

KETEVAN NADIRADZE



FEDO
ZHORDANIA

*A Researcher of the
History of Georgia*

EUROPEAN POLITICAL, ECONOMIC, AND SECURITY ISSUES

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**A RESEARCHER OF THE
HISTORY OF GEORGIA**

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PREFACE

This work presents the first monographic study of Tedo Zhordania's life (1853-1916) as a scholar tirelessly exploring the history of Georgia. My interest in this historian was first aroused by one fact. A group of then young historians of the Chair of History of Georgia at Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University was working on the history of exploration of Georgian sources under the supervision of Academician Mariam Lordkipanidze. As a member of the group, I was given a task for the seminar to present a paper on the structural composition of "Kartlis Tskhovreba" ("History of Georgia"). As is known, the old cycle of "Kartlis Tskhovreba" (from ancient times to the 14th century) is considered to be the major narrative source known in the history of Georgia. Therefore in Georgian historiography, and not only here, this source has enjoyed a longstanding, ongoing research. Due to this fact, there are a number of views regarding the volume, titles and authors of its separate parts. It emerged that only Tedo Zhordania worked on the structural composition of this source amongst the researchers of the period. In addition, the opinions of this scholar regarding the structural composition were in accordance with the conclusions made by the scholars of the contemporary period rather than with those made by the historians of the period he lived in.

Later, having made a more extensive study of the works by Zhordania, it became clear to me that if the subject of historical studies is to find new

facts and observe differences, Tedo Zhordania's heritage presents a genuinely significant case of the 19th century Georgian historiography. Therefore, it is necessary to explain why historical studies should show more about the scholarly heritage of Tedo Zhordania and the methodology of his research. As well as this, it is also important to substantiate the significance of the conclusions made by this scholar from the modern standpoint and to determine the extent of the impact on the enhancement of Georgian historical thought. In addition, I agree with the opinion regarding the impossibility of conducting successful, modern research without basing it on past experience.

Due to these factors, I chose to embark on studying the scholarly heritage of Tedo Zhordania which turned out to be a painstaking process. First of all, the full picture of Tedo Zhordania's life as a statesman and a public figure needed to be restored as it was interesting to reveal his contribution, both to the development of the Georgian historical thought and maintenance and enhancement of Georgian mentality in the conditions of Russian assimilatory politics. As well as this, it was crucial to explore his works in order to reconstruct the process of work attached to him. For this, the best way was to explore the notes made by the scholar in his writing pads and block notes as well as his inscriptions in the margins of the books read by him. Consequently, it took quite a long time to work on archive documents as well as to find and analyse either articles written by Zhordania himself or written about him in the periodicals of the 19th century (such as "Iveria," "Mtskemi" ("The Shepherd"), "Tsnobis Pirtsseli" ("Information Leaflet"); "Kvali" ("The Trace"), "Духовный Вестник Грузинского Экзархата" ("The Spiritual Herald of the Georgian Exarchate"), "Кавказ" ("The Caucasus") etc.

During my research I enjoyed the constant support and therefore I would like to express my deep gratitude to the staff of K. Kekelidze Institute of Manuscripts, the Central Archives of Tbilisi and Kutaisi, the National Library and the Department of Kartvelian Studies. In addition, I would like to thank my mentor, Academician Mariam Lordkipanidze and my father, Professor Giorgi Nadiradze, whose advice assisted and facilitated the progress of my research. I would also like to thank the first

reviewer of this work Professor Natela Vachnadze and I also thank Manana Rusieshvili-Cartledge, Trevor Cartledge and Nino Simonishvili.

This book was first published in Georgian by Ivane Javakhisvili Tbilisi State University (TSU) Publishing House in 2004. Due to the emerging, increasing interest in the development of the general scholarly thought of the 19th century, I am presenting the revised edition of the book to a wider circle of readers. I believe that it will be notable for readers interested in the history of Georgia to follow the development of Georgian historical science in the second half the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century when the Georgian in-group was being consolidated under the rule of the Russian colonial regime.

The actualisation of the historical past acquired a special significance in this period. Thus, presenting the facts of social and scholarly work by Zhordania seems crucial for the reconstruction of the full picture of this process. In addition, due to the above-mentioned, the portrayal of a Georgian historian is equally interesting from the point of view of the history of the Georgian identity.

