moved away from the Russian subject. The only exception is the works of the Sukhumi scientist E.M. Antelava who published articles about Russian state imperial policy in the North Caucasus (Antelava, 2003; Antelava, 2004; Antelava, 2005-2006; Antelava, 2008; Papaskiri, 2012), about Lenin's and Bolsheviks fight against political opposition (Antelava, 2000; Antelava, 2000a) and also works of O.K. Zhordaniya (Zhordaniya, 2009). In some ways, the works of young scientists fill the shortage of the research on the Georgian-Russian relationship history (Dzhavakhishvili, 2003).

3. Conclusion

Such is an overall picture of research works in Georgia on problems of the Russian history and the questions connected with Russia. Perhaps, not all publications of the mentioned authors in which, directly or indirectly, single questions of the Russian history are raised were included in our review, but, we believe that the stated material gives rather complete idea of a condition of historical Russian Studies in Georgia in general.

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