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**Migrations of the Russian Language  
and the State Academic Institutions:  
Notes on Its Cultivation and Depopularization  
in Georgia and Its Peripheries (Abkhazia and South Ossetia)**

The development of literary studies is dependent on the geopolitical factor.<sup>1</sup> It can create the appearance of support for state interests, active participation in nation-building, in the establishment of a new state as well as in the destruction of old attitudes, which have lost their former relevance, and the search for a new form of expression. I have come to these conclusions by turning to the study of Russian-Georgian literary relations.<sup>2</sup> The imperial-colonial feature of relations between Georgia and Russia has been determined for centuries and all layers of scientific, social, and cultural life are saturated with it. In this article, which is based on an interdisciplinary approach since I address historical, political, and cultural aspects, I aim to analyze the development and characteristics of research on the history of Russian literature in Georgia. This work does not claim to be a complete analysis of the research process in the Georgian SSR and its peripheries (the Abkhaz ASSR and South Ossetian AO) before and after the USSR, the extent of the article does not provide such an opportunity. Nevertheless,

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<sup>1</sup> E. Chkhaidze, *Politika I issledovanie russko-gruzinskikh literaturnykh svyazei v Gruzii: s sovetskogo perioda po postsovetskii*, NLO, Moscow 2018, pp. 347–365.

<sup>2</sup> Ibidem, pp. 371–373.

I will expand the boundaries of the topic that I began prior to analyzing the history of science in the above-mentioned peripheries (Abkhazia and South Ossetia). The USSR was a specific type of empire<sup>3</sup> – “the empire of affirmative action” as professor and specialist in Slavic studies Terry Martin referred to it. In Martin’s book *The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the USSR, 1923–1939* (2001), contradicting numerous works, he proves that the actions of the center of USSR empire were focused on a policy of benefits and preferences for national minorities. Beginning in 1917, when the Bolsheviks came to power, one of the most vivid slogans about “the rights of nations to self-determination” drew “affirmative” actions, which were aimed at supporting various “forms” of nations’ existence: national elites, culture, languages, and, in the end, territories were the most important. Martin introduces the term “territorialization of ethnicities,” that is, if an ethnos received its territory, which took place at the beginning of the Soviet state’s history, then attributes had to be invented or found for each “territory” to emphasize their special feature in the large state of the Soviets. The American scholar is echoed by researchers in Moscow: “the Soviet Union <...> was a unique state because, firstly, ethnic qualifiers here acquired the character of civic categories, i.e., they began to be called nationalities; and secondly, proceeding from the understanding of ethnicity as the basis of a socialist nation, the process of the so-called nation-state building was carried out”.<sup>4</sup>

David C. Moore in the article *Is the Post- in Postcolonial the Post- in Post-Soviet? Toward a Global Postcolonial Critique* comes to the conclusion that the USSR conducted a policy of eliminating privileges for Russians in the south and east of the former Russian empire, and the Soviet government made great efforts to develop industry, educational and medical spheres on the “periphery”: construction of factories, manufacturing plants, schools, hospitals, and the liberation of women from harems.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> D. Moore, *Is the Post- in Postcolonial the Post- in Post-Soviet? Toward a Global Postcolonial Critique*, “PMLA” 2001, Vol. 116, No. 1, Special Topic: Globalizing Literary Studies, p. 111–128.2001; T. Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923–1939*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 2001; M. Tlostanova, *Žit’ nikogda, pisat’ niotkuda. Postsovetskaja kul’tura i estetika transkul’turacii*. Moskau 2004.

<sup>4</sup> V.A. Tishkov, U.P. Shabev, *Etnopolitologia*, Moscow 2019, pp. 54–55.

<sup>5</sup> D. Moore, op. cit., p. 123

A result of the “affirmative action” was the creation of a science that would confirm and record the “friendship of peoples” in writing, based on cultural and historical facts. Thanks to this, Russian literary studies appeared with a Georgian, Abkhazian, Ossetian, etc. accent. The center-periphery<sup>6</sup> hierarchy in our case supplemented each other’s knowledge and promoted the formation of interethnic institutions, which were out of the question (universities, institutes, faculties, publishing houses).

I must mention in advance the difficulties that I encountered. They concern the personalities and scientific works of literary scholars from Abkhazia and South Ossetia. It was not possible to collect complete information about those who comprised the core of the science, what they wrote, and details about the formation of departments because access to the archives of the autonomies is not possible for various reasons, including the fact that many archives were burned or went missing during the armed conflicts of the 1990s in Abkhazia and South Ossetia. I was, however, able to compile a picture from fragmented information. Furthermore, I will name the institutions, which were involved in the study of Russian literature, but I will limit myself to monographs and not articles published in university collections or newspapers again due to the limitations of the current work.

The analysis will be based on the periodization which I once proposed in the article *Politika i issledovanie russko-gruzinskikh literaturnykh svyazei v Gruzii: s sovetskogo perioda po postsovetskii* [Politics and the study of Russian-Georgian literary ties in Georgia: from the Soviet period to post-Soviet period]<sup>7</sup>. At that time, I identified 5 periods in the study of these ties: pre-Soviet, Soviet (early-Soviet (from the formation of the GSSR to the 1950s), the period of “stagnation” (mid-1960 – 1980s), late-Soviet (end of the 1980s up until the collapse of the USSR)), first post-Soviet (1990s), and second post-Soviet (2000s to the present day).

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<sup>6</sup> I use the designations of Russia, Georgia, Abkhazia, and South Ossetia conditionally. With their usage I imply the Russia Empire, and then the RSFSR and the Russian Federation; and accordingly, the Georgian principalities, then the Georgian SSR and modern Georgia, as well as the Soviet Georgian autonomous units of the Abkhaz ASSR and South Ossetian Autonomous Oblast.

<sup>7</sup> E. Chkhaïdze, *Politika i issledovanie russko-gruzinskikh literaturnykh svyazei v Gruzii: s sovetskogo perioda po postsovetskii* (Politics and the study of Russian-Georgian literary ties in Georgia: from the Soviet period to post-Soviet period), “Toronto Slavic Quarterly”, 2015, No. 53, pp. 92–112.