The scholarly heritage of Tedo Zhordania is explored based on the comparative method. Previous research concerning the issues the scholar worked on, his personal contribution and the development by subsequent Georgian researchers is also taken into account.

Following the tendency practised in the 19th century, scholars exploring issues of Georgian Studies did not observe thematic and chronological boundaries. Therefore, the heritage of Tedo Zhordania is various and multi-coloured. He was involved in studying manuscripts and sources as well as in exploring issues of socio-political and Church history in the early and late medieval periods. This fact makes the description of the scholar's heritage even more interesting as it gives us an opportunity to follow the development of the research regarding the issues Zhordania was interested in from the 19th century up to 2000.

The introduction has been re-written and the footnotes were added to the English text of the book.

The book deals with the life and activities, public and political views, historical conception and methods of study of a well-known Georgian

scholar of the 19th century, Tevdore (Tedo) D. Zhordania (1853-1916). It demonstrates his contribution to the development of Georgian historical science.

The book is designed for the general readership interested in issues of the history of Georgia.

INTRODUCTION

By the manifesto of September 12, 1801, issued by the Russian Emperor, Alexander I the Kingdom of Kartli - Kakheti was annulled and made one of the provinces of Russia.¹ This was the beginning of the end of Georgian Statehood.² “Land, water and air boundaries” were now part of the Russian Empire. The Bagrationi Royal House was annulled. The Georgian Church lost its independence and became an exarchate of the Russian Synod. Church affairs were now ruled by exarchs specially sent from Russia. Church services were held in Russian and the language of tuition was also Russian, which indicated that the country had lost the foundation on which the Georgian State was built. Thus, the Empire started active Russification of the population.

The Georgian people responded to the situation in Georgia by five large-scale rebellions aiming at the restoration of the lost statehood. These rebellions all ended in failure. In the end, Russia suppressed the national movement in bloodbaths and became the only player in Georgian economics. In addition, by settling people of different origin in Georgia, Russia secured a strong social support. The demographic situation was changed in favour of the new settlers. There was no force visible to act against the expansion of Russia in the geopolitical region of the Caucasus.³

However, the second part of the 19th century marked a new stage in the fight for Georgian independence. To achieve this goal, Georgian society

clearly saw the necessity for an ideological and intellectual struggle with resistance against the Russian Empire.

The group of “Tergdaleulebi” which appeared in the 60s under the leadership of the writer and leader of the national movement Ilia Chavchavadze (1837-1907)⁴ was the first to notice this necessity. The group comprised a number of intellectuals of the period: Akaki Tsereteli, Dimitri Kipiani, Niko Nikoladze, Giorgi Tsereteli, Iakob Gogebashvili, Vaja Pshavela, Sergei Meskhi, etc. The political atmosphere of the period gave a strong impetus to the strengthening of the tendency discussed above.

The so-called liberal reforms and various forms of the social movement started in the third quarter of the 19th century in Russia which also raised hopes for genuine changes concerning the future of Georgia. On the other hand, bourgeois national states were formed in Europe in the 70s of the century. As a result of this, social-economic development of European countries was further enhanced and industrialisation secured the easing of European economic crises and demographic development. Due to this fact, in order to strengthen and speed the national self-determination process, Georgian intelligentsia started to pay more attention to events happening in Europe. For this reason numerous articles were published in Georgian periodicals of the time “Sakartvelos Gazeti” (“The Newspaper of Georgia”), “Sakartvelos Moambe” (“The Messenger of Georgia”), “Droeba” (“The Times”), “Iveria,” “Tsnobisputseli” (“The leaflet of information”), the Journal “Tsiskari” (“The Daystar”) etc. Specifically, the articles were dedicated to the description of European political structures, the social life, technical and scientific progress, the educational system and cultural life; to all the spheres of life contributing to building a powerful Europe.

The main function and goal of the Georgian press of the period were precisely defined by Ilia Chavchavadze: “Journals and newspapers disseminate knowledge and attitudes. They present one big school which should generate, revive and refine the attitudes and beliefs, feelings and tastes of the society. The journals and newspapers measure the necessity and demands of the society.” “Iveria,” which was founded and issued over

30 years (1877-1906) by Iliа Chavchavadze, responded to the above-mentioned especially well.”⁵

Relying on the experience of Europe and Russia, “Tergdaleulebi” started a large-scale cultural and educational movement aiming at the development of national science, culture, literature and mother tongue. This was even more important for awakening the feeling of national self-awareness among nationally oppressed peoples.

Iliа Chavchavadze believed that, due to the gradual accumulation of knowledge, every next generation reaches new heights of development compared to the previous one. By educating himself a person can perfect themselves and improve his standard of living. He wrote: “Young people should be educated relying on conscientiousness and diligence by accumulating as much knowledge as possible of European science. Led and equipped by European experience, the youth should start doing the job in our country.”

Iliа envisaged realisation of common interests as the foundation for building up the ideology on common ground. He believed that only developing science can unify interests (in social, national, political and cultural spheres) and Georgia needs “teachers, doctors, technicians, etc.” Chavchavadze also maintained that the fight against ignorance was one of the most effective means of developing the nation.⁶

A large-scale education of people from all social layers of society was considered to be a fertile soil for spiritual development. In the period of the colonial regime schools existing and functioning in the country would not be suitable for that goal. However, this function could be taken over by schools founded as a result of private initiatives. This became feasible only after local institutions or private persons were given the opportunity to found primary public schools.

According to Chavchavadze and one of the like-minded public figures, Iakob Gogebashvili, ⁷ unless the language is used to educate people it cannot function in the same way as the native tongue. Only the language by which a child adapts to the environment can be considered to be the mother tongue.⁸

Chavchavadze thought that general knowledge and science are the foundation which conditions the progress of the country. Therefore scholars are the group of society who first feel the heartbeat of life, realise the need for change and are able to channel the changes into the positive development of the country.⁹

Organisations founded in the period (The Society for the Spreading of Literacy among Georgians and The Georgian Historical-Ethnographic Society) existed on private donations and became the best tools for realising these ideals. The Society for the Spreading of Literacy among Georgians aimed at spreading books and knowledge among those Georgians living in the Caucasian region of the Russian Empire. Therefore, according to the regulations of the society, it “helped already functioning schools or opened new schools at its own expense and published textbooks for schools as well as books for public use. In addition, it set up book depositories for people and warehouses and also storage rooms to give books out freely or upon payment. It also prepared public teachers for already functioning schools or opened schools at the society’s expense.” In the third paragraph of the regulations, it is mentioned that the language of tuition at primary schools was the native language whereas Russian was taught as a subject¹⁰. The main goal of the other society was to collect, explore and store historical, archaeological, anthropological, literary and ethnographic remains available not only in Georgia but also in the Caucasus and neighbouring countries. The duty of The Georgian Historical-Ethnographic Society was to open a museum to store and protect various materials, manuscripts and books published in Caucasian Studies. In addition it was planned to publish journals, collections, books, atlases, dictionaries, maps, paintings and music notes in the Georgian and Russian languages, to organise scientific expeditions, etc. The Society also aimed at organising archaeological digs, assisting science and scientific societies in exploring the history of the Caucasus and neighbouring countries. Two series of periodicals were founded together with the Society: “Dzveli Sakartvelo” (“Ancient Georgia”) and “Sakartvelos Sidzveleni” (“Antiquities of Georgia”).¹¹ The complex and multi-branch work of the Society conditioned the extremely positive reputation it enjoyed and thus it

was referred to in the official document as the “only institution carrying out scholarly goals.”¹²

Fighting against the Russifying politics of the Empire, the “Tergdaleulebi” assigned a crucial role to the development of historical studies. They correctly maintained that nothing raised the level of the people’s awareness better than learning and making an evaluation of their own history. Chavchavadze believed that by learning the history of the nation it is possible to perceive the past and present of the nation as well as to predict its future. Therefore, in the second part of the 19th century, the development of the history of Georgia as a field of science and knowledge bore the function of fighting for maintaining national self-respect and dignity. Georgian historians worked day and night, largely based only on enthusiasm, to develop this branch of science.