### *Pre-Soviet Period*

It is not necessary to speak about an organized study of Russian literature in Georgia and on its peripheries during the pre-Soviet period. There were no institutions and motivations for such a study. Literary life was reduced to a friendly conversation of writers, teachers of the Russian language and literature in secondary Georgian educational institutions and at the Higher Women's Courses, which was the only higher educational institution in the Caucasus to publish works by Russian writers and textbooks for schools and courses in Georgia.<sup>8</sup>

The arrival of the Russian Empire in the Caucasus prompted the emergence of the school of Caucasian studies.<sup>9</sup> The first major scientific works appeared thanks to the orientalist Marie-Félicité Brosset, and later his student, academic, Nikolai Marr. The need to study geography, ethnography, culture of Caucasian and Transcaucasian peoples was due to the goal of strengthening the Russian Empire in the region. It then became clear that military conquest alone would not make the Caucasus and Transcaucasia completely Russian. Religious and cultural bonds were to become the means of fundamental conquest. It was very difficult to proliferate one's knowledge and culture among an illiterate population. According to the census of 1897 in Abkhazia, 9 out of 10 people were illiterate. The Russian Empire began to resolve its problem of illiteracy, and the Soviets continued this. To achieve the goal of eliminating illiteracy, the imperial

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<sup>8</sup> For example, the books by: A.V. Barsov, *Literatura posle Gogolya: Posobie dlya gimnazii* [Literature after Gogol: a Textbook for Gymnasiums] Tiflis 1912; *Ocherki iz istorii russkoi literatury: Dva paral.* [Essays from the History of Russian literature: Two Parallels] 1st edition. Tiflis 1911; *Sintaksicheskii zadachnik* [Syntactic Problem Book], Tiflis 1913; *Zhivoe slovo dlya izucheniya rodnogo yazyka: Metodika* [The Live Word for Studying a Native Language: Methodology] Practical. Course 3. Tiflis 1907; or D.N. Mikhailov, *Ocherki russkoi poezii XIX veka* [Essays on Russian Poetry XIX Century], 1905; or V. Martynovskii, *Russkie pisateli v vybore i obrabotke dlya shkol* [Russian Writers in Choice and Development for School: [with stress marks]. T. 2. I, Pushkin. Gogol. Lermontov. Turgenev. L. Tolstoy. Maikov. Goncharov. II, Lomonosov. Dmitriev. Derzhavin. Fonvizin. Karamazin. Zhukovskii: Book for Lessons in the Country's Language in III and IV classes. secondary educational institutions and in higher classes of city and district schools: with stress marks Tiflis 1905; *Kavkazskaya polemika o Pushkine* [Caucasian Polemic about Pushkin] (collection of articles), Tiflis 1899.

<sup>9</sup> Or see: <http://www.kavkazoved.info/news/2011/11/10/stranicy-otechestvennogo-kavkazovedeniya-ii.html>.

power of the pre-Soviet period set itself the task of creating a writing system for the *gortsy* [mountain people] so that they could easily become familiar with Russian culture and, preferably, this system would be based on the Cyrillic alphabet:

...грамотность на родномъ языкѣ должна доставаться горцамъ весьма легко, – такъ же легко, какъ достается она учащимся въцѣлой просвѣщенной Европѣ при разумной системѣ обученія. Сверхъ того, должна она подготавливать и располагать горцевъ къ изученію русскагои къ ознакомленію съ русскимъ образованіемъ. Очевидно, что оба условія въ совокупности могутъ быть достигнуты лишь тогда, когда въ основанія горскихъ алфавитовъ принять будетъ алфавитъ русскій

[literacy in one's native language should be very easy for the mountain people – just as easily as it is for students in the entirety of enlightened Europe with a reasonable teaching system. Moreover, literacy should prepare and organize the mountain people for the study of Russian with an acquaintance of the Russian educational system. It is apparent that both conditions, in total, can only be achieved when the Russian alphabet is adopted on the basis of the mountain people's alphabets]

The original Georgian writing system had already existed for several centuries, but it had to be created for Abkhazians and Ossetians. There is a version that the first book in Ossetian was printed in Cyrillic in 1798, and several years later various church books were found printed in the Georgian alphabet. Ossetian grammar was created by the linguist and ethnographer *Andreas Johan Sjögren* and published in 1844 based on the Cyrillic alphabet. Regarding the Abkhazian language, the Russian major general, historian and Caucasian scholar, *Petr Uslar*<sup>10</sup> played a leading<sup>11</sup> role in its development. In 1862, he published the first Abkhaz grammar and proposed a version of the alphabet, in which there were 55 letters: letters from the Latin, Greek, Serbian, Old Church Slavonic, and Georgian alphabets were added to the Cyrillic, as well as newly invented letters that

<sup>10</sup> *Languages of the Peoples of the USSR*. Volume 4. *Iberian-Caucasian languages*. See *Abkhazskii yazyk* [Abkhazian Language] (K.V. Lomtadidze, ed. by E.A. Bokareva and K.V. Lomtadidze, Moscow 1967, pp. 101–122).

<sup>11</sup> Newly scripted languages of peoples of the USSR. See: I.O. Getsadze, *Abkhazskii yazyk* [Abkhazian Language], Moscow–Leningrad 1959, pp. 232–239.

previously did not exist. In 1865, the first Abkhazian primer was published, compiled on the basis of Uslar's letter outline with minor changes. However, the primer was not widely distributed due to the small number of schools and the lack of teachers in the region. Later, the alphabet would be modified numerous times.

The history of the first school in Abkhazia can serve as an example of the spread of the Russian language and the restriction of the national language. It was in this school that instruction in the Abkhazian language first began and this was connected to the Georgian priest (future archimandrite) Ioanne Ioseliani. He proposed to the Abkhazian ruler a project to open a parish-school, which was meant to conduct instruction in the Abkhazian language. The proposal was approved, but authorities of the Russian Empire rejected the initiative. Several years later, on May 30, 1851, the Holy Synod of the Russian Church decided to open an Abkhazian theological school. On September 25, 1852, a school (consisting of 4 classes) appeared in the village of Lykhny. Here, the teaching of jurisprudence, Russian language, Georgian language, penmanship in the Russian and Georgian languages, arithmetic, Russian and Georgian grammar, etc. was conducted in the Abkhazian language. This was the first instance in the history of teaching the Abkhaz language. Previously, Abkhazians received their education primarily in Georgian or Russian. The existence of the Georgian and the emergence of the Abkhazian and Ossetian writing system towards the end of the pre-Soviet period prepared the people for the assimilation of Soviet ideology.

### *Soviet Period*

#### *Early-Soviet Period*

The history of Slavic studies associated with the study of Russian literature in Georgia began during Soviet times when institutes and universities appeared, in which the history of Russian literature began to be taught. In the Caucasus there were no higher educational institutions, except for the Higher Women's Courses in Tiflis. To receive a higher education, young people went to the central part of the Russian Empire (Moscow, Saint-

Petersburg, etc.) or Europe. Only with the Bolsheviks coming to power did universities appear in Tbilisi, Yerevan, and Baku.