Despite long and rich traditions enjoyed by the Georgian historical studies,¹³ the scholars working in the 60s of the 19th century (David Chubinashvili, Marie Brosset, Dimitri Bakradze, Alexander Tsagareli, Mose Janashvili, Tedo Zhordania, and Ekvtime Takaishvili, amongst others) found themselves in an extremely difficult position.¹⁴ Specifically, there were no stable and reputable sources, which is a crucial condition for the scientific perception of the country’s past. By creating the lacking base source, promoting Georgian cultural heritage, publishing historical-literary works and translating them into foreign languages (mainly in Russian), participating in international and archaeological congresses, the young scientists aimed at promoting the Georgian national culture and its historical past and making it known to the international scholarly community. All this, as was genuinely believed, would facilitate the recognition of the unique, rich cultural heritage of the country with lost statehood in the international arena and development of Kartvelian science at the European level. These objectives were noble and would bring serious results in the case of fulfilment. Therefore, it is interesting to find out the extent of the hard work they did to achieve their goals; what they managed to do and what they failed in. I am sure that in the future a very serious effort will be invested in this issue. However, currently, it is possible to say that they proposed a new way of understanding and perceiving a number of problems persistent in

Georgian history. They introduced the necessity of studying Georgian history systematically and tried to define the shortcomings of the previous studies about Georgian history in order to show the ways of its perfection. Most importantly, having worked incessantly these scholars created a rich foundation of the source studies. The combination of all of these factors allowed the next generation of scientists, represented, amongst others, by Ivane Javakhishvili, to conquer new heights.¹⁵

The Georgian public opinion of the time opposed the understanding of history from provincial positions. Fatalism contradicted the logical understanding of history studies. It was assumed that the development and advancement of society depend on its efforts. According to Georgian researchers, a historian does not possess the full knowledge of the causes of a specific event, which makes the explanations provided by him faulty, whereas constant research is necessary for perfection. As well as this, particular importance was attached to the use of a comparative methodology in research. Georgian historians believed that the best method with which to study written sources was the critical-historical method.

The Georgian Historical Society was well aware of the scientific methods of processing archaeological, linguistic, epigraphic, ethnographic, oral and other materials (its members were educated in Moscow, St. Petersburg, Kazan, Geneva, Leipzig, Zürich, Paris, and at other Universities). However, at that time, it was not possible to conduct research meeting the requirements of advanced methodology in Georgia, and therefore, the scholars worked tirelessly to create these conditions.

In the present work the development of Georgian historical opinion of the second half of the 19th century is presented using Tedo Zhordania's example because the subject of our research is his scholarly heritage. Although Tedo Zhordania was not part of the "Tergdaleulebi" movement, he supported the national-liberation movement with his work and toiled tirelessly together with Ilia Chavchavadze regarding the newspaper "Iveria." In his turn, Ilia greatly appreciated Zhordania's devoted work.

There arises a question regarding the course of action Zhordania belonged to with his worldview. It is difficult to answer this question unequivocally. First of all, Zhordania stands on the national standpoint and

explores ancient national monuments. Zhordania also gives priority to the study of the contribution made by individuals rather than contemplate the mass history, which makes him closer to humanists. He denies the struggle between classes and thus shares the opinion of positivism.

It can also be claimed that Zhordania's research methods are also largely positivist. He collected facts, described manuscripts, inscriptions on manuscripts, genealogies, antique objects of ancient churches, inscriptions of gravestones etc. In addition, Zhordania brought into scientific circulation political, social, legal, ecclesiastical content and charters. He achieved great success in the publication of historical sources.

Zhordania was particularly critical when studying sources, drawing attention to both their appearance and content. In his studies there are examples of the use of the separate methods employed in the practice of source studies. His research follows the classical division of the methods of historical research by positivists: he not only explores sources but also makes a critique and determines the importance of facts. Not only does he describe the history but he also explores the events based on the facts seeking a cause and effect relationship between the facts and events (which is not typical of positivism), specifies the facts based on the sources and reconstructs political decisions. All this places Zhordania amongst the new generation of the 19th century historians who contributed to the advanced development and enhancement of historical science.