One of the first “affirmative actions of empire” was aimed at combating literacy and creating a vaster educational system, although the message was given even before the formation of the USSR. In 1903, at II congress of the RSDL, the main principles of the future state’s educational system were announced in the party’s program: “... 8) The right of the people to receive an education in their native language, ensured by the creation of the necessary schools at the expense of the state and public authorities.”<sup>12</sup> As for higher education, the establishment of a university in the Caucasus was discussed in the beginning of the 1910s and it was assigned a unifying role with the empire:

It should be borne in mind that the secondary educational institutions of the Caucasus graduate up to 1,000 young people annually who are currently forced to leave their families for higher education and travel to other cities, even abroad, where they very often fall under the disastrous influence of various revolutionary organizations. It is completely clear that under such conditions the idea of the need to open a higher school in the region has long been ripe among the educated strata of Caucasian society. In the past, various political fears were an obstacle to satisfying this understandable desire of the local population, which provided for the possibility of turning such a school into a weapon for disseminating separatist ideas in the Caucasus. However, such fears are hardly substantiated since it is not the school that produces and nurtures separatist tendencies, but rather the social and family traditions of the environment and location. ... the opening of a university in Tiflis for the creation there of a properly established Russian higher educational institution cannot but a serious cultural and unifying influence.<sup>13</sup>

The first attempt to establish a university was a failure, and the next attempt was undertaken by the Provisional government:

To establish in the city of Tiflis a polytechnical institute consisting of four faculties: agricultural, chemistry, hydromechanics – with hydrotechnical and

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<sup>12</sup> Documents and materials from the II congress of the RSDLP. 17 July – 10 August (30 July – 23 August) 1903. Minutes, Moscow 1959, pp. 418–424.

<sup>13</sup> Special journal of the Council of Ministers. 9 February 1912. Regarding the opening of new higher educational institutions and expansion of existing ones // RGIA F. 1276. Ор. 20. Д. 56. Л. 73 об.

hydroelectromechanical departments, and economics with trade and commercial departments – with the designation of the aforementioned institute as a higher educational institution of the department of the Ministry of Public Education.<sup>14</sup>

In pre-revolutionary Russia, there were 105 higher educational institutions, and in the Caucasus, there was only one – the Higher Women's Courses in Tbilisi where 300 students were enrolled.<sup>15</sup>

The Bolshevik's coming to power was fateful. The construction of a communist society began (Lenin, *ibidem*, V. 41, p. 301), new educational institutions and institutions of a new form were actively opened. In 1918, a university was opened in Tbilisi, and universities in Yerevan and Baku in 1920. It is not surprising that a university was firstly opened in Georgia. It was noted more than once that the first schools and academies appeared on Georgian and Armenian territory. For example, the article *Higher Education* in the Great Soviet Encyclopedia includes the following:

The Georgian Colchian Higher Rhetorical School (4th century) as well as academies, created in the 11–12 centuries (Galati, Ikalto, and others), played a large role in the development of education on the territory of the USSR (within its present borders). The Gelati Academy (near Kutaisi) became the center of Soviet education – at the academy arithmetic, geometry, philosophy, grammar, rhetoric, and music was taught. Furthermore, the history of Georgia and neighboring states, medicine, jurisprudence, natural science, Greek, and Arabic languages were studied at Georgian academies.

In 1927–1928, there were already 6 higher educational institutions in the Georgian SSR, in which there were 10,503 students and by 1959–1960 there were already 51,100 students.<sup>16</sup> If we speak about Georgia, then after the Tbilisi University, higher educational institutions appeared in its Autonomous formations (Abkhaz ASSR and the South-Ossetian Autonomous

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<sup>14</sup> “*Ob uchrezhdenii Tifliskogo politechnicheskogo instituta*” [About the creation of Tiflis Polytechnical Institute] // SU. 1917, № 175, 29 July, pp. 970, pp. 1729–1733. See: Archive of the new history of Russia. Series “*Publikatsii*” [Publications], T. VIII. Journals of the meetings of the Provisional government: March–October 1917. In 4 volumes. 2nd volume May–June 1917, Moscow 2002.

<sup>15</sup> Sh.I. Basiliya, *Sukhumskii gosudarstvennyi institut* [Sukhumi State Institute], Sukhumi 1962, p. 5.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 7.



Oblast). In 1931 at a joint meeting of the CPK<sup>17</sup> and EC<sup>18</sup> of Georgia, a decision was made regarding the organization of the Abkhaz Pedagogical Institute. The reason for this was the evident lack of teachers in the region. In 1932, the Georgian People's Commissariat for Education issued a resolution to open a pedagogical institute in Sukhumi, which became Abkhaz State University in 1979 (Basilaya, 1962, 8). Also, in 1932 a pedagogical institute was opened in the city of Stalinir (later Tskhinvali, South Ossetia), which grew into the South Ossetian University.

Since the 1920s, affirmative action was especially appearing in regard to peoples who did not have their own writing systems and scientific institutions. For example, as noted in the book *ABNO i ego razgrom. 1922–1931* [Abkhaz scientific community and its destruction. 1922–1931]:

Prior to the revolution of 1917, there was not one scientific institution in Abkhazia nor one researcher of Abkhazian nationality with special theoretical training.<sup>19</sup> After the establishment of the ABNO<sup>20</sup> in 1922 in Abkhazia, on the initiative of the founder of Caucasian studies Nikolai Marr, the “Academy of Abkhaz Language and Literature” was formed (1925),

which subsequently changed its name numerous times. The same occurred with South Ossetia: in 1922, the Scientific and Literary Society was created, which turned into the South Ossetian Scientific and Research Institute of Language, Literature, and History.<sup>21</sup>

Faculties of the humanities were supposed to play an important role in the formation of a new society and writing the history of the “friendship of peoples,” which the first appearance of the following confirms: philosophy in Tbilisi, historical-philological in Baku, and historical-linguistic in Yerevan.

New personnel were needed to implement, among other things, the tasks set out in party documents (documents of the XIII party congress “On the Press” (1924) and the resolution of the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party(b) in 1925 “On party policies in the field of fiction.” The first of them states that in the field of educational literature

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<sup>17</sup> The Council of People's Commissars.

<sup>18</sup> Economic Council.

<sup>19</sup> ABNO I ego razgrom (1922–1931), Sukhum 2021, p. 3.

<sup>20</sup> Abkhazian Scientific Community.

<sup>21</sup> South Ossetia in the period of building socialism, Metsniereba 1981, p. 5.

it is necessary “to set the main task as the final transition to the production of new political and methodologically sound textbooks, teaching and methodological manuals” (see. *O partiinoi i sovetskoj pečati, radioveshčanii i televidenii* [About Party and Soviet Printing, Radio Broadcasting and Television]. Collection of materials and documents, 1972, p. 114) and it is “necessary to achieve the transition of all national publishing houses to printing in non-Russian languages, the issuance of sound cheap textbook for primary schools (...)” (see: *O partiinoi i sovetskoj pečati, radioveshčanii i televidenii* [About Party and Soviet Printing, Radio Broadcasting and Television]. Collection of materials and documents, 1972, p. 112). If before the Revolution of 1917 the Russian language was the main and only one for all spheres, then after the Revolution emphasis was placed on supporting national languages and receiving an education in one’s native language. 1932 was the most striking year in this regard as it was the peak in the development of teaching in national languages: instruction in schools was conducted in 104 languages.<sup>22</sup>

Indigenization of the 1920s–1930s was carried out alongside the Russification of “fraternal peoples of the USSR”: “The entire framework of Soviet culture was based on a specific interpretation of Russian culture”<sup>23</sup>. A twofold principle of national politics existed in the USSR: on the one hand, the creation of a nation, and on the other hand, suppression, but not destruction of those that existed<sup>24</sup>. In the 1930s, in parallel with the departments of national languages and literature, departments of Russian language and literature were created in all educational institutions of the Soviet republics, in our case:

- (pedagogical institute in the city of Stalinir) 1933 – creation of the departments of language and literature for the Russian and Ossetian sectors, and in 1937 – the department of Russian language;
- (pedagogical institute in the city of Sukhumi) 1933 – creation of the department of Russian language, 1937 – department of the history of Russian and foreign literature;

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<sup>22</sup> N. Zamorskaya, *Rodnaja rech: kak Stalin vnedrjal russkij jazyk*, 2018, <https://www.gazeta.ru/social/2018/03/12/11679751.shtml?updated>.

<sup>23</sup> S. Lur’e, *Imperium. Imperija – cennostnyj i etnopsichičeskij podchod*, Moskau 2012.

<sup>24</sup> Ibidem.

- (Tbilisi State University) 1933 – creation of the department of Russian language and history of Russian literature.<sup>25</sup>

During the same years, textbooks on Russian literature appeared in national languages (Georgian in our case), textbooks are published on national literature in Russian, and works on interethnic ties emerge. The research process from the perspective of interethnic relations became one of the “bonds” between “us” (Moscow, Russia) and “them” (Tbilisi, Georgia). The authorities put science, for our purposes literary studies, at the service of state interests.

The creation and structuring of higher educational institutions was carried out in Moscow at the All-Union Committee for the Higher Technical School (1932), then in the All-Union Committee for Higher Education under the Council of People’s Commissars of the USSR (1936–1946), and later, already formed on the basis of previous bodies, in the Ministry of Higher and Secondary Specialized Education of the USSR or Minvuz (1946–1988). The appointment of department heads fell upon the university’s academic council. The candidate needed to have the “right biography: be a communist, come from a peasant or working class family. These were for example: Arkadii Markovich Davidovskii (1884–1950) and Sergi (Sergei Iosifovich) Danelia (1888–1963).

A native of the Belarussian city of Mozyr, Davidovskii graduated from a gymnasium in Kiev, then the Imperial Saint-Petersburg Institute of History and Philology and began to work as a school inspector for the People’s Commissariat of Education. He was also a lecturer at the Subtropical Institute, and for the majority of his life he was the head of the Russian language department at Sukhumi Pedagogical Institute. He created the first Russian language textbooks for Abkhaz schools and others.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> I. Modebadze, T. Megrelishvili, *Poslednie “iz mogikan,” ili Krizis gruzinskoi russkoi* [The last “of the Mohicans,” or the Crisis of Georgian Russian studies], “TSQ” 2015, № 53, pp. 113–134.

<sup>26</sup> A.M. Davidoskii, *Russkaya grammatika dlya national’nykh shkol: Posobie po yazyky v svyazi s pravopisaniem i razvitiem rechi dlya 2 klassa* [Russian grammar for national schools: textbook for language in connection with orthography and speech development for the 2nd grade], Sukhumi 1934; A.M. Davidoskii, *Russkaya grammatika dlya national’nykh shkol* [Russian grammar for national schools], Sukhumi 1933; A.M. Davidoskii, *Grammatika russkogo yazyka: dlya IV klassa abkhazskikh shkol* [Grammar of the Russian language: for the IV grade in Abkhaz schools], Sukhumi 1939; A.M. Davidovskii, *Ocobennosti prepoda-*

Danelia, a native of the Marvili village of Nadzhikhao, was educated at Kharkov and Moscow universities. First of all, he was a philosopher, and then a specialist in literary studies. As a philosopher, Danelia applied the approaches of dialectical materialism to literary material. From 1927 he taught a course on Russian literature at Tbilisi University and he served as the department head for “History of Russian Literature” since its creation in 1933. In 1947, he stepped down from his position. Danelia began to give lectures to students of the “Russian” and “Georgian” sectors of the Philological Faculty in Russian and Georgian languages. The first course he created was “The History of Russian Literature” of Old Russian literature up to the 19th century. The only textbook for students was his *Overview of the History of 19th Century Russian Literature*. Danelia suffered a tragic fate. In 1949, he was accused of “cosmopolitanism” and fired from the university. As it turned out later, this was only temporary. However, he was removed as the head of the department indefinitely.<sup>27</sup>

The structure and content of courses on literature, which were taught throughout the GSSR, were oriented on the work of researchers from Tbilisi State University. For example: the first course “History of Russian literature,” which Danelia taught, was limited to the framework of Old Russian literature of the 19th century. As mentioned above, students only had one textbook and in the history of Russian literature he identified three stages: literature from the period of serfdom in Russia, literature after its abolition in 1861, and literature after 1917.

Danelia was the author of reference books and research in the Georgian language: *Ocherki po russkoi literature XIX veka* [Overview of the History of 19th Century Russian Literature] (1st edition, Tbilisi, 1936; 2nd edition, Tbilisi, 1938; 3rd edition, Tbilisi, 1955); *Zhizn' i tvorchestvo Pushkina* [Pushkin’s Life and work] (Tbilisi, 1937); *Zhizn' i tvorchestvo Lermontova* [Lermontov’s Life and Work] (Tbilisi, 1946). Georgian students’ acquaintance with Russian literature began outside the topic of ties with Georgia or the Caucasus.

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*vaniya russkogo yazyka v nerusskikh shkolakh* [Peculiarities of teaching the Russian language in non-Russian schools], Sukhumi, 1941; Reader in literature for national secondary schools, ed. N.G. Vekua, P. I. Tolchin, A.V. Shadova, Sukhumi, 1935.

<sup>27</sup> See D. Tukhareli, *Do dnei poslednikh* [Until our last days], “Russkii klub” 2011, No. 3, pp. 50–51.

For several decades, teachers of the created departments worked on the development of programs for teaching Russian language and literature. A large number of textbooks and anthologies appeared.<sup>28</sup> A majority of Georgian scholars teaching Russian language and literature during the Soviet era were bilingual and freely taught and wrote works in Russian as well as Georgian.<sup>29</sup>

Unfortunately, scholars of literary studies who determined the direction of research on Russian literature in Abkhazia and South Ossetia have not yet been identified, because it has not been possible to restore/find records and documents on this matter. But what is known for sure is that the school of literary studies in Tbilisi University set the tone and the majority of dissertations on Russian literature were defended here, since other universities of the mentioned GSSR had the status of pedagogical institutes and lacked dissertation commissions. For example, the well-known Abkhazian literary scholar A. Papaskiri defended his candidate's dissertation on "Abkhazia in Russian prose of the pre-October period" (1974) in Tbilisi State University under the guidance of professor G. Taliashvili whose books I will mention numerous times.