ENDNOTES

¹ Permanent invasions of Georgia by numerous enemies (Mongols, Iranians, Ottomans etc.) and development of feudalism caused the decline of the economy, weakening of state governance, political disorders and violation of the integrity of the country. As a result, in 1490 the Bagrationi Royal House legally announced the breaking up of Georgia. Georgia was divided between the representatives of the House. Specifically, the kingdoms of Kartli and Kakheti were formed in Eastern Georgia. In the aftermath Erekle II (King of the Kartli-Kakheti Kingdom in 1762-1798), managed to unite Kartli and Kakheti again. At the same time the Imereti Kingdom was formed in Western Georgia. However, its constituent elements gradually came out of the political influence of the Imereti ruler and transformed

- into the principalities of Guria, Samegrelo, Svaneti, and Abkhazia, ruled by Georgian feudal clans. (See *History of Georgia* 2008. II. Asatani, N. and according to Givi Jamburia's edition. Tbilisi: Tbilisi University Press: 97-123).
- ² The Russian Empire finally managed to abolish the Kingdom of Imereti in 1830 and after that the principalities of Guria, Samegrelo, Svaneti, and Abkhazia were easily abolished (in 1829-1864).
- ³ *History of Georgia (the 19th Century)* 2004. Edited by Guruli, V. for TSU students, Tbilisi: Tbilisi University press: 78-91. See in the same book: "The description of Georgia's political map after the establishment of Russia's rule": 6 - 7. (In Georgian).
- ⁴ "Tergdaleulebi" - Public, political and literary movement in Georgia of the 60s of the 19th century. Young Georgian educated people who were supporters of new trends in social life were referred to by this name.
- ⁵ For Chavchavadze's opinion about the press functions see Gogiashvili, Omar. 2008. *Ilia Today*. Tbilisi: 429-434.
- ⁶ Chavchavadze, Ilia. 1955. *A complete collection of works in ten volumes*. Edited by Ingorokva, P. Vol. V. Tbilisi: Sakhelgami: 116.
- ⁷ Iakob Gogebashvili (1849-1912) a Georgian teacher, publicist, children's writer and public figure, was educated at Kiev Theological Academy. He was one of the founders of the "Society for the Spreading of Literacy among the Georgians," the author of the "Gateway to Nature" and "Mother Language." His works played a major role in the development and establishment of a new Georgian literary language.
- ⁸ Gogebashvili, Iakob. 1953. "A complete collection of works in four volumes." *Pedagogical works*. Edited by G. Tszishvili. Vol. II. Tbilisi: Sakhelgami.
- ⁹ Chavchavadze, Ilia. 1953. *A complete collection of works in ten volumes*. Edited by Ingorokva, P. Vol. III. Tbilisi: Sakhelgami: 73.
- ¹⁰ Goderidze, Lamara. 2000. *Cultural-educational movement in Georgia in the second part of the 19th century and early 20th century*. Tbilisi: Tbilisi University Press: 66-67.
- ¹¹ See Metreveli, Roin. 1982. *The Georgian Historical and Ethnographic Society*. Tbilisi: Khelovneba.
- ¹² The Russian Empire adopted the law on the establishment of a private higher education institution in non-Russian languages only in 1914. In Tbilisi on January 26, 1918, the University founded under Iv. Javakhishvili's leadership took over the function of this society.
- ¹³ See Lordkipanidze, Mariam. 2016. *Georgian Hagiography and Development of Historical Thinking*. Selected Works, Tbilisi: Meridiani: 481-490; Lordkipanidze, Mariam. 1976. *Georgian Historical Writings of the Early Feudal Age*, Tbilisi: Sabchota Sakartvelo. Lordkipanidze, Mariam. 1989. *What is the Kartlis Tskhovreba?* Tbilisi: Tbilisi University Press. Javakhishvili, Ivane. 1977. *Old Georgian Historical Literature*. Works. Vol. VIII. Tbilisi. Tbilisi University Press. Gabashvili, Valerian. 1969. *Vakhushti Bagrationi*. Tbilisi: Nakaduli. Khantadze, Shota. 1985. *Georgian Historiography in the 18th Century*. Tbilisi: Metsniereba. Nadiradze, Ketevan. 2012. *Georgian historiography. A course of lectures*. Universali. Topics: I, II, III. (All in Georgian).
- ¹⁴ See Kintsurashvili, Korneli. 1974. *Alexander Tsagareli*. Tbilisi: Ganatleba; Makhadadze, Nino. 1967. *The Centre of the Georgian Culture in St Petersburg*. Tbilisi: Sabchota Saqartvelo;