### *The Period of "Stagnation" and Time Before the Collapse of the USSR*

Beginning from the period of "stagnation" to the post-Soviet period, research on Russian literature in Georgia has been flourishing. In the process of producing knowledge, the strengthening and expansion of interethnic ties

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<sup>28</sup> *Programma po russkomu yazyku dlya abkhazskikh nachaln'nykh, nepol'nykh srednikh i srednikh shkol* [Program in the Russian language for Abkhazian primary, incomplete secondary and secondary schools], Sukhumi 1937; *Programma po russkomu yazyku dlya abkhazskikh nachaln'nykh, nepol'nykh srednikh i srednikh shkol* [Program in the Russian language for Abkhazian primary, incomplete secondary and secondary schools], Sukhumi 1939; *Programma po russkoi literature: Dlya uchitel'skikh institutov Tbilisi* [Program in Russian literature: For teaching institutes of Tbilisi], 1939; *Drevnyaya russkaya literature: (XI–XVII)* [Ancient Russian literature: (XI–XVII), Program for the history of Russian literature (for the faculty of languages and literature), Tbilisi 1938.

<sup>29</sup> D. Tukhareli, Department of the history of Russian literature of TSU. 1. Creation of the department. Academic disciplines. Composition; 2. Study of the problems of literary theory. See *Aktual'nye voprosy mezhnatsional'nykh filologicheskikh obshchenii* [Relevant problems of interethnic philological communication], see the collection of works of the I. Dzavakhishvili, 2002, pp. 225–235.

between the center and periphery, literary scholars have played an important role. They have connected not only writers, their biographies, cities, republics, and literary themes, but united the work of various institutions: academies of sciences, publishers, departments, and universities. Kartvelian scholars could publish articles on the history of Russian literature, and Abkhazian or South Ossetian scholars were most often published in Tbilisi publishing houses. In order to analyze the development of Russian literary studies in the Georgian SSR, I decided to start not only from the names, but from the publishing houses and academic institutions.

The works of the republic's literary scholars, as well as works of fiction in the original or translation, appeared in almost all specialized publishing houses of the republic (Tbilisi – “Zarya Vostoka,” “Merani,” “Ganatileba”; Sukhumi – “Alashara”; Tskhinvali – “Iriston” and others). Scientific articles were published in collections of works by pedagogical institutions, universities, and Academy of Sciences. A writer or scholar had the opportunity to publish their own works in any specialized publishing house. For example: the poetry of the Abkhaz poet Ivan Tarba or Konstantin Lomia *Abkhazskie stroke* [Abkhazian verses] (1987), translation of poems from Abkhazian in the collection *Odnazhdi v aprele* [Once in April] (1982), and also the collection of Ossetian poets translated into Russian – Gagloev Gafez *Za Gorami gori* [There are mountains beyond the mountains...] (1978), Revaz Asaev *Goryachaya pamyat'* [A Keen Memory] (1984), or the general collection of translations from the republics' (Georgian, Abkhazian, and Ossetian) three languages entitled *Vzveites', znamena!* [Soar, banners!] (1987) were printed in the Tbilisian “Merani.” It should be noted that the majority of scientific literature in the GSSR fell not on the publishing houses of autonomous entities, but on the capital's publishing houses located in Tbilisi. This was due to the centralized work of the institutions and a stronger scientific school in the capital, the youth of the scientific school on the periphery and its small population.

The first scientific works about Russian writers in book form began to appear in the publishing house “Sakhelgami (State publishing house)” (1921–1957).<sup>30</sup> It was a part of the structure of the republic's People's

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<sup>30</sup> *Problemi rukopisnoi i pechatnoi knigi* [Problems of handwritten and printed books] [Text] / Academy of Science USSR; [ed.: A.A. Sidorov and others.], Moscow 1976. See.:

Commissariat of Education, and later was turned into the publishing house “Sabchota Sakartvelo” (Soviet Georgia), “Nakaduli” (Brook), and “Tsodna” (Knowledge). The publisher printed political, economic, fiction, children’s, scientific, and other literature, for example: collections of essays by Georgian writers, translations of works by Russian writers, textbooks and others.<sup>31</sup> Here, a reader could find translations from Russian to Georgian with prefaces by Georgian literary scholars: *Evgenii Onegin* [Eugene Onegin] by Pushkin (1935, with a preface by S. Danelia), *Podnyatoi tselini* [Virgin Soil Upturned] by Sholokhov (1st volume, 1934, with a preface by G. Nutsubidze), *Petr Pervyi* [Peter the First] by Aleksei Tolstoy (1935, K. Dzhavrishvili), and also literary works in Georgian: *Lermontov: Zhizhn’ i tvorchestvo* [Lermontov: Life and work] (1946, S. Danelia), *Etiudy iz russkoi literatury. L. Tolstoy. Estetika of N. Chernyshevskogo* [Etudes from the history of Russian literature. L. Tolstoy. Aesthetics of N. Chernyshevsky] (1928, S. Danelia), *Zhizhn’ i tvorchestvo Pushkina* [Pushkin’s life and work] (1937, S. Danelia).

Legendary publishers picked up the baton: “Zarya Vostoka” and “Marani.” In “Zarya Vostoka,” many Georgian works of fiction were published in their Russian translation, and many works by Georgian literary scholars appeared: I. Enikolopov *Lermontov na Kavkaze* [Lermontov in the Caucasus] (1940), I. Andronikov *Lermontov v Gruzii v 1837* [Lermontov in Georgia in 1837] (1958), G. Bebutov *Uchenicheskie gody Vladmira Mayakovskogo (Kutaisskaya gimnaziya)* [Vladimir Mayakovsky’s Student Years (Kutaissi gymnasium)] (1955), L. Asatiani *Druzhiba bratskikh literatur (literaturnye svyazi gruzinskogo naroda s bratskimi narodami SSSR)* [Friendship of Brotherly Literature (literary ties of the Georgian people with Brotherly Peoples of the USSR)] (1958), G. Taliashvili *A.P. Chekhov: zhizn’ i tvorchestvo* [A.P. Chekov: life and work] (1950). The first volume of the first textbook on the history of Russian literature in the Georgian language was printed by the “Tsodina” and “Zarya Vostoka” publishing houses in 1960. The second and third volumes were issued in 1962 and 1963. Its author was a profes-

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Sh.V. Tsvediani, M.Ya. Fizitskii, *Book publishing in Georgia during the first years of Soviet rule (1921–1925)*.

<sup>31</sup> P. Gugushvili, *Etapi razvitiya gruzinskogo sovetskogo knigoizdatel’sтва 1921–1937* [Stages of development for Georgian Soviet book publishing 1921–1937], Moscow 1967.

sor at Tbilisi State University, Georgii Taliashvili. He was also the author of books in Georgian about Chekhov (*A.P. Chekhov: zhizn' i tvorchestvo* [A.P. Chekov: Life and Work] (1960), Lomonosov *M. V. Lomonosov*, 1962). In addition, he developed the program for the discipline “History of Russian Literature” to be taught in Georgian higher educational institutions.

“Merani,” which specialized in publishing Russian and Georgian literature in both languages, released the following works in Georgian: T. Buachidze *Gogol, Dostoevsky, Tolstoi* (1973), *Mikhail Sholokhov* (1975); I. Bogomolov *Ocharovat'nyi kraï... [A Delightful Region]* (1999, for the anniversary of Pushkin, G. Taliashvili *Lev Tolstoi* [Lev Tolstoy] (1985), G. Dzhibladze *Epokha Sholokhova* [The Era of Sholokhov] (1980), *Za khrebtom Kavkaza: 160 let so dnya rozhdeniya M.IU. Lermontova* [Behind the Ridge of the Caucasus: 160 years since the birth of M. Lermontov] (1977, compiler V. Shaduri), *Tam, gde v'etsya Alazan': 180 let so dnya rozhdeniya A.S. Griboedova* [There, Where the Alazan' Twists: 180 years since the birth of A. Griboedov] (1977, compiler. V. Shaduri). Books and articles timed to coincide with the birthdays of writers were a favorite and obligatory act in Soviet literary studies: A. Pushkin and Georgia (150 years since his passing, compiled by N. Gabinidze, 1987), *Rossiia v zhizni i tvorchestve gruzinskikh pisatelei XVII–XIX: K 200-letiiu Georgievskogo traktata* [Russia in the Life and Works of Georgian Writers from 17th to the 19th centuries: For the 200 Year Anniversary of the Georgievsky Treatise (1983, V. Shelemet'eva), *Velikii gumanist: K 50-letiiu so dnya smerti A.P. Chekhova* [The Great Humanist: 50 years since the passing of A. Chekhov] (1954, G. Gigolov, “Molodoi Stalinets” newspaper). The publishing house “Tsodna” (Knowledge) published primarily textbooks and methodological materials, but sometimes monographs appeared, for example: T. Buachidze *Lev Tolstoi: Zhizn' i tvorchestvo* [Lev Tolstoy: Life and Works] (1978). Furthermore, there were specialized academic publishing houses: “Metsniereba” (Science) – the publishing house of the Academy of Sciences and the Georgian SSR State Committee for Publishing as well as the publishing house “Ganatileba” (Enlightenment). They also printed books by Georgian scholars: O. Lortkipanidze *Lev Tolstoi* [Lev Tolstoy] (1979), a large number of anthologies on Russian literature for Georgian schools that were compiled by Georgian scholars (“Russian Literature. Anthology. 1956, 1957, 1958, 1958, 1963, 1967, 1977, 1984”).



The handbook for literary scholars studying Russian literature and its ties with Georgia became the *Letopis' družby gruzinskogo i russkogo narodov s drevneishikh vremen do nashikh dnei* [Chronicles of Friendship Between Georgian and Russian Peoples From Ancient Times to the Present Day] (1961). Its compilers were two leading scholars – V. Shaduri and G. Bebutov. The first volume was dedicated to the pre-Soviet period, and the second to the Soviet period, which contained numerous letters by Georgian and Russian writers to each other, memoirs, as well as reports on celebrations held. Both scholars have an extensive bibliography. Shaduri was more interested in the pre-Soviet period (*Shumit Aragva predomnoi...* [Shumit Aragva Before Me...], (for the anniversary of A. Pushkin, Marani, 1974), *Drug Pushkina A. A. Shishkov i ego roman o Gruzii* [Pushkin's Friend A. A. Shishkov and His Novel About Georgia], Zarya Vostoka, 1951, *Dekabristckaya literatura i gruzinskaya obshchestvennost'* [Dekabrist Literature and Georgian Society], Zarya Vostoka, 1958, etc., and Bebutov – Soviet period (*Gimnaziya litsom k litsu* [Gimnasium Face to Face] (about Vladimir Mayakovsky), Merani, 1977, *Tovarishchi po chustvam, po peru...* [Companions in Feelings, By Pen...], *Sergei Esenin v Gruzii* [Sergei Esenin in Georgia] Merani, 1986 and others).

The creation of books on literary studies published in the GSSR during the Soviet era was reduced to the Shaduriev principle (I assume that books on mutual relations were also created in other republics): first, compliments were given and words by Lenin were quoted as a courtesy to the authorities, then a historical-literary analysis was provided – a description of the Russian writer's relationship to Georgia or Abkhazia (information about his stay, works on a Georgian/Abkhazian topic, statements about local actors, culture, nature), and the second part addressed the local community's attitude towards the Russian writer (materials from the press were cited, critical articles, and literary works). In *Letopisi družby* [Chronicles of Friendship], the title alone allows one to trace the political attitude and involvement in the Soviet "state order," moreover, the second volume contains letters, memoirs, documents confirming and "strengthening" the ties of friendship, but several historical facts are not mentioned.

A topic in which one could hide from the analysis of works of socialist realism was ancient Russian literature and 19th-century literature. Here, there was no need to take into consideration the everyday state of affairs.

But there were scholars, who specialized specifically in this: V. Imnadze *Gork'ii v Gruzii* [Gorky in Georgia] (Zarya Vostoka, 1957) and other scholars whose works I mentioned above. There were works that analyzed the creativity of several writers, for example: L. Khikhadze *Iz istorii vospriyatiya russkoi literatury v Gruzii. Opyt istoriko-literaturnogo izucheniya* [From the History of the Perception of Russian Literature in Georgia. The Experience of Historical-Literary Studies] (1978). Studies were focused on the works of Pushkin, Lermontov, Gogol, Dostoevsky, Ilia Chavchavadze, and Nikoloz Baratashvili.

The works of Abkhazian literary scholars were also divided into “single authors” and collections. The leading publishing house of Abkhazia – “Alashara” specialized in scientific literature, academic and works of fiction. The following collections were published: *Abkhaziya v russkoi literature* [Abkhazia in Russian Literature] (1982, 1983 compiled by I.I. Kvitsiniya) and *Russkie picateli v Abkhazii* [Russian Writers in Abkhazia] (1980) by V. P. Pachuliya, books about Russian writers in Abkhazia – *Konstantin Simonov v Abkhazii* [Konstantin Simonov in Abkhazia] (1981, compiled by D. Chakhalia), M. Ladariya *I.S. Turgenev i klassiki frantsuzskoi literatury* [Turgenev and the Classics of French Literature] (1970).

The book *Abkhaziya v russkoi literature* [Abkhazia in Russian Literature] began with a preface by poet Yevgeny Evtushenko, in which he underscored that in the love of Russian writers for Abkhazia there is no after-taste of colonial romanticism, although his enthusiastic speeches recall the imperial tradition of Russian literature – a passionate romanticization of the Caucasus and Georgia. The next step was the words by the compiler, in which the theme of Russian-Abkhaz literary relations was outlined, and after this a number of poems, stories, and letters about Abkhazia by Russian writers. The collection *Russkie picateli v Abkhazii* [Russian Writers in Abkhazia] was compiled differently. Following the introductory part about Russian-Abkhazian literary-historical ties, a number of *letopisnykh* [chronicle] articles regarding the visits of Russian writers in Abkhazia and literary works written here were provided. The list of writers begins with Bestuzhev-Marlinsky and continues with Sollogub, Chekhov, Gorky, Alexei Tolstoy, Serafimovich, Furmanov, Fadeev, Simonov, Tvardovsky, Yevtushenko, and others. It is clear that Vianor Pachulia meticulously collected the memories from named visits, since the attention given to the

periphery for the locals emphasized the significance of their region and ties with the center.

As I have already mentioned, in addition to a large number of monographs, there were, of course, many scientific articles that were published in collections of works of Tbilisi University, pedagogical institutes, and other institutions in the republic, but I will not touch upon this topic.

If we were to generalize the interests of Georgian literary scholars and scholars of Slavic studies, then in the Soviet period they were formed around the classics of Russian literature in two areas: firstly, the analysis of works or new findings in biographies, and secondly, the interethnic perspective (the connection of a writer with a certain republic or with writers from these Soviet republics). The list of names coincides with the names mentioned in textbooks on Russian literature: Pushkin, Lermontov, Tolstoy, Griboedov, Ostrovsky, Chernyshevsky, Nekrasov, Mayakovsky, Bulgakov, and others. A particularly large number of works were dedicated to XIX century authors who lived for a certain period of time in Georgia or in the Caucasus. At the same time, the emphasis was shifted towards romanticization of the southern periphery of the empire, but the very theme of the colonizer's glorification on the outskirts was deeply veiled. Thanks to the large flow of works, even formulations such as "Georgian Pushkiniana" appeared. As an example is the book in Georgian by Kartvelian scholar S. Khutsishvili *Gruzinskaya pushkiniana* [Georgian Pushkiniana] (1979).

### *Post-Soviet Period*

The collapse of the USSR led to a deep social-economic crisis. Already in the late 1990s, the process of both political and cultural decolonization began.<sup>32</sup> In 1985, Mikhail Gorbachev announced the beginning of Perestroika

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<sup>32</sup> According to A. Etkind, colonization consists of two components – political and cultural (in the book: A. Etkind, *Vnutrennaya kolonizatsiya. Imperskii opyt Rossii* [Internal colonization: the imperial experience of Russia, Moscow 2013, p. 17. In our case in Georgia, decolonization began as well as the political and cultural.

and Glasnost'. This became a catalyst for the "epiphany" of peoples and provoked clashes on ethnic grounds.

The year 1989 served as the border for the breaking of an era<sup>33</sup> and the year of disruption ideology. The anti-Soviet and nationalistic mood reached its peak. On Rustaveli Prospect in Tbilisi on the night of April 9, 1989, a bloody clash occurred between Soviet forces and protesters. For protesters, the concepts "Soviet/Russian/imperial" were viewed as being equivalent to each other. Georgians favored secession from the USSR. A similar sentiment was felt in the autonomies, but with a different focus. The Abkhaz demanded secession from the Georgian SSR and restoration of their status as a union republic, which was agreed upon at a gathering of the people on March 18, 1989. Also, Tskhinvali demanded status as an autonomous republic from Tbilisi. The first blood was shed in Abkhazia in July of 1989. Closer to November of the same year, a worsening of the situation in the South Ossetian Autonomous Oblast was noted. Results of Georgian-Abkhaz and Georgian-South Ossetian unrest are well-known: war in Abkhazia 1992–1993 and 1998, conflict in the Kodori Gorge in 2001, war in South Ossetia 1991–1992 and 2004, as well as the Five-Day War between Russia and Georgia over the South Ossetian issue in 2008. Furthermore, the Civil War of 1991–1993 swept over Georgia. Never the richest republic in the USSR, Georgia was plunged into a high crime situation, destruction, poverty, and fear; there were serious interruptions in electricity and water, and there was no heating.

Political cataclysms resulted in serious changes, including in the system of education. Fundamental, humanities, and applied disciplines became unnecessary. The active interrepublic science and cultural life remains in the past. Centers for the study of Russian literature were reduced or disappeared, institutes and libraries were closed. The "Museum of the Friendship of Peoples" was closed and one of the most prominent centers of Russian culture in Georgia – the Smirnova-Rosset Museum, where a unique memorial collection was preserved, almost untouched, of paintings, manuscripts, furniture, and cookware that belonged to the woman who raised Pushkin, was friends with Gogol, and was admired by some of the brightest individu-

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<sup>33</sup> M. Hardt, A. Negri, *Empire. Globalization as a new Roman order, awaiting its early Christians*, 2000.

als of the Golden Age of Russian literature. The “island of memories” – archives, publishing houses, libraries, and other cultural institutions as well as science and education were plundered and destroyed. In such difficult times, even the archive in Tbilisi State University of the former head of the department Vano Semenovitch Shaduri disappeared.

Publishing houses in the 1990s generally fell into a complete decline, both financially and technologically. The Russian edition of the publishing houses “Merani” and “Zari Vostoka” were closed. It is thanks to them that practically all monographs and textbooks on Russian literature by Georgian authors were printed. Textbooks, journals, newspapers, and new editions from Russia stopped arriving. Prior to the Internet, there was an information starvation and isolation from the centers of Russian studies in Russia.

A split along ethnic lines also occurred in education. In 1989, After the April events in Tbilisi, Georgian students at the Abkhaz University (Sukhumi) refused to continue their studies. This decision was provoked by the university’s leadership Abkhaz nationalistic mood. The students abandoned the university building and turned to Tbilisi University with a request to accept them into their structure and open a branch in Sukhumi. Talks between the Abkhaz side and students-Georgians did not lead to anything. On May 14, 1989, by the decision of the GSSR Council of Ministers, the Sukhumi branch of Tbilisi State University was created and in the summer the recruitment of students was announced, to which the Abkhaz side reacted quick sharply. This development provoked yet another clash.

The system of Georgian higher education began to be built taking into consideration the new realities. A “duplication” of educational institutions started: for those who remained in Abkhazia, the Abkhaz University continued to exist and teachers and students who became refugees from Abkhazia continued their work and studies at Sukhum University (Tbilisi) transformed from The Sukhum brank of Tbilisi State University; students and teachers of Tskhinvali Pedgagogical Institute found refuge in the Gori Pedagogical Institute, which became Gori University in 1999. The forced “relocation” also affected other educational institutions, for example: the Georgian Institute of Subtropical Management (Sukhumi) established itself in Kutaisi, the Ilia Vekua Independent Institute in Poti, the Sukhumi Humanitarian Institute in Sanaki.

In the difficult 1990s – early 2000s, the teaching of Russian language and history of Russian literature in educational institutions in Georgia, Abkhazia, and South Ossetia were conducted according to course programs from the Soviet period. The crisis in the regions attracted all the resources and it did not result in new formations. The intelligentsia, similar to other strata of society, tried to survive. From the memoirs of the famous Georgian professor of Russian studies and the Polish language Maria Filina, I learned that after the introduction of “lari” as the national currency in 1995 a Doctor of Sciences, professor, received a salary of 13.5 lari, which amounted to approximately 10 US dollars. An associate professor received 10.8 lari while assistant professors and departmental assistants received 9.6 lari. A professor’s lecture “cost” 20 tetri, which was equivalent to a bus ticket, an associate professor’s lecture amounted to 15 tetri. As a result, the professor could travel to work by bus for the cost of the lecture, and then return home on foot. Theoretically, an associate professor could not even afford to travel to work. In Abkhazia after the war, due to destruction and death, many teachers did not return to work in the university and it was forced to find a new teaching staff.

Signs of “decolonization” or, on the contrary, stagnation, on the examples of the structure of Georgian SSR educational institutions became noticeable in the mid-2000s. The structure of Abkhaz State University in the post-Soviet period has hardly changed. The Philology Faculty has remained as it was, consisting of several departments include the “Russian Language Department” and “Department of the History of Russian and Foreign Literature.” At the South Ossetian University (Tskhinvali), the Philology Faculty at some point became the “Faculty of Russian Philology, International Journalism, and Foreign Languages.” Here, there are two departments: “Department of Russian Language” and “Department of the History of Russian and Foreign Literature.”

In Georgia, there is a different picture emerging. A political course oriented to the West is apparent. Beginning in 2004, Georgia began to conduct educational reforms in accordance with the “Bologna Convention.” The reform of Georgian educational institutions turned out to be extremely difficult. Of the nearly 4,000 employees of Tbilisi State University, approximately 700 people remained after the competition for vacancies. From the three departments of Russian language (specifically geared towards

university students and foreign students) and the department of the history of Russian literature at Tbilisi State University, only 9 employees remained from the original 120. Departments as scientific-educational units were abolished. Six faculties were united into one – the Faculty of Humanities.

At Gori University, a faculty of humanities was also created, where (according to the faculty's official website) only one associated professor teaches all disciplines in "Russian philology." According to the same principle of combining the humanities and social sciences, the faculty of humanities was created at Sukhumi University (Tbilisi). There, only three associated professors teach in the area of "Slavic philology."

As for scientific work, despite the post-war destruction and economic difficulties, it tries to survive by finding new formats. For example, scientific works in Georgia are published primarily in collections of articles (for example, *Aktual'nye voprosy mezhnatsional'nykh filologicheskikh obshchenii* [Relevant Issues of Multiethnic Philological Communication], *Gruzinskaya rusistika. Literaturovedenie. Lingvistika. Kul'turologiya* [Georgian Russian Studies. Literary Studies. Linguistics. Culturology]). Collections of articles are published at the expense of the authors themselves (PhD students-philologists, university teachers). Research topics remain actual for Georgian Russian studies. Furthermore, scholars have not forgotten to pay their respects to older colleagues and publish collections of articles in the memory of professors-Russian specialists (V.S. Shaduri, G.M. Gigolova, T.P. Buachidze). Also, collections of works have been prepared and published dedicated to the anniversaries of Chekhov and Nekrasov. Materials from conferences held appear in the form of theses. Important events in the life of Georgian Russian studies is the collection *Nash Peterburg* [Our Petersburg] (edited and compiled by M. Filina, 2004), which includes materials about Georgian–Petersburg relations over the course of two centuries; *Serebryanyi vek v russkoi literature* [Silver Age in Russian Literature] (TSU, 2004) and the anthology in two parts *Serebryanyi vek* [Silver Age] (2005, compiled by S. Khangulyan); the book about the intertwining of Russian and Georgian writers' fates *Sud'bonosnye biographii. XIX vek* [Momentous Biographies. XIX Century] (G. Lomidze, T. Megrelishvili, and I. Modebadze, 2011); two monographs by professor L.D. Khikhadze appeared concerning the perception of literature as an interaction, and two monographs by T. Megrelishvili dedicated to the works of Lermontov and memoir prose of the Russian émigré community.

The usual friendly tone of research works was broken, and this became a reaction to the anti-Georgian sentiments in Russian society. Nodar Levanovich Porakishvili, a professor at Tbilisi State University, offered a radically different view on “friendship.” A thirty-year post-Soviet study of Russian literature and press gave Porakishvili a reason to begin to debunk the myth of “friendship of the peoples” – Georgians and Russians. In the late 90s, the book *Seyateli vrazhdy, ili Anatomiya i fizionomiya gruzinofobii* [Sowers of Enmity, or the Anatomy and Physiognomy of Georgiophobia] appeared (Tbilisi: TSU, 1997; coauthor Georgii Tsiabkhashvili), and later in co-authorship with Omar Gogiashvili – *Bezumie i bezumtsy, ili Lenin i teper' zhaleet vsekh zhivykh: Nezanimatel'naya gruzinofobii i ne tol'ko o nei* [Madness and Madmen, or Lenin Now Regrets all the Living: Georgianophobia of Little Interest] (Moscow: “Slavyanskii Mir,” 2005) and *Epidemiya idiotizma: O nezanimatel'noi gruzinofobii i ne tol'kj o nei* [Epidemic of Idiocy: About Gruzinophobia of Little Interest and Not] (Tbilisi, Universal, 2006). Porakishvili analyzed texts and cited the names of authors (writers and publicists), calling them “powerful men,” “accomplices,” and Gruzinophobes,” who wrote or spoke about Georgia and Georgians removing their romantic pink glasses: Viktor Astaf'ev, Dmitrii Galkovskii, Mikhail Lobanov, Denis Peredel'skii, Vladislav Shurygin, and others. The main mood in Porakishvili's named works was a feeling of injustice and resentment for the negative attitude of Russian “colleagues,” who had visited and relaxed wonderfully in Georgia during Soviet times, and later spoke poorly about the southern people.

Summing up the results in the presented work, it should be noted that the development of science and the educational system was directly dependent on the political regime. With the collapse of the affirmative action empire, the popularity of Russian language and literature was determined by political trends in the regions. The fullness of literary studies, emergence of new research schools, the crystallization and search for new directions, methodologies, and research topics requires a significant amount of time, sometimes decades. The Soviet Georgian school for the study of Russian literature, which, naturally, included scholars from the autonomies of the GSSR, was “disbanded.” This was done in different forms. The unity of the research process disappeared. Some scholars have joined the comparativists, others are still searching for their own original niche.



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## SUMMARY

The history of the building, construction, and collapse of states makes it possible to observe the expansion of the Empire's language and the changes that are taking place in the politics of language and education, including those in higher education. Georgia's history is a telling example of this. After the Russian Empire came to power, institutions of higher education were established, which included education in Russian as well. Moreover, writing languages were also created for the ethnic groups that made up the Georgian population (Abkhaz and Ossetians) in order to widen their influence and integration into the empire. In the Soviet time, these practices became stronger. After the collapse of the USSR, linguistic priorities in education changed, and institutions in the periphery were divided into those that stayed in the old territories with the new national

curriculum and those that moved under the old names to the central locations of the former Soviet republic center (the Abkhaz University in Tbilisi and in Sukhumi).

**Keywords:** language politics, Russian, Georgia, and the peripheries